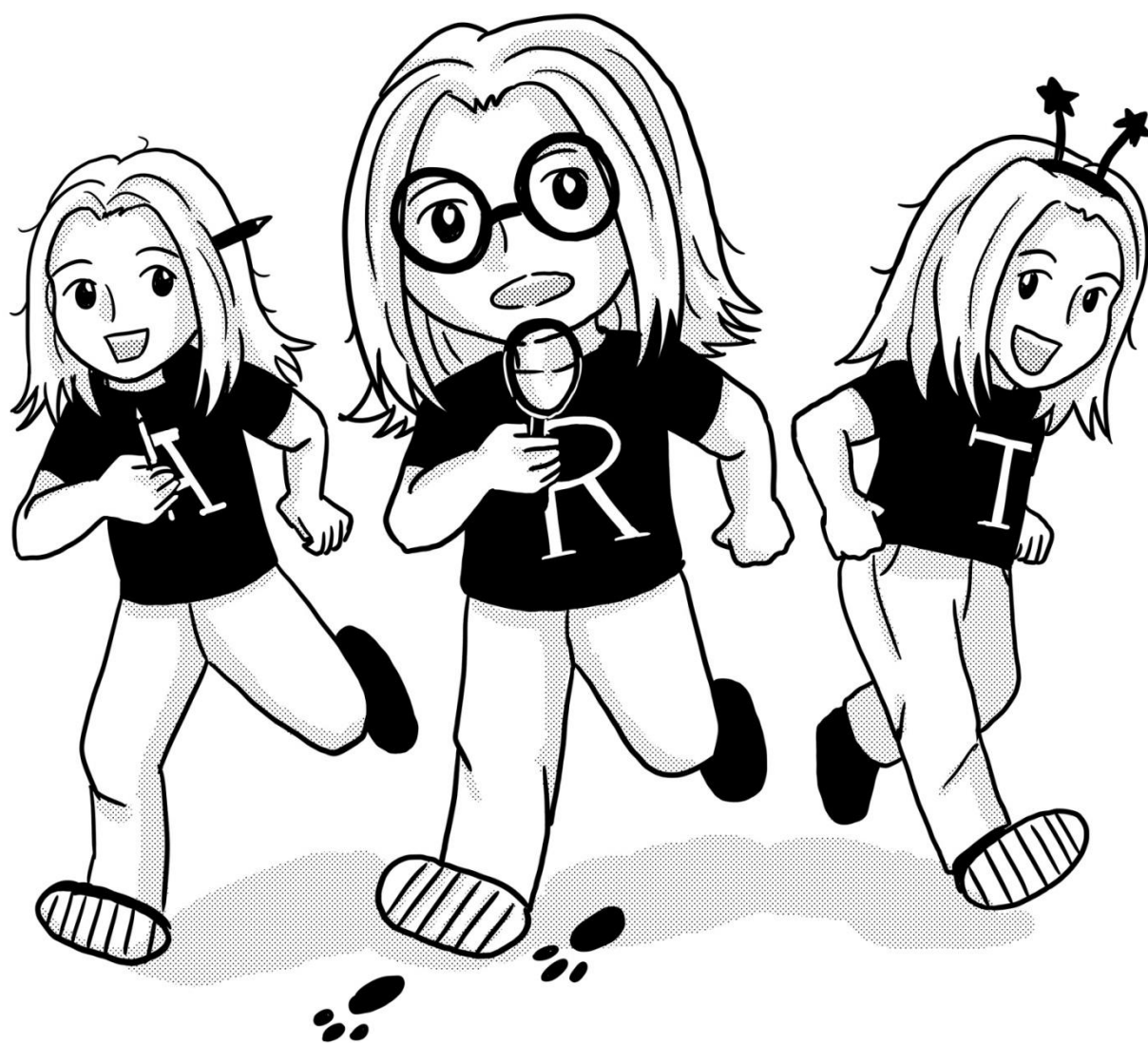


# Crossing Paths

**A graphic essay**



Irina '21

**Irina Richards**

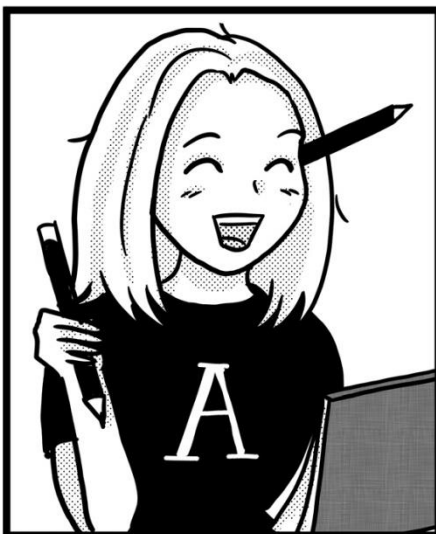
**Inauspicatum dat iter oblatus lepus**  
**Crossing paths with a hare brings you a bad journey**

This is, quite literally, a comic about a comic, as it documents the process of creating a comic in response to a historic artefact.

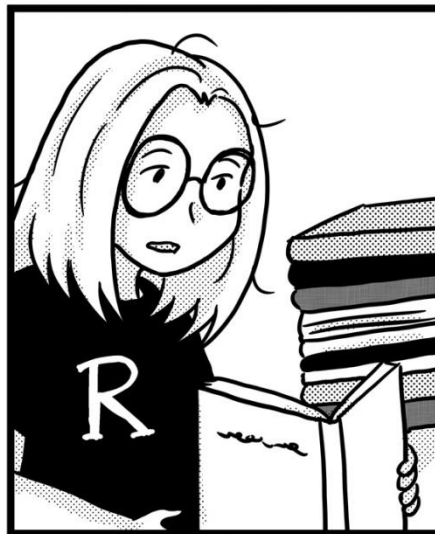
This comic follows an autoethnographic investigation, which took me on a winding path through myth, history, and landscape.

The characters in this comic represent the three aspects of my professional identity - those of the artist, researcher, and teacher. The comic aims to demonstrate the ways in which these identities interact, and the roles they play in the process of inquiry.

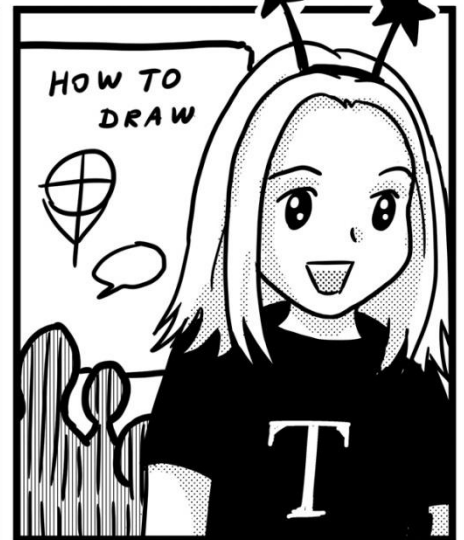
**ARTIST**



**RESEARCHER**

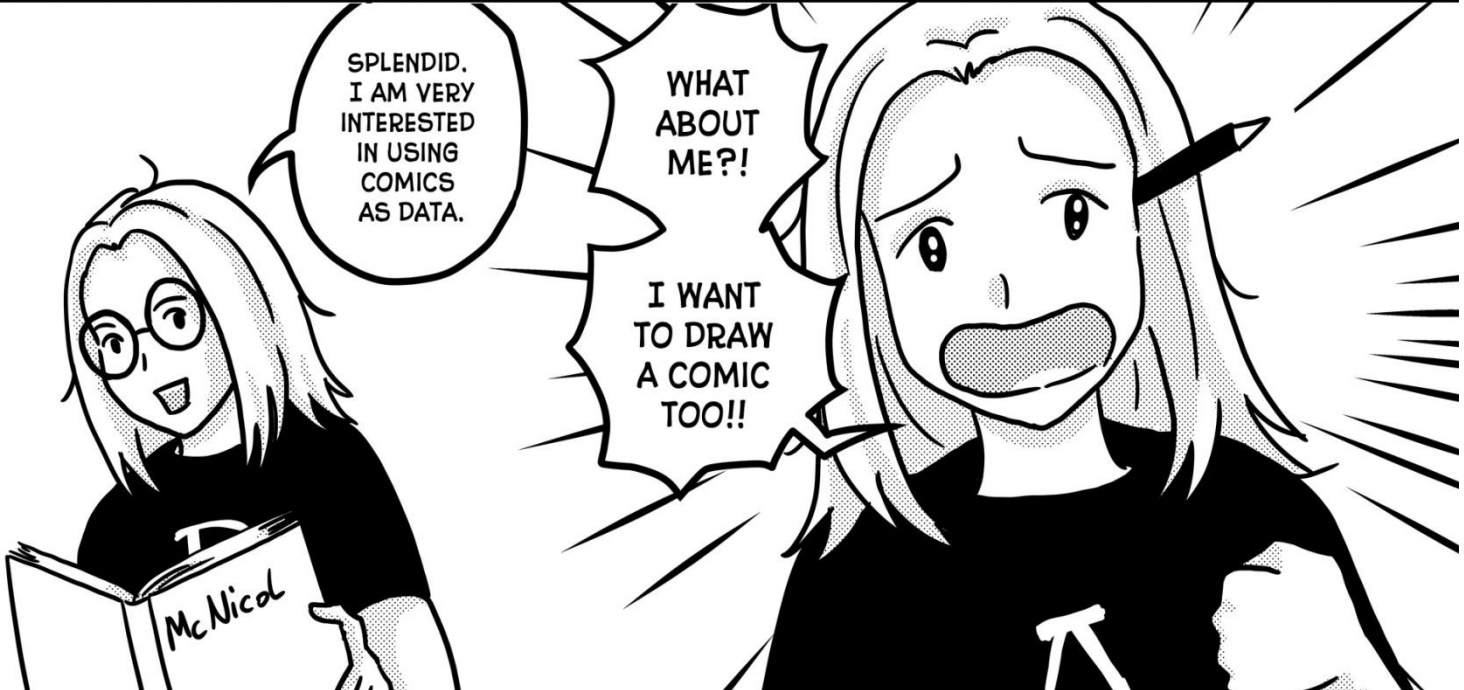
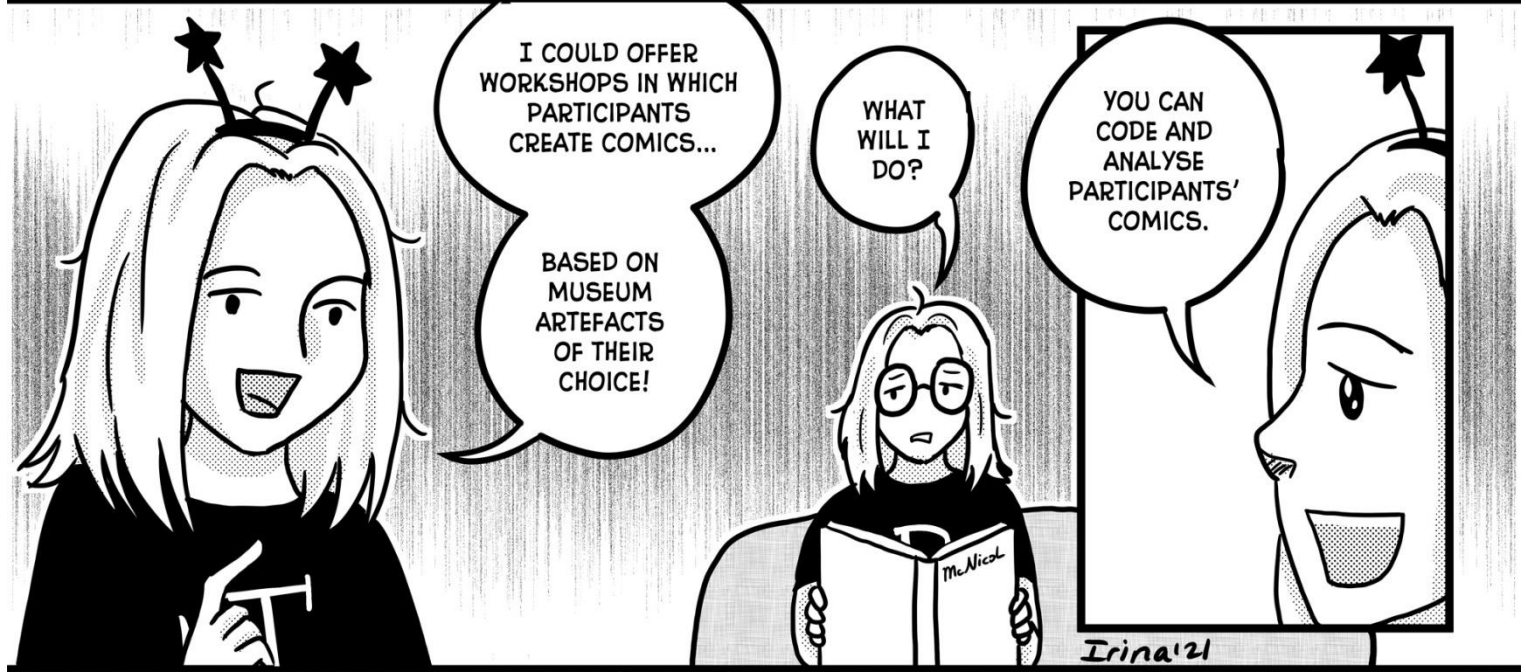
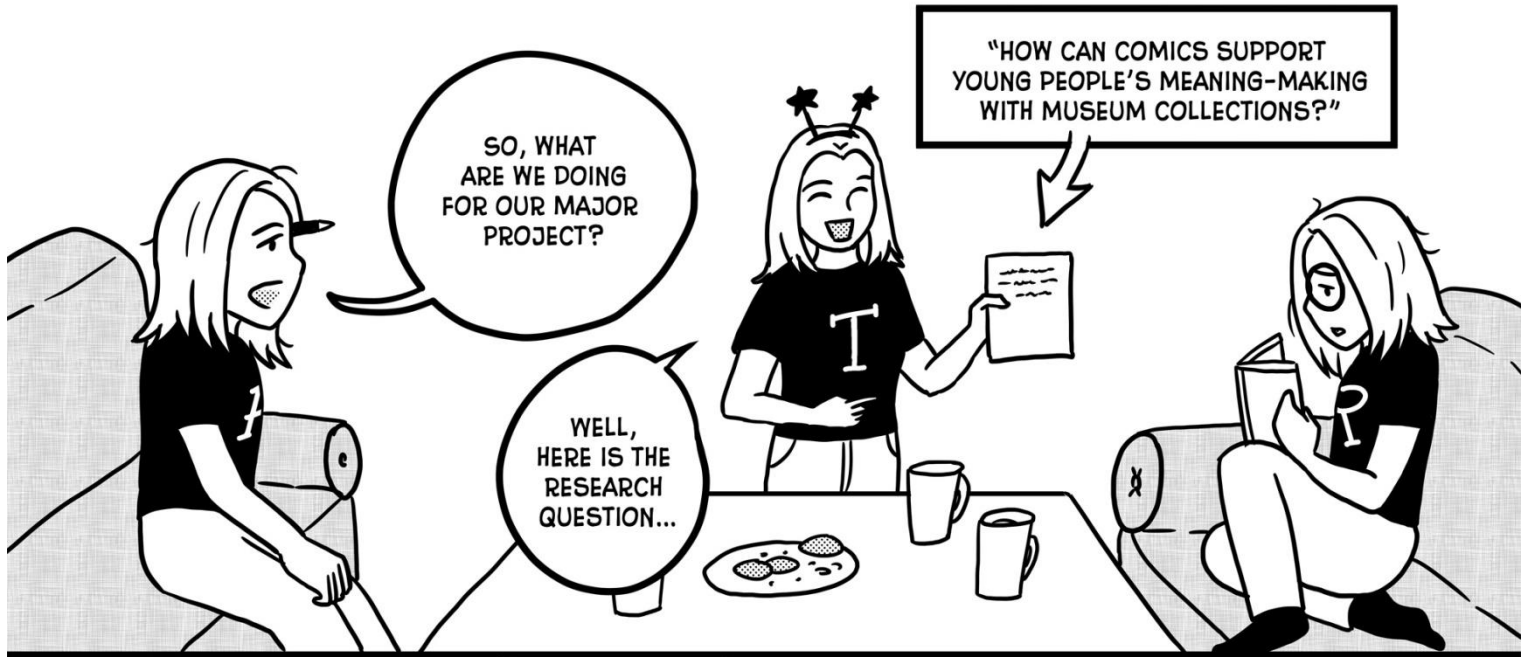


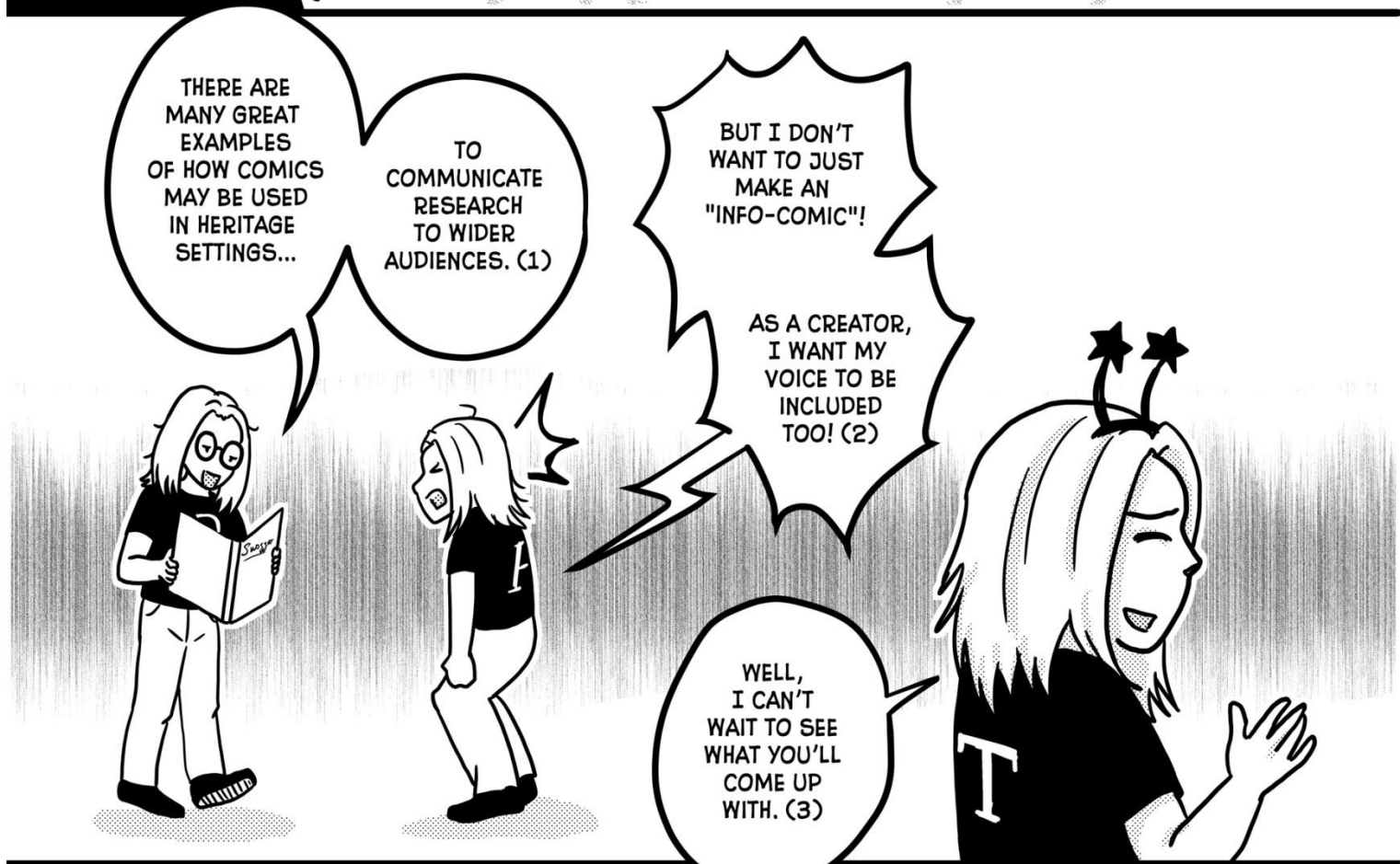
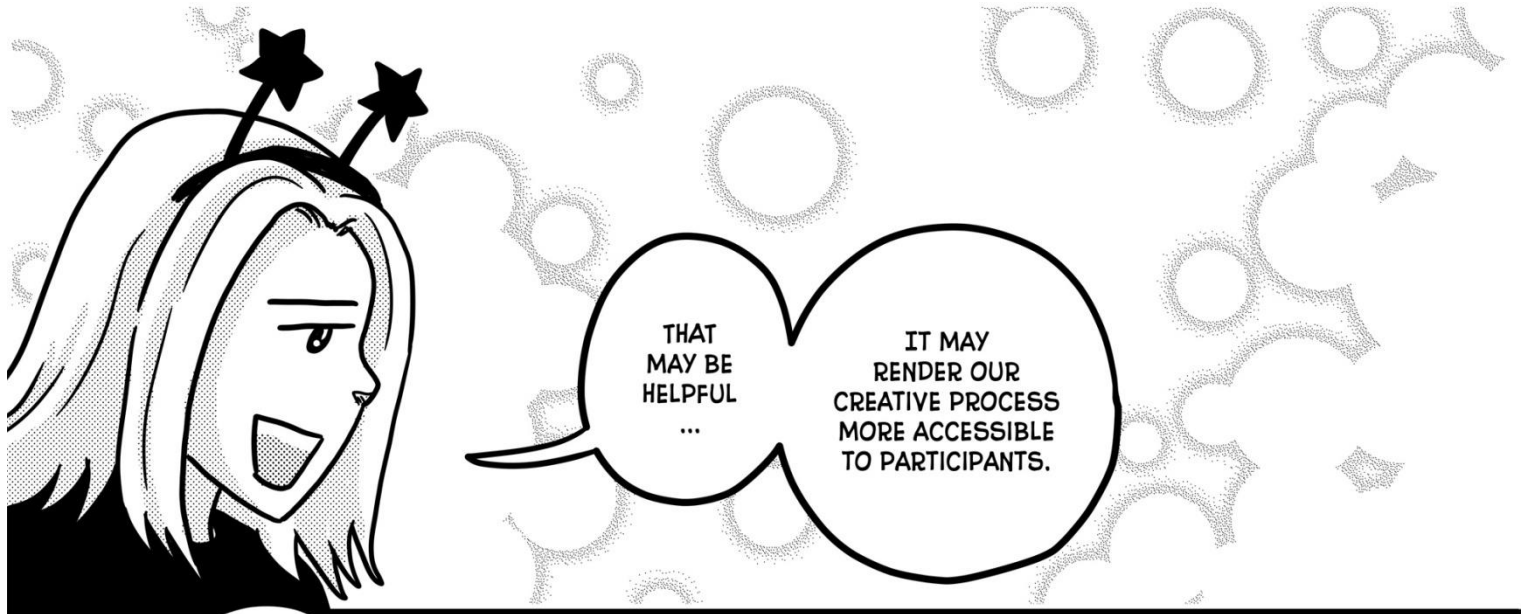
**TEACHER**



*“The integration of the artist, researcher and teacher identities has the potential for creating emerging identities in which new skills, theories and practices are formed that could influence the development of art and art education practice and knowledge.”*

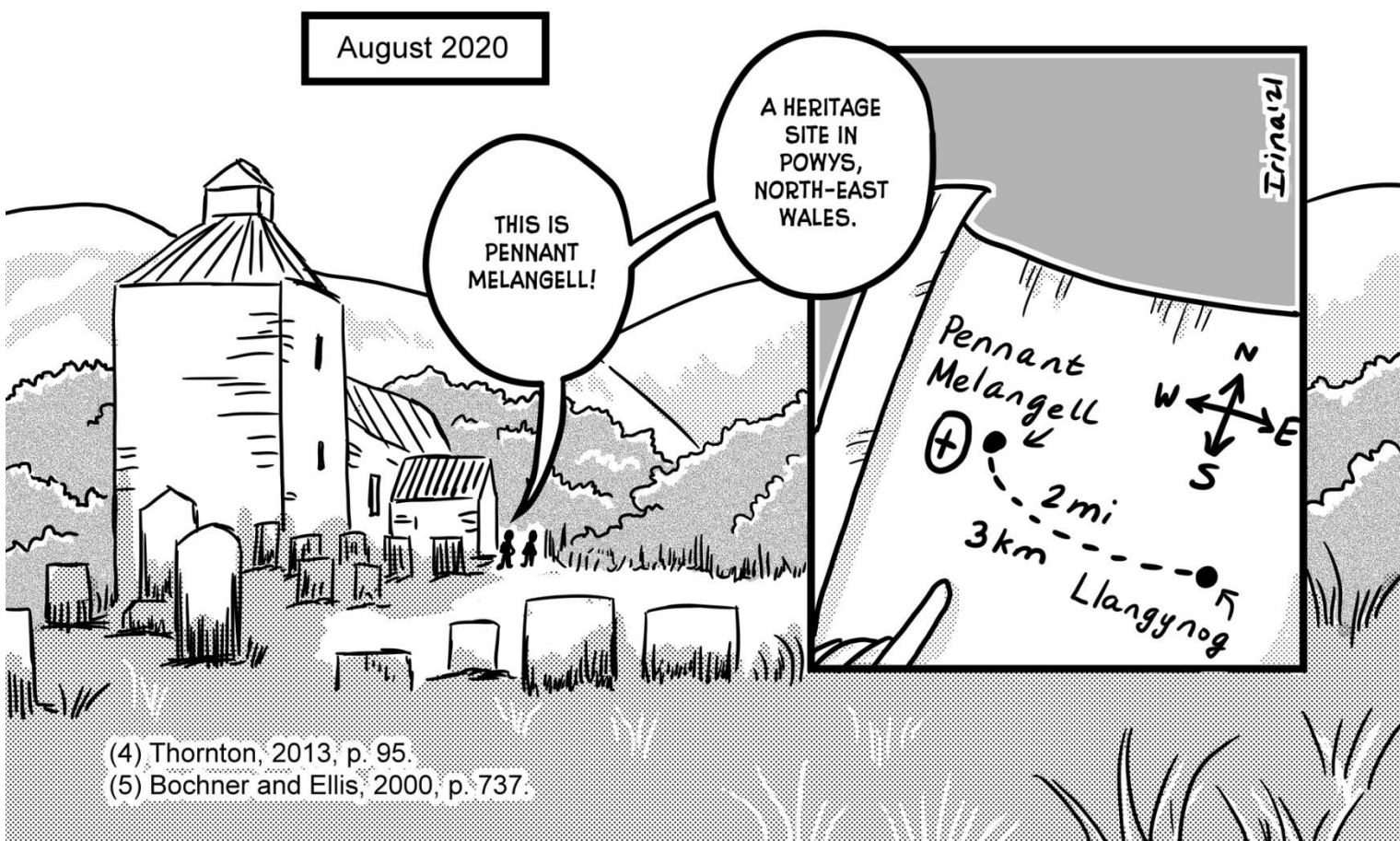
(Thornton, 2013, p. 9)





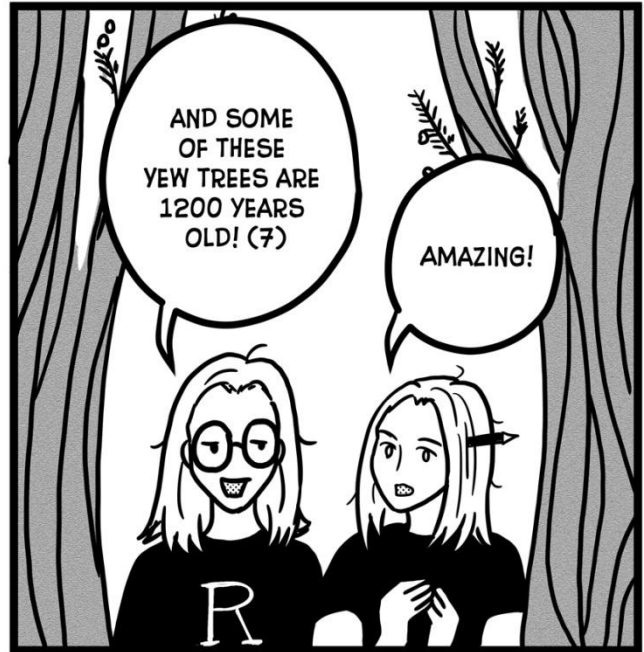
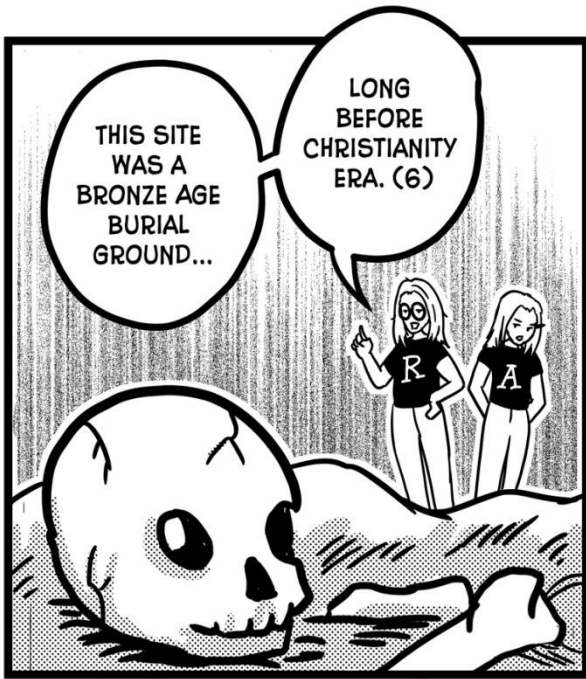
(1) Atalay, 2012, cited in Swogger, 2019, p. 137.  
(2) Kuttner et al, 2020, p. 11.

(3) Although the research focus of this study contains an educational element, this comic focuses on my own artistic process rather than on the teaching aspect.

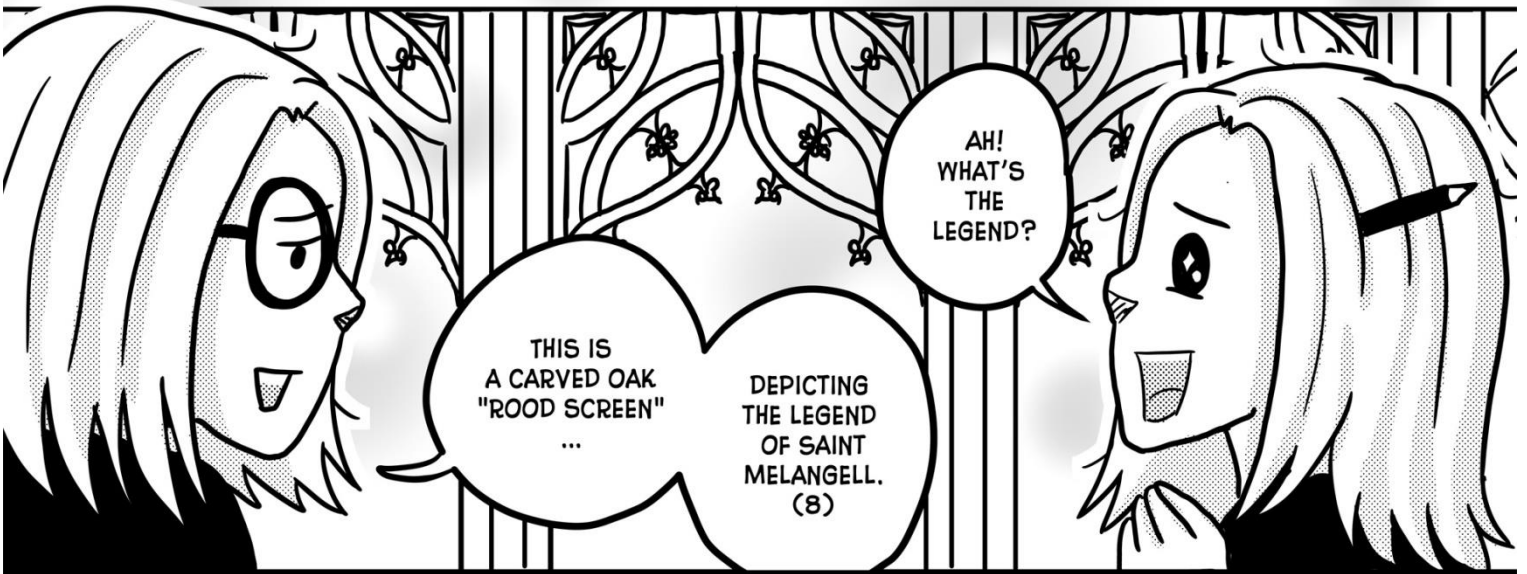


(4) Thornton, 2013, p. 95.

(5) Bochner and Ellis, 2000, p. 737.

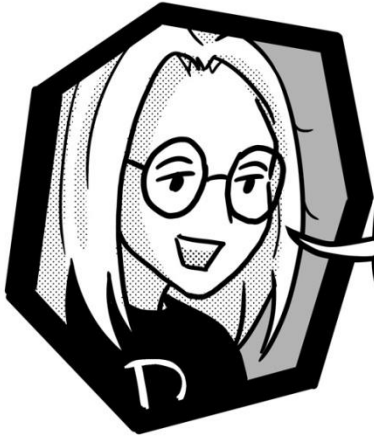


Irina'21



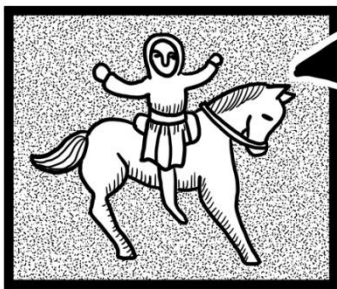
(6) Malim, 2018, p. 90.  
 (7) ibid, p. 91.

(8) Cambrian Archaeological Association, 1846, pp. 224-225.



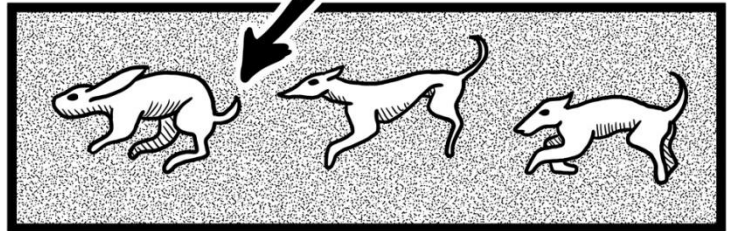
SO, MELANGELL - THAT'S HER IN THE CENTRE - WAS AN IRISH PRINCESS, WHO ESCAPED AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE.

SHE TRAVELLED TO WALES AND LIVED AS A HERMIT IN THE FOREST FOR 15 YEARS...



ONE DAY, BROCHWEL, KING OF POWYS - THAT'S HIM HERE - CAME HUNTING IN THE FOREST.

HIS HOUNDS CHASED A HARE - SEE THEM HERE? - AND THE HARE HID UNDER MELANGELL'S CLOAK.



MELANGELL TOLD BROCHWEL HER STORY...

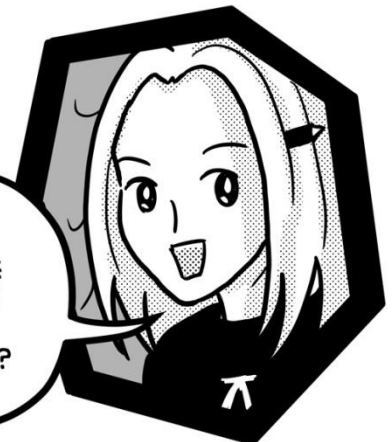


BROCHWEL WAS SO STRUCK BY HER VIRTUE AND DEVOTION THAT HE GAVE HER THESE LANDS TO BUILD A SANCTUARY.

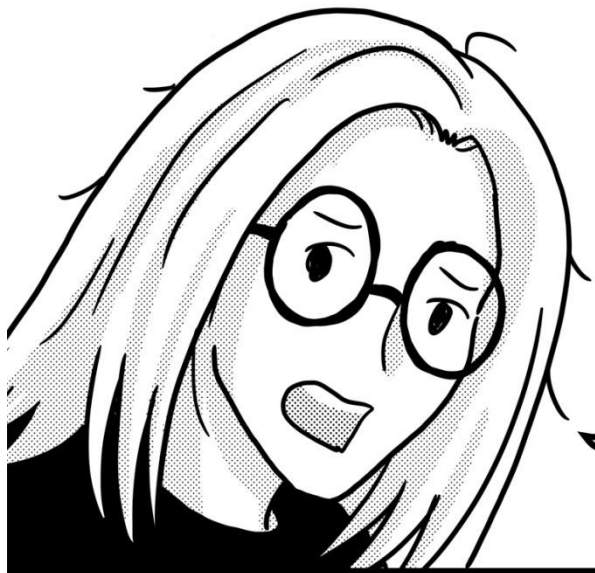
ALSO, HARES WERE NOT HUNTED OR EATEN IN THIS PARISH FOR MANY YEARS - THEY WERE CALLED "MELANGELL'S LAMBS". (9)

THAT IS FASCINATING!

HOW DO WE KNOW THIS STORY?



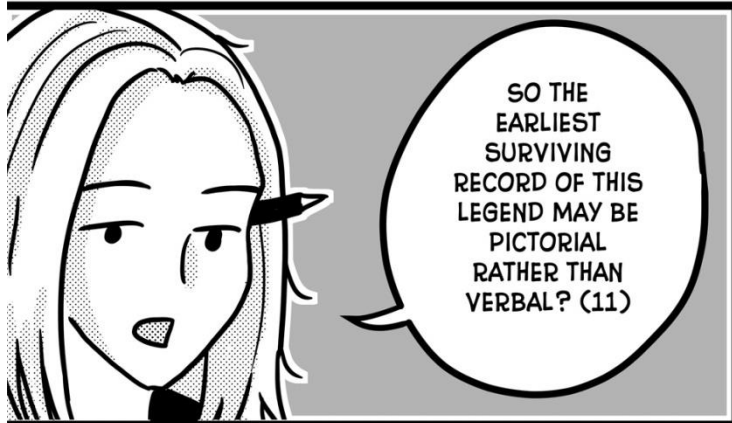
(9) Pennant, 1801, pp. 173-174.



THE  
LEGEND WAS  
RECORDED IN A  
MANUSCRIPT  
IN THE 15TH  
CENTURY  
...

ABOUT  
THE SAME  
TIME AS  
THE SCREEN  
WAS CREATED.

SADLY,  
IT'S NOW LOST –  
ALTHOUGH  
LATER COPIES  
DO EXIST. (10)

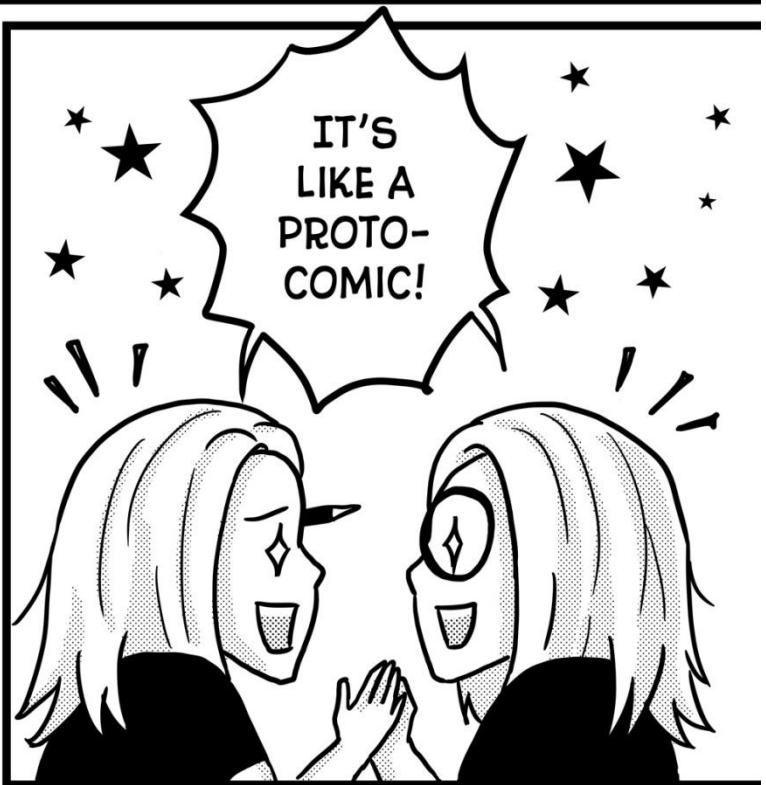


SO THE  
EARLIEST  
SURVIVING  
RECORD OF THIS  
LEGEND MAY BE  
PICTORIAL  
RATHER THAN  
VERBAL? (11)

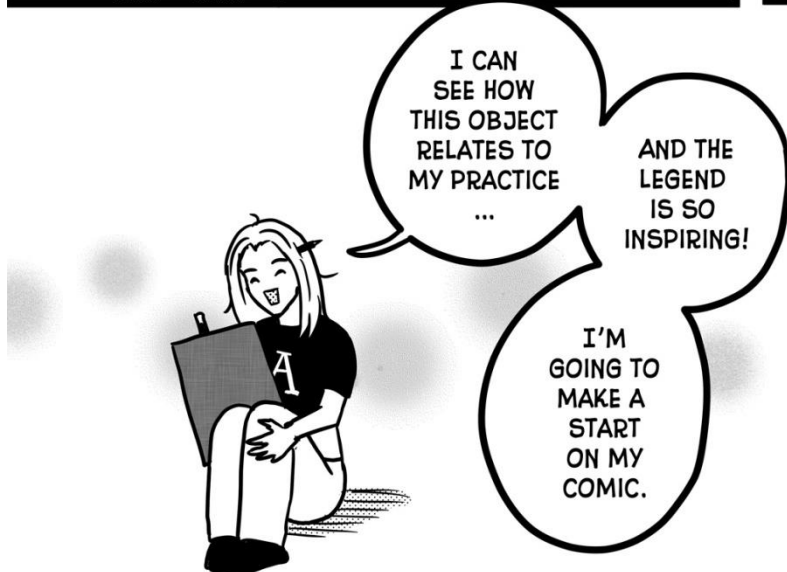


ARE YOU  
THINKING  
WHAT I'M  
THINKING?..

*Trina'21*



IT'S  
LIKE A  
PROTO-  
COMIC!



I CAN  
SEE HOW  
THIS OBJECT  
RELATES TO  
MY PRACTICE  
...

AND THE  
LEGEND  
IS SO  
INSPIRING!

I'M  
GOING TO  
MAKE A  
START  
ON MY  
COMIC.



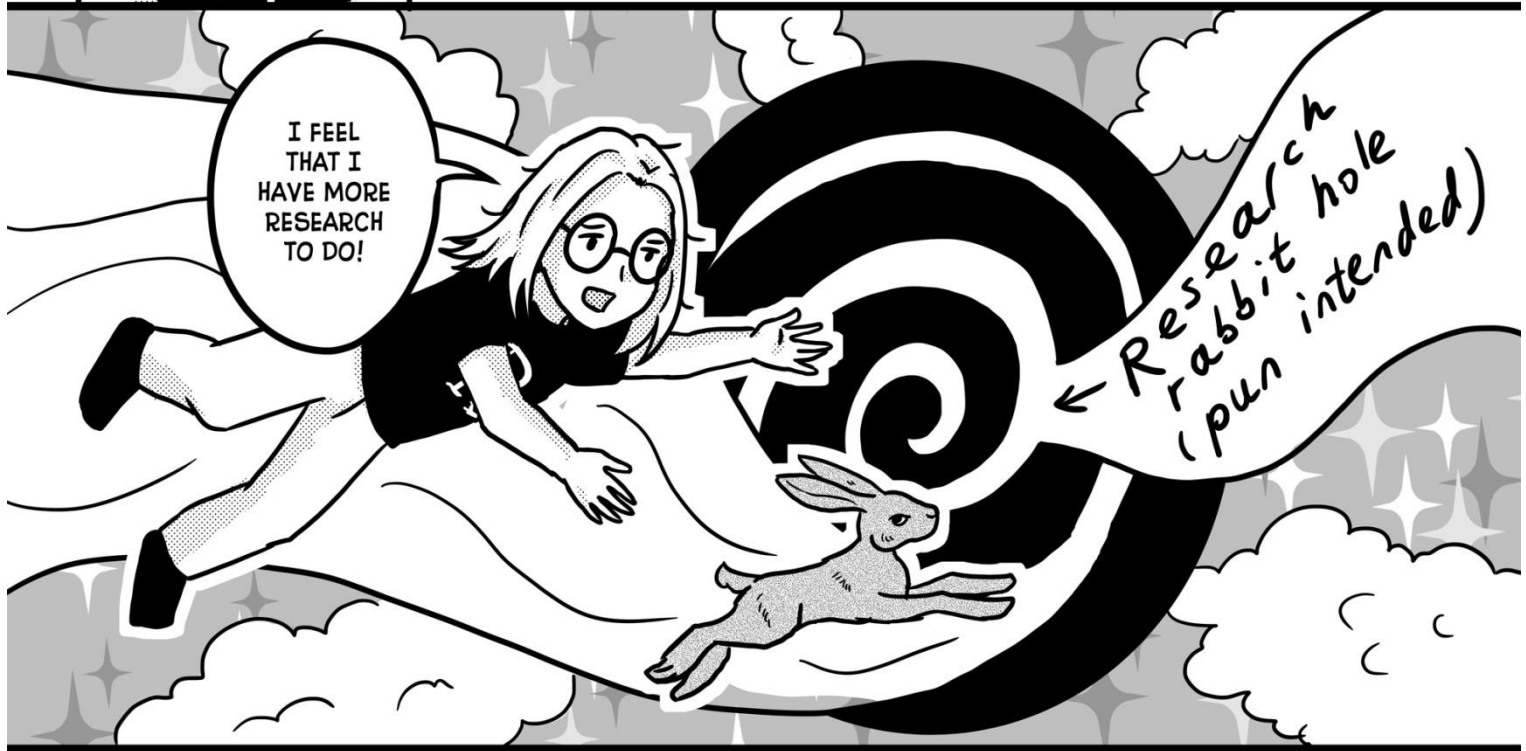
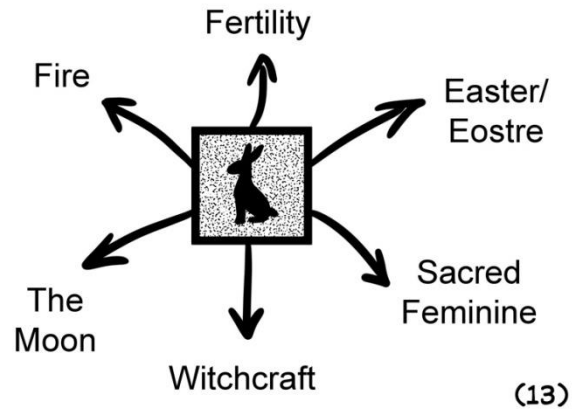
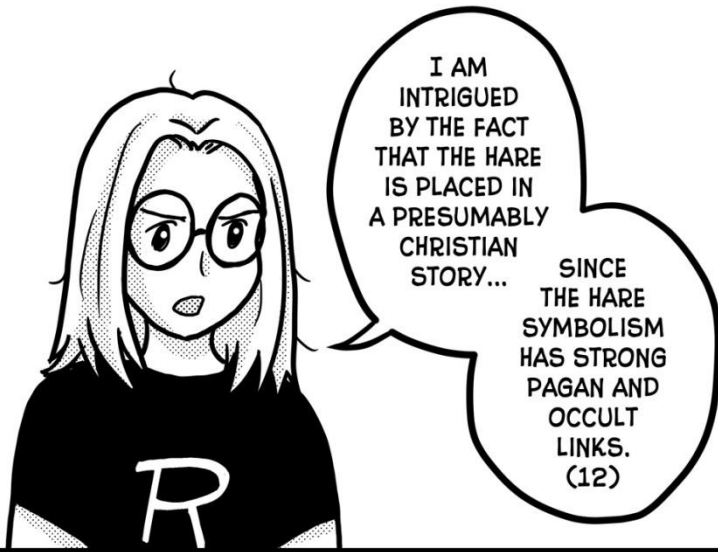
YOU  
GO  
AHEAD  
...

I'LL  
BE RIGHT  
BACK.

(10) Pryce, 1994, p. 23.

(11) Cartwright, 2002, p. 6.





(12) Evans and Thompson, 1972.

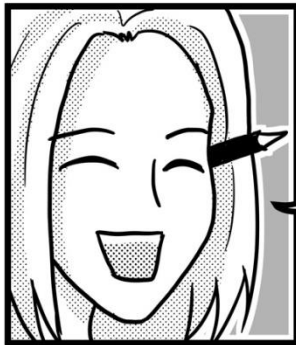
(13) This "semantic centres" model is based on one suggested in Murphy and Ameen, 2020, p. 215.



THE HARE FEATURES IN MANY STORIES ACROSS WALES. (14)

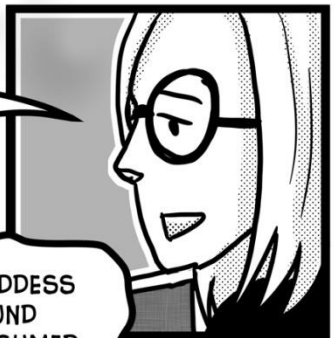
MANY OF THEM ARE TRANSFORMATION STORIES, WHERE A WITCH TURNS INTO A HARE, OR VICE VERSA. (15)

AND IN MANY TALES, THE WITCH-HARE IS CHASED, OR INJURED, BY HOUNDS...



JUST LIKE IN THE LEGEND OF SAINT MELANGELL!

YES... IT'S A COMMON MOTIF IN WELSH FOLKLORE ...



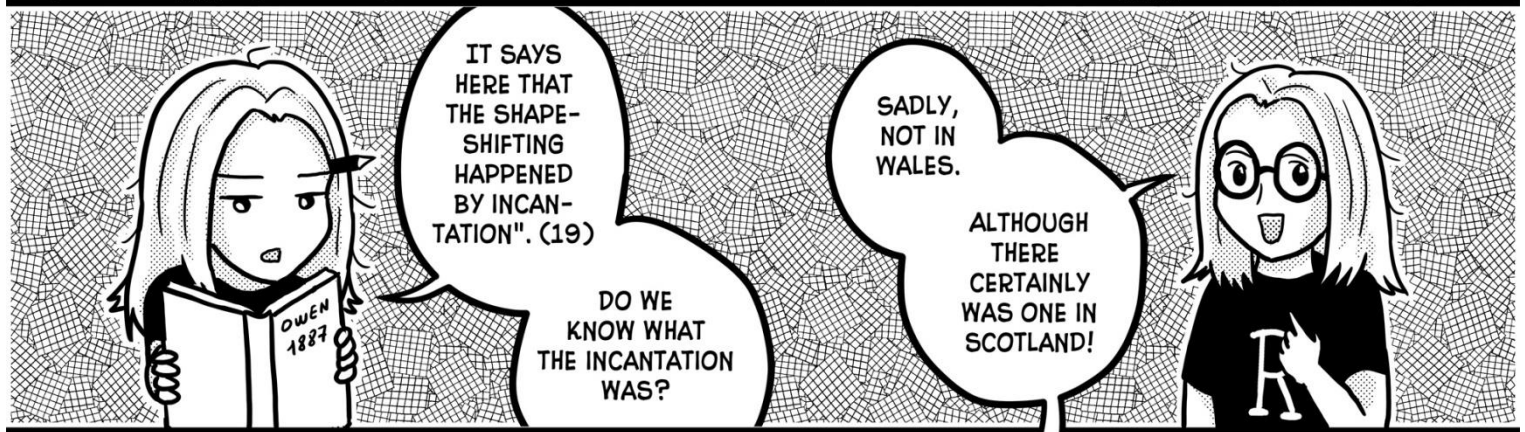
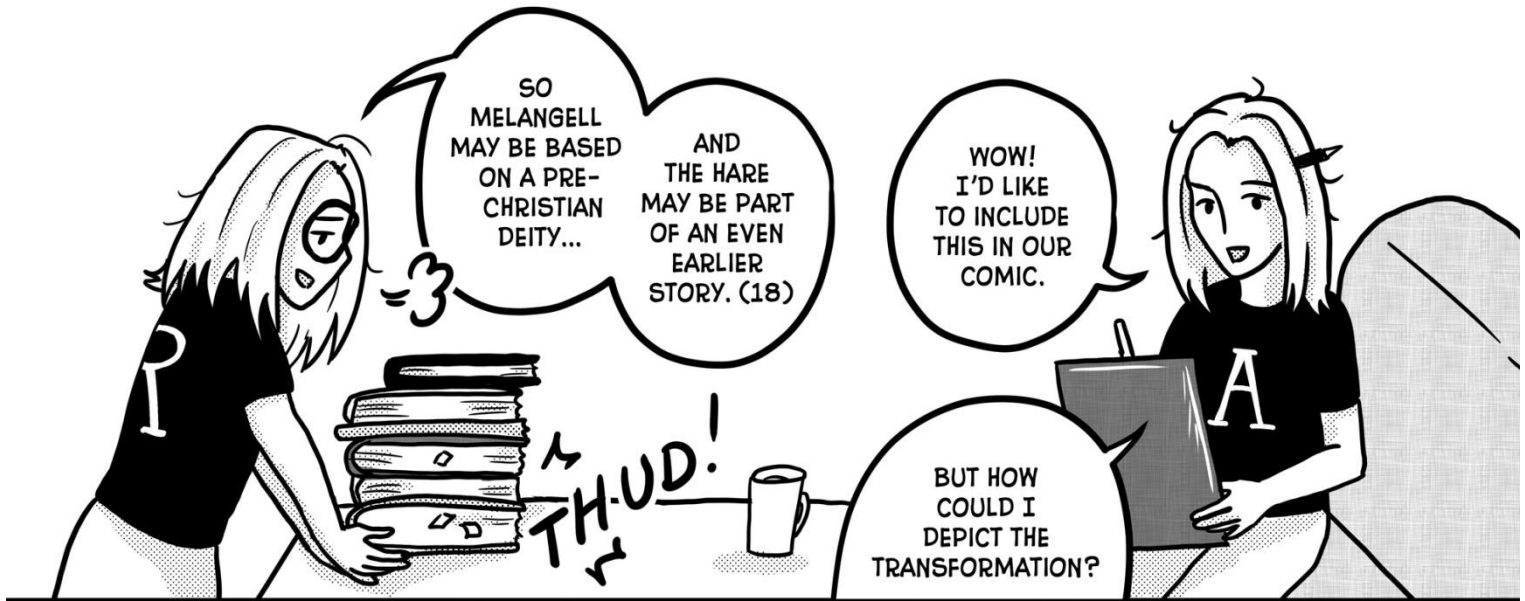
AND IT MAY EVEN BE LINKED TO THE WELSH GODDESS CERIDWEN, WHO TRANSFORMED INTO A HOUND TO CHASE HER SERVANT GWION BACH, WHO ASSUMED THE SHAPE OF A HARE. (16)

*"The tale of Ceridwen, whose fame was such that she can without exaggeration be styled the goddess of witches, resembles in part the chase of the witch-hare by the black dog, and probably her story gave rise to many tales of transformations." (17)*



(14) Trevelyan, 1909, p.212.  
(15) Evans and Thompson, 1972, pp. 168-174;  
Jenkins, 1899, p. 79.

(16) Evans and Thompson, 1972, p. 226.  
(17) Owen, 1887, p. 235.



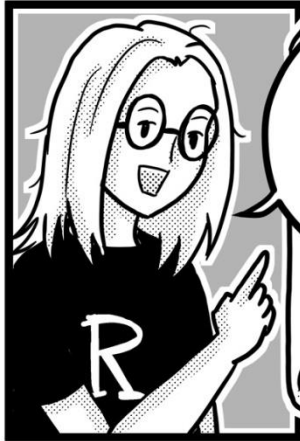
IN 1662, A FAMOUS WITCH TRIAL WAS HELD IN AULDEARN, SCOTLAND. ONE OF THE ACCUSED WOMEN, ISOBEL GOWDIE, CONFESSED TO BEING A WITCH, AND RELATED DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF HER ACTIVITIES - INCLUDING A "HARE-SPELL", WHICH SHE USED TO TURN INTO A HARE AND BACK. (20)



(18) Malim, 2018, p. 99; Murphy and Ameen, 2020, p. 226; Pryce, 1994, p. 29

(19) Owen, 1887, p. 233.

(20) Winsham, 2016, p. 80.



HERE'S  
ISOBEL  
GOWDIE'S  
"HARE-  
SPELL".

"I shall go into a hare,  
With sorrow and sych [sigh] and meickle [much] care;  
And I shall go in the Devil's name,  
Ay while I come home again."  
To turn back, she would say:  
"Hare, hare, send me care.  
I am in a hare's likeness right now,  
But I shall be in a woman's likeness even now." (21)

IT  
APPEARS  
SIMILAR TO  
THIS  
WELSH  
WITCHES'  
SPELL.

ALTHOUGH  
IT HAS  
NOTHING  
TO DO WITH  
HARES...

BOTH  
SPELLS  
SHARE THE  
VOCABULARY  
AND  
STRUCTURE.



"In the Devil's name  
We pour water among this meal [earth].  
For long doing and ill heal  
We put it into the fire,  
That it may be burnt as we desire.  
It shall be burnt with our will,  
As any bubble upon a kill [kiln]." (22)

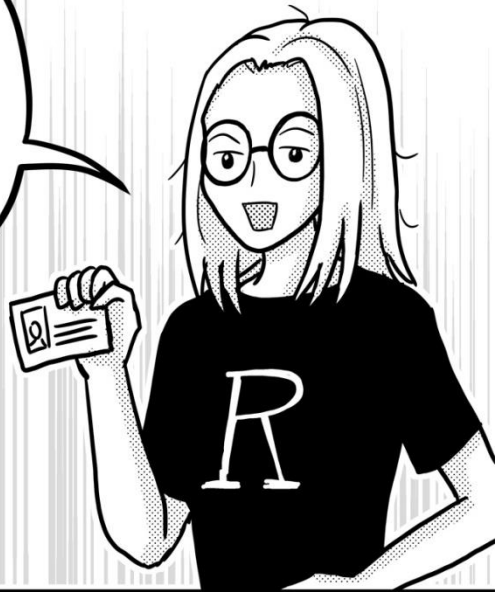


PERHAPS  
I COULD  
USE ISOBEL  
GOWDIE'S  
"HARE-  
SPELL"  
...

AS A  
KIND OF  
"PROXY"  
SPELL  
IN OUR  
COMIC?

WELL,  
AUTO-  
ETHNOGRAPHIC  
RESEARCHERS  
OCCASIONALLY  
USE  
CREATIVE  
LICENSE...

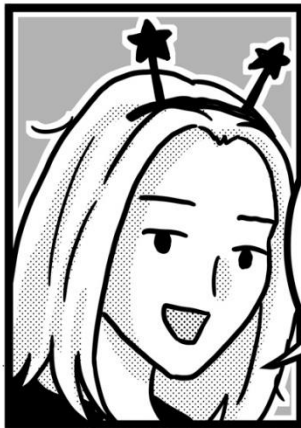
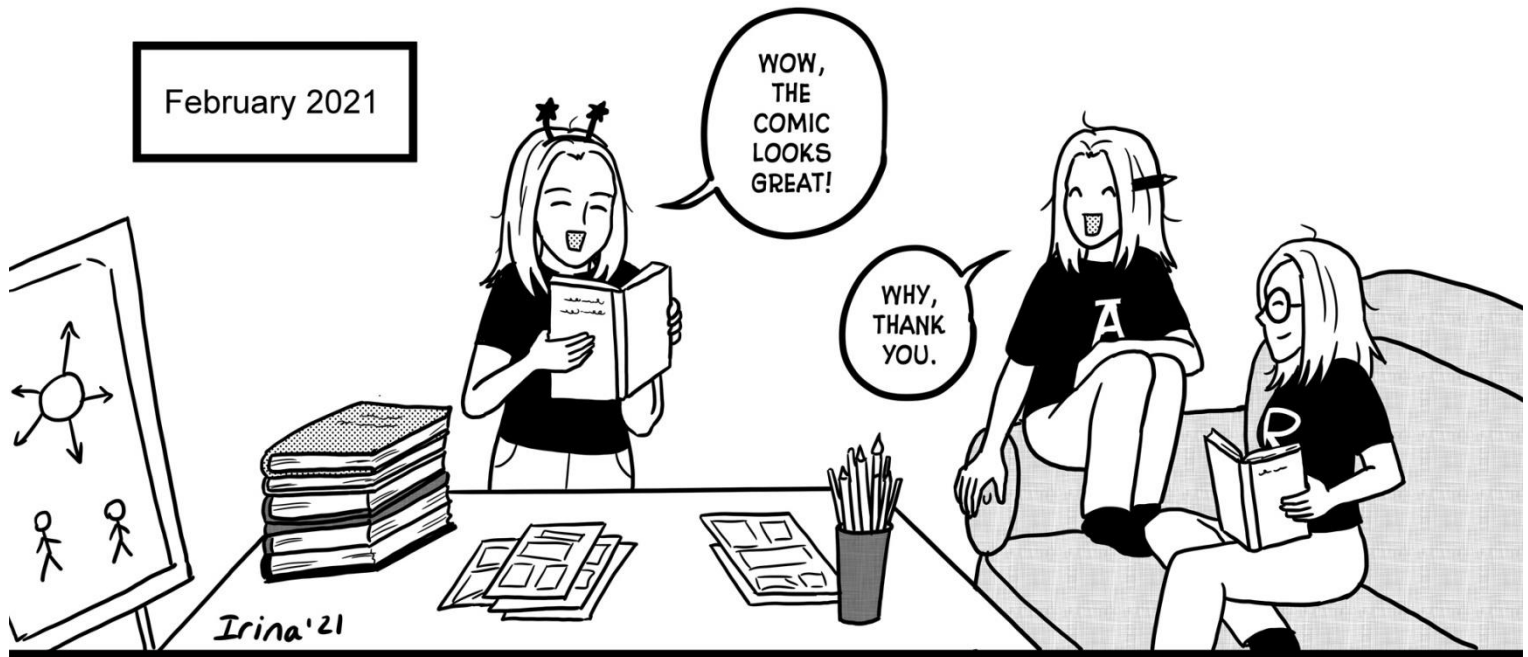
IF THEIR  
INVESTIGATION  
ALLOWS IT.  
(23)



(21) Pitcairn, 1883, p. 607.  
(22) Trevelyan, 1909, p. 207.

(23) Leavy, 2019, p. 583.

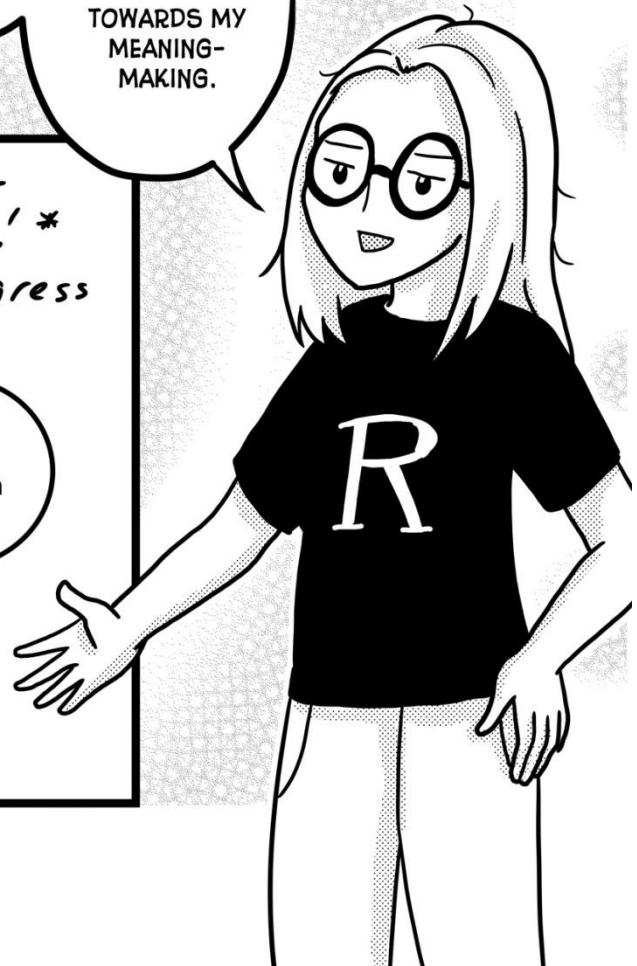
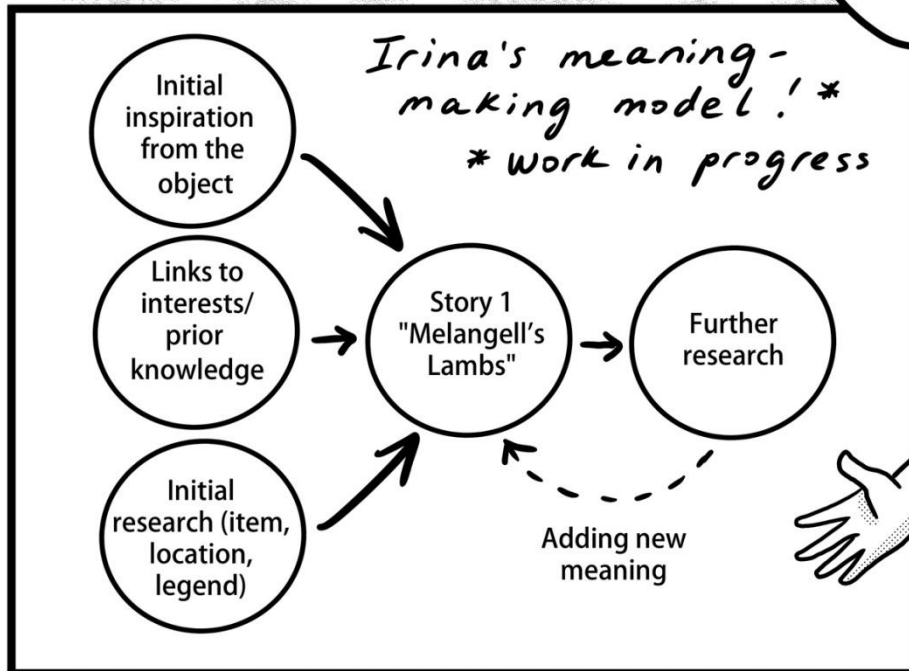
February 2021

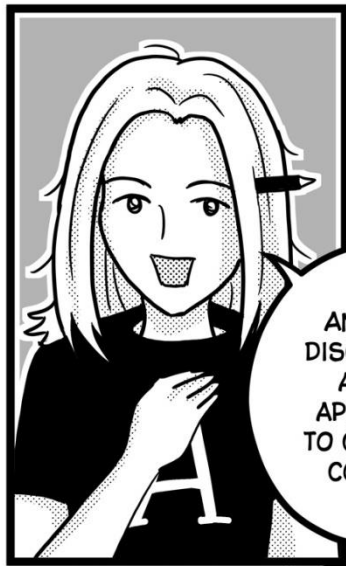


SO WHAT HAVE YOU TWO LEARNT SO FAR?

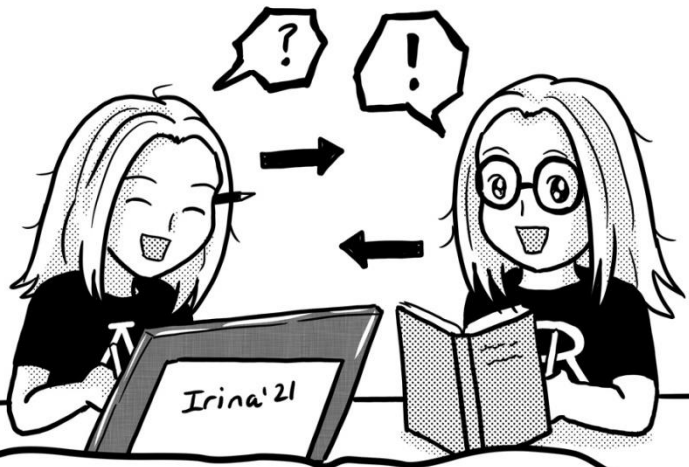
WELL, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO INVESTIGATE MY OWN MEANING-MAKING PROCESS ...

AND SEE WHICH ASPECTS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MY MEANING-MAKING.

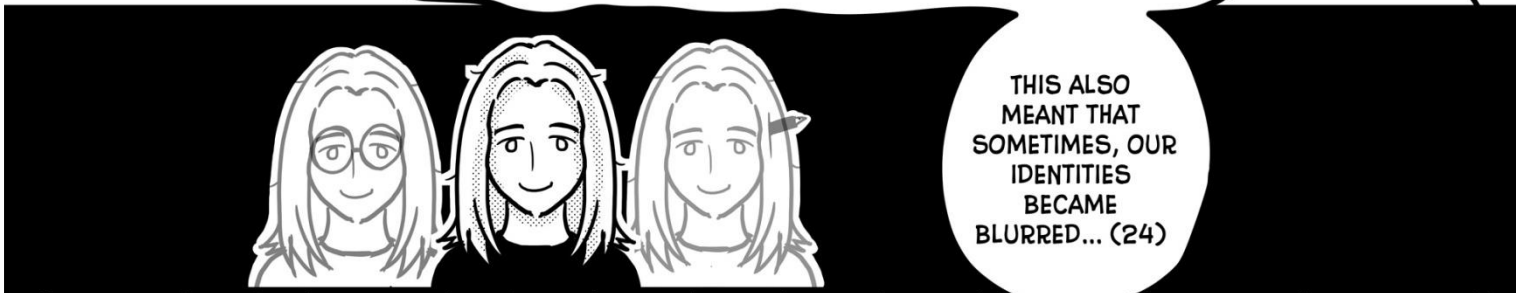




AND I'VE DISCOVERED A NEW APPROACH TO CREATING COMICS!

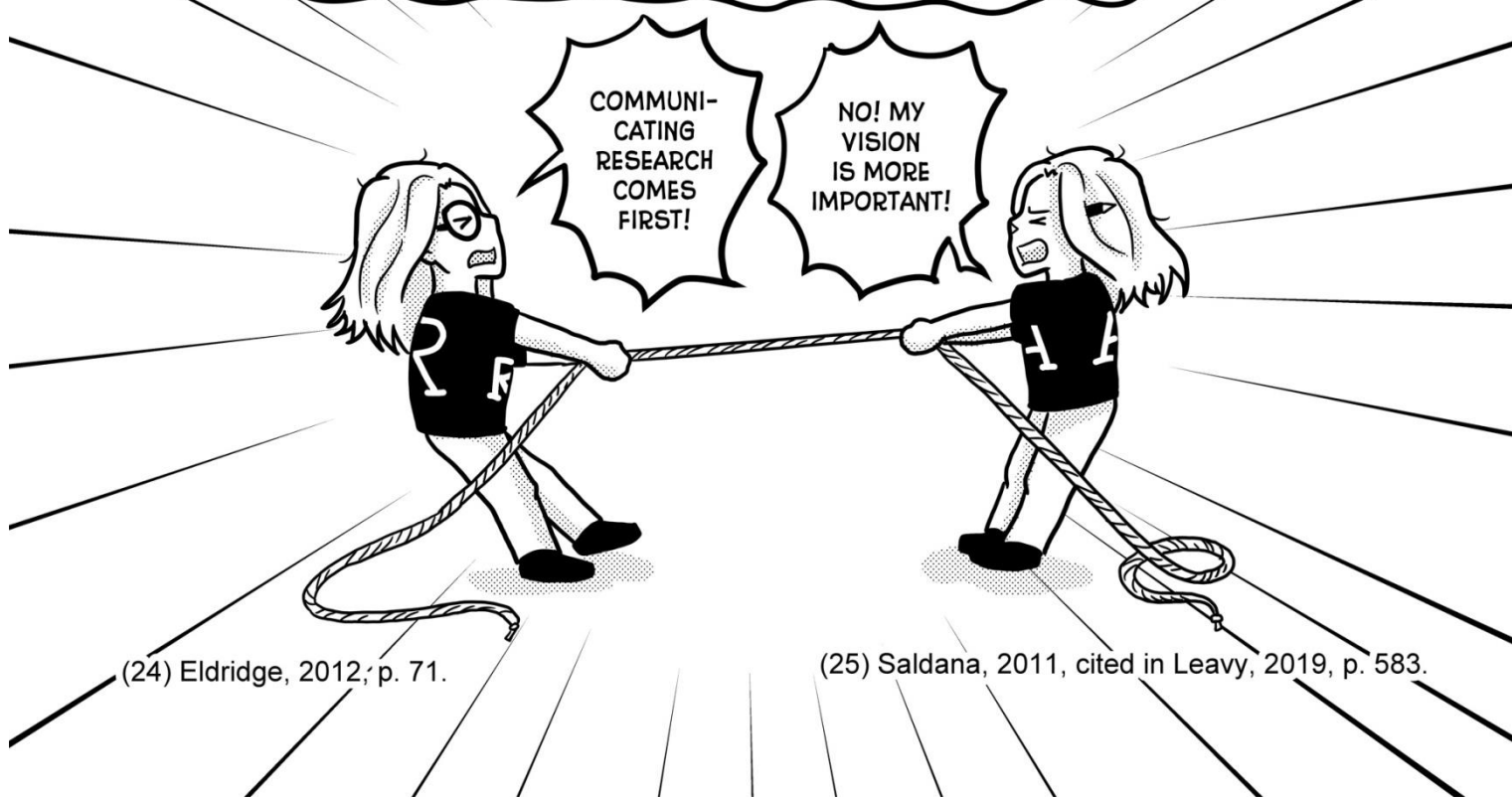


WORKING AS AN ARTIST-RESEARCHER WAS REWARDING, AS WE WORKED ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER AND INFORMED EACH OTHER'S PRACTICE.



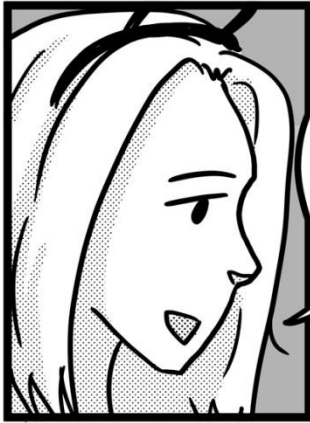
THIS ALSO MEANT THAT SOMETIMES, OUR IDENTITIES BECAME BLURRED... (24)

AND STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN ARTISTRY AND AN "ETHICAL OBLIGATION TO REPRESENT THE DATA" (25) WAS A CHALLENGE.



(24) Eldridge, 2012, p. 71.

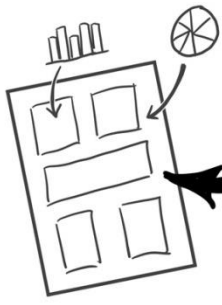
(25) Saldana, 2011, cited in Leavy, 2019, p. 583.



YOU MENTIONED USING COMICS AS DATA.

HOW CAN COMICS BE ANALYSED?

SIMILARLY TO OTHER TYPES OF VISUAL DATA. (26)



FOR EXAMPLE, BY USING CONTENT ANALYSIS... (27)

OR VIEWING COMICS AS LITERARY TEXTS. (28)

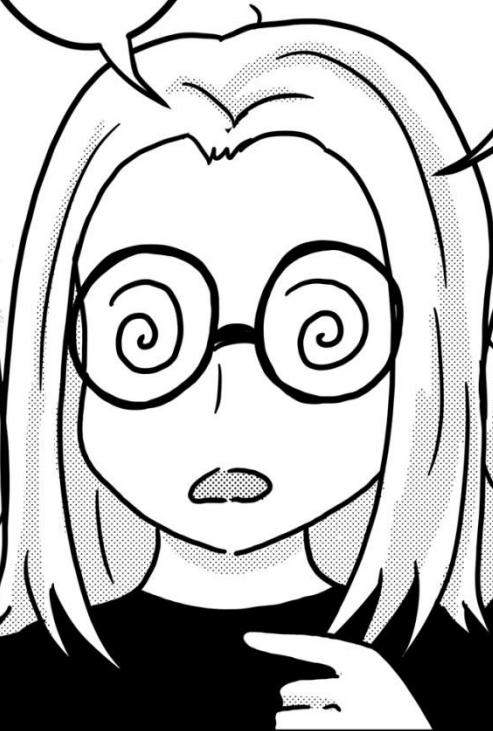
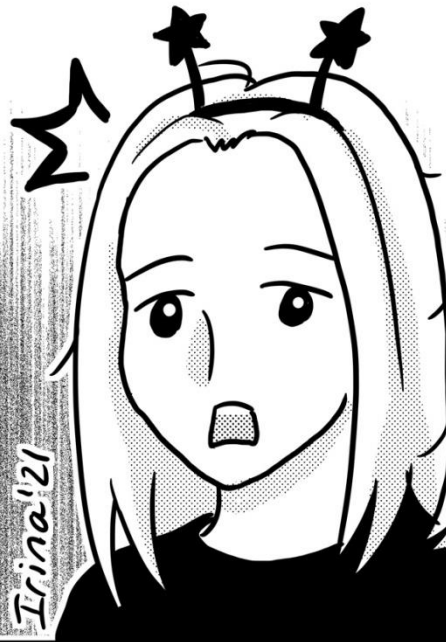


YOU CAN ALSO ANALYSE A COMIC BY, ERM...

CREATING A COMIC ABOUT IT! (29)



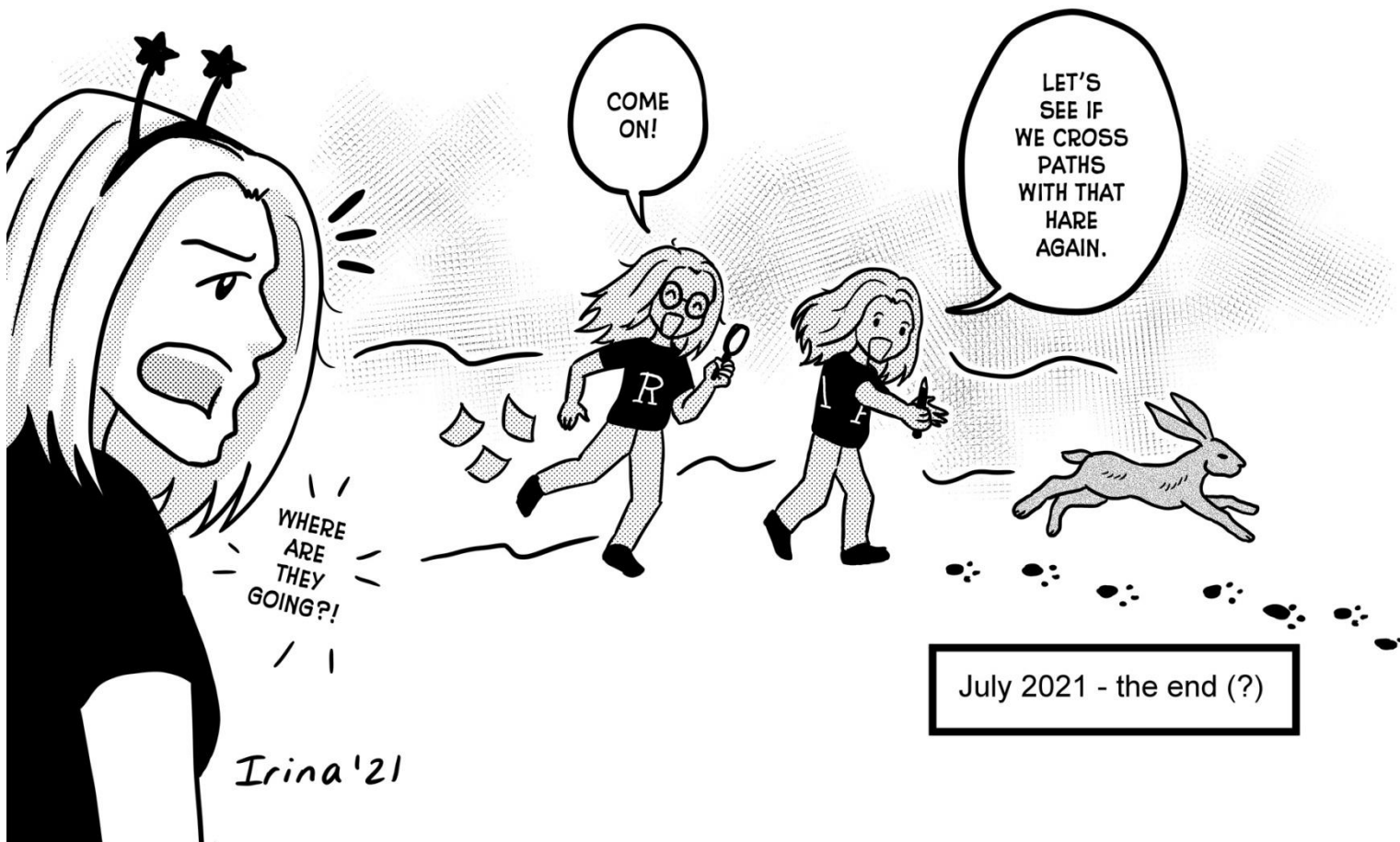
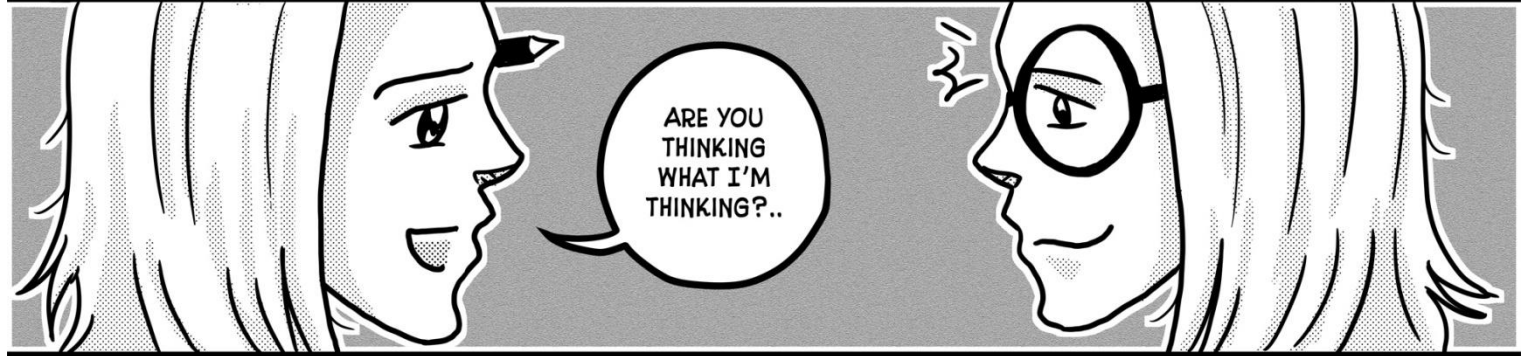
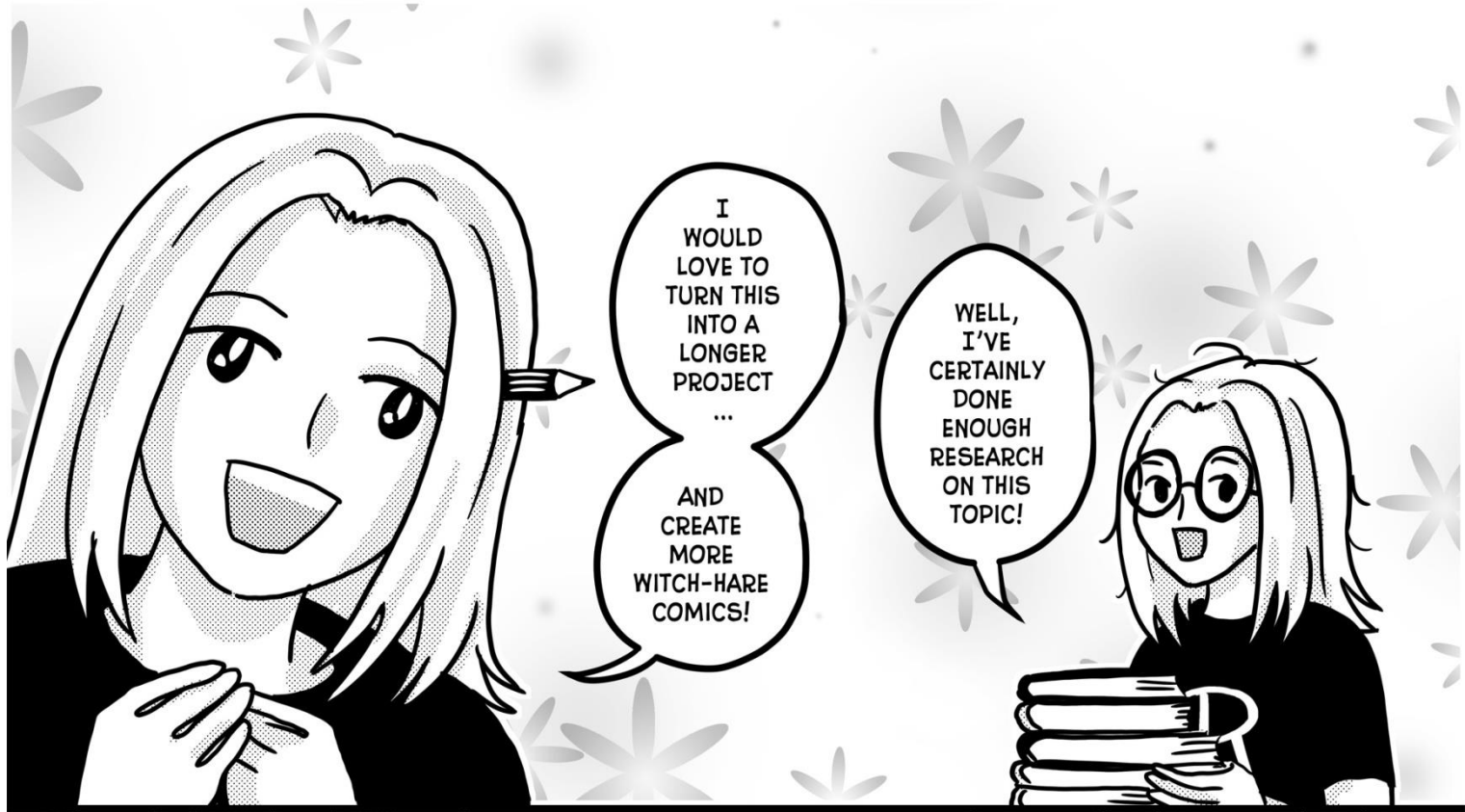
JUST LIKE THE ONE **THEY** ARE READING NOW.



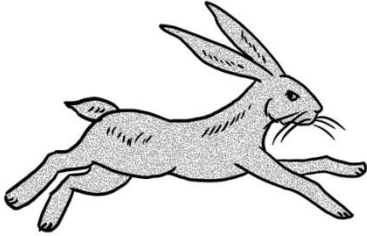
Trina'21

(26) Kuttner et al, 2020, p. 5.  
(27) Galman, 2009, p. 204.

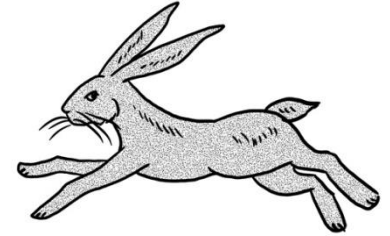
(28) McNicol, 2019, p. 8.  
(29) Kuttner et al, 2020, p. 5.







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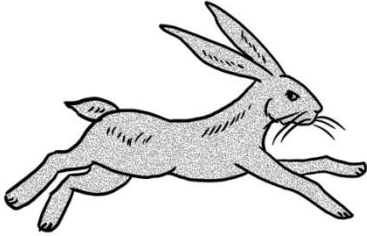
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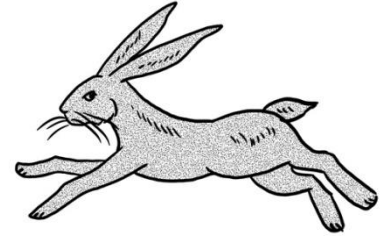
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This graphic essay was created for my MA Education (Artist Teacher Practice) course at Oxford Brookes University. It forms part of the visual element of my Major Project.

You can see its accompanying comic, "Melangell's Lambs", as well as my other comics and artwork, on my website:  
**[www.irinarichards.com](http://www.irinarichards.com)**

Or follow me on social media:

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