
EDITORIAL: WAR AND CONFLICT IN SEQUENTIAL ART

by Katja Kontturi, Martin Lund, Leena Romu, and Fredrik Strömberg





Dear reader,

It has been a year and a half since NNCORE – The Nordic Network for Comics Research held its second international conference, titled “War and Conflict in Sequential Art,” at the University of Oslo. At the two-day seminar, several presentations examined the comics medium’s potentials for conveying stories, experiences, and themes related to the grim side of humanity. This issue of SJoCA presents two articles that evolved from the conference. Both of them discuss war and conflict by taking a look at two very different ways the Second World War has been brought to the pages of comics.

First, Pascal Lefèvre’s article “What if the Japanese could alter WW2? – A case study of Kawaguchi’s manga series *Zipang*” discusses Kawaguchi’s series by contextualizing it within the specific history related to Japan’s role in the Second World War. Lefèvre introduces a model in which Kawaguchi’s series can be considered as an alternate history in comparison to other genres that combine history and fiction in various ways, such as historical fiction, revisionist history, and science fiction. The article shows how the series not only comments on the past but contributes to contemporary discussions about Japan’s position in the world of today.

Second, in “Early Representations of Concentration Camps in Golden Age Comic Books,” Markus Streb studies the visual motif of concentration camps in early US comic book and shows how the representations were affected by genre conventions of horror, adventure, and war comics. Streb argues that especially after the war, many comics exploited German atrocities but only a few acknowledged the Jewish dimension of Nazi atrocities. The article shows how a detailed comics analysis together with contextual information about political and societal discussions can help us understand how comics participate in the construction of social representations.

This issue’s forum text is provided by Maarit Mutta, who discusses the *Asterix* series from the perspective of Gallic identity. Mutta reads the series as offering stories of resistance that, despite their seemingly humorous nature, convey a profound message about the importance of solidarity and sense of community.

In addition, we have three interesting book reviews by Leena Romu, Jani Ylönen, and Martin Lund. Romu examines Hillary L. Chute’s *Disaster Drawn – Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (2016); Ylönen discusses *The Comics of Joss Whedon – Critical Essays* (2015); and Lund writes about *The Myth of the Superhero* (2013), *On the Origin of Superheroes* (2015), and *The New Mutants* (2016).