

**International Conference of Graphic Novels and Comics 2022 (IGNCC22)**

**Call for Papers**

# **Comics and Conscience: Ethics, Morality, and Great Responsibility**

**Wednesday 29 June – Friday 1 July 2022**

**Lexicon Library and Cultural Centre, Dún Laoghaire, Ireland  
and Online**

**Hosted by Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) in  
association with *Studies in Comics* (Intellect) and the *Journal of Graphic  
Novels and Comics* (Routledge)**

This conference explores the roles of conscience, responsibility, morality, and ethics in comics in an era when these values are under threat. Conscience determines our judgements of right or wrong, good or evil. The duties and responsibilities of the individual and the collective have been explored in several comics genres from war (Witek 1989), superheroes (DiPaolo, 2011; Gavalier & Goldberg, 2019; South, 2005), autobiography and teaching (Scherr 2013; DeFalco 2016). There have also been studies of morality and ethics in comics creation and publication, for instance, in creators' rights.

However, according to Paul Strohm (2011) the longevity of conscience in shaping national, collective and individual human values owes much to its ability to mould itself to historical, cultural and ideological conditions. Conscience is, therefore, not fixed. Contemporary ideas of morality and ethics are in flux in politics, war, and international relations. Debates around these concepts also underpin communication, news reporting, and even social media where notions of individual responsibility and accountability may be ignored, or can be foregrounded.

How do these contemporary challenges to conscience, ethics, morality, and responsibility prompt us to think about texts, examples, and representation, or to approach or rethink debates and conflicts in comics studies?

We invite papers relating to any aspects of ethics, morality and conscience in comics. We particularly encourage submissions that go beyond the UK and US comics industries and/or engage with diverse perspectives and texts. Themes could revolve around, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Publishing – creators and the creation of characters, ownership, publisher and creator responsibilities in publishing problematic material



- Autobiographix and comics journalism – the morality of telling a truthful story – whose truth?
- Graphic medicine and the ethics of care, authority, and representation
- Conflict and discord, e.g. war comics, debate and disagreement
- Superheroes – the morality of vigilantism, to kill or not to kill, antiheroes, the noble villain
- The morality of ownership and creator’s rights in their creations or products (e.g. characters, artwork, conflicts between publishers and artists/writers)
- Fandom – grassroots movements, gatekeepers, conflicts and prejudices, e.g. comicsgate, debates and mediation
- Comics activism – aims, priorities, limitations, effectiveness
- Children’s comics and controversial content – e.g. violence, sex
- Academic debates and disagreements
- Comics and the news – e.g. media debates, reportage, gatekeepers, and stakeholders

Proposals for research papers (20 minutes), workshops (60 or 90 minutes), or panels (2-3 papers) should be submitted as an email attachment in MS Word document format to TheIGNCC@gmail.com by 31 January 2022. Please ensure you include the following information in the document:

- Online/in person strand
- Title of paper/panel
- Presenter name and affiliation (as applicable)
- Summary of content (200-300 words)
- List of references (if applicable)
- Biography (100-150 words)

This conference will run to British Summer Time and will offer an in-person strand and an online strand (to be held live via Zoom, although presenters will be able to play pre-recorded presentations if they prefer). **Please ensure that you state in your proposal which strand you are applying for. It is not possible to switch between strands at a later date.**

#### References

- DeFalco, Amelia. 2016. “Graphic Somatography: Life Writing, Comics, and the Ethics of Care.” *Journal of Medical Humanities*, no. 37: 223–40.
- DiPaolo, Marc. 2011. *War, Politics and Superheroes: Ethics and Propaganda in Comics and Film*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co.
- Gavaler, Chris, and Nathaniel Goldberg. 2019. *Superhero Thought Experiments: Comic Book Philosophy*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.
- Scherr, Rebecca. 2013. “Teaching ‘The Auto-Graphic Novel’: Autobiographical Comics and the Ethics of Readership.” In *Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom*, edited by Rob Weiner and Carrye Syma, 134–44. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co.
- South, J B. 2005. “Barbara Gordon and Moral Perfectionism.” In *Superheroes and Philosophy*, edited by T Morris and M Morris, 89–101. Illinois: Carus.
- Strohm, Paul. 2011. *Conscience: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Witek, Joseph. 1989. *Comic Books as History: The Narrative Art of Jack Jackson, Art Spiegelman, and Harvey Pekar. Studies in Popular Culture*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

