About this Issue

Androids, algorithms and automated transport: forms of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are more present in public discourse than ever before. From playful experiments such as *The Next Rembrandt* (2016) to the gloomy predictions of Elon Musk or Stephen Hawking, where technological singularity would herald the end of humanity, to current publications by Thomas Ramge (2018), Manuela Lenzen (2018) or Yuval Noah Harari (2015), the contributions to the discourse on AI range from sober stocktaking to euphoric promises of salvation to dark science fiction dystopias.

Alternative world conceptualisations in literature, film and comics are created and given meaning through our imaginings of the possibilities (and limits) of future technologies. Artificial humans have been a literary topos since ancient times (Pygmalion) and have been studied so frequently in Literature[1] and Film[2] that a motif-specific canon has established. This includes novels like *Sandmann* by E.T.A. Hoffmann (1816) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the film classic METROPOLIS (1927), and science fiction films such as BLADE RUNNER (1982) or James Cameron's TERMINATOR-series (since 1984).

The above examples show the scope and importance of this issue's topic as a transmedial phenomenon. In addition to the fact that METROPOLIS and BLADE RUNNER are novel adaptations and *Frankenstein* gained popularity through the 1931 film adaptation (starring Boris Karloff in the leading role), the aforementioned classics are all also available as comics. Likewise, E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Sandmann* has been the subject of three recent graphic novel adaptations – Andrea Grosso Ciponte (2014), Michael Mikolajczak and Jacek Piotrowski (2019) and Vitali Konstantinov (2019).

Until now, AI, post-humanism and transhumanism in comics have rarely been researched academically in spite of the abundance of comics and manga that represent these subjects.[3] The Japanese manga series *Astro Boy* (1952–68), the short story collection *2001 Nights* (1984-86), *Blame* (1998-2003) and *Pluto* (2003-09) are just a few of numerous publications in which posthumanist settings are explored. In American and European comics, various depictions of artificial intelligence can also be found, for exa-

mple, recently, in Jeff Lemires *Descender* (2015-18) or in *Alex + Ada* by Jonathan Luna and Sara Vaughn (2013-15).

Markus Oppolzer (Salzburg) contextualizes the films Ex Machina (2014) and Her (2013) with the comics series *Alex + Ada* in his transmedial analysis »A man wants flesh and blood, not rubber and metal«. He examines how this comics series and the creators of contemporary Android love stories deal with stereotypes and power relations.

Joanna Nowotny (Zurich) considers the artificial family man *The Vision* and his family, in order to stimulate reflections on the topicality of cyborg narratives as a (comic)mirror of human society. In her investigation, »Repetition oder Revolution? Posthumane Identitätsentwürfe im Superheldencomic der Gegenwart«, Nowotny asks the daring question of what has remained of Haraway's *cyborg manifesto* from the 1980s.

In her article »Artificial Alterity in Everyday American Life«, **Rebecca Haar** (Tübingen) examines the representation of alternative (artificial) family designs using the Marvel comic *The Vision* by Tom King and Gabriel Hernandez. The paper investigates how structural repetitions on various levels (graphics, action, language) mark exclusion, but also the adaptation of artificial intelligence to its environment.

Ina Kühne (Siegen) focuses on a Spanish comic, *Mil euros por tu vida*, written by Elia Barcel, Jordi Farga, and Luis Miguez (2008) in »The Problematization of Social Consequences and Moral Dilemmas of Transhumanism«. In this comic, transhumanist aspirations are staged in a dystopian mode. The author analyses the ideological implications, and places them in a cultural-historical context as well as in the context of current social discourses in Spain.

This issue's open section features contributions from **Elisabeth Krieber** (Salzburg) and **Amrita Singh** (Delhi).

Elisabeth Krieber's article, »Adapting the Autobiographic Self«, explores the staging of auto(bio)graphic subjectivities in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* and Phoebe Gloeckner's *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* and also attends to three adaptations of these two works for the stage and the screen. Tracing the comics-specific performativity of Bechdel's and Gloeckner's works, the author sheds light on their potential for questioning the generic conventions of life writing. Moreover, her analysis of the adaptation process reveals that the staging of autobiographic subjectivities interacts with its medium: text-image-relations in comics, films, and on the stage foreground different approaches to concepts such as temporality and memory.

In her contribution, »Of Superheroes in Ordinary Clothing: Reinventing Biography, History and the Comics Form in *A Gardener in the Wasteland*«, **Amrita Singh** examines how Srividya Natarajan's and Aparajita Ninan's comic represents an opportunity to understand social movements in present-day India.

We would like to thank the authors as well as the reviewers for their contributions. Special thanks go to **Jan-Christoph Casper-Lahann** for this issue's cover design. As we found it difficult to choose between the two designs that Jan-Christoph offered, we chose to present you with our very first reversible cover.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Kiel, December 2019
The CLOSURE-Team

1] Wolf-Andreas Liebert, Stefan Neuhaus, Dietrich Paulus, Uta Schaffers (Hg.): Künstliche Menschen. Transgressionen zwischen Körper, Kultur und Technik. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2014; Gisela Febel (Hg.): Menschenkonstruktionen. Künstliche Menschen in Literatur, Film, Theater und Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004.

2] Aurich, Rolf / Wolfgang Jacobsen, Gabriele Jatho (Hg.): Künstliche Menschen. Kontrollierte Körper. Berlin: jovis, 2000.

3] Lungershausen, Gerrit: Künstliche Intelligenz im Comic. In: Out of Office. Wenn Roboter und KI für uns arbeiten. Hg. von Rita Müller und Mario Bäumer. Ausstellungskatalog Museum der Arbeit Hamburg 2018, S. 66-68.