

COMIC BOOK SUPERHEROES – BIBLIOGRAPHY

LYNN LIBRARY SELECTIONS

Fingeroth, D. (2004). *Superman on the couch : what superheroes really tell us about ourselves and our society*. New York: Continuum.

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Topics:

[Heroes in literature -- Congresses.](#)

[Superhero films -- Congresses.](#)

[Comic books, strips, etc. -- Themes, motives -- Congresses.](#)

[Heroes in mass media -- Congresses.](#)

Note: This "Anthology is the culmination of the 'Men in tights' superheroes conference, which was held at Melbourne University, Australia between 9th-12th June 2005."

Jones, G. (2004). *Men of tomorrow: Geeks, gangsters, and the birth of the comic book*. New York: Basic Books.

Topics:

[Comic books, strips, etc. -- History and criticism.Cartoonists -- United States -- Biography.](#)

Kaveney, R. (2008). *Superheroes! Capes and crusaders in comics and films*. [Electronic Resource].

Topics:

[Comic books, strips, etc. -- History and criticism.](#)

[Heroes in literature.](#)

[Heroes in motion pictures.](#)

[Heroes on television.](#)

[Superhero films.](#)

[Superhero television programs.](#)

Contents:

The freedom of power : some first thoughts on superhero comics -- The heroism of Jessica Jones : Brian Bendis' Alias as thick text -- Watching the watchmen : sharing a world with superheroes -- Dark knights, team-mates and mutants : sustaining the superhero narrative -- Some kind of epic grandeur : events and reboots in the superhero universe -- Gifted and dangerous : Joss Whedon's superhero obsession -- Superherovision : from comic to blockbuster.

www.: [Click here to read the book!](#)

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Topics:

[Comic books, strips, etc. -- United States -- History and criticism.](#)

Lawrence, J. S., & Jewett, R. (2002). *The myth of the American superhero*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B.

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Topics:

: [Popular culture -- United States.](#)

[Heroes in mass media.](#)

[Heroes -- United States -- Folklore.](#)

[National characteristics, American.](#)

[United States -- Civilization.](#)

[United States -- Intellectual life.](#)

[Heroes -- Political aspects -- United States.](#)

[Political culture -- United States.](#)

Misiroglu, G., & Roach, D.A. (2004). *The superhero book : the ultimate encyclopedia of comic-book icons and Hollywood heroes*. Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press.

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[Heroes in mass media -- Encyclopedias.](#)

Nyberg, A. K. (1998). *Seal of approval: The history of the comics code*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

O'Brien, R. (1977). *The golden age of comic books, 1937-1945*. New York: Ballantine Books. 1977.

Reynolds, R. (1994). *Super heroes: a modern mythology*. Studies in Popular Culture Series. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi.

Topics:

[Comic books, strips, etc. -- United States -- History and criticism.Heroes -- United States.](#)

Sadowski, G. (2009). *Supermen: The first wave of comic-book heroes 1936-1941*. Seattle, Wash.: Fantagraphics.

Topics:

[Superheroes -- History.](#)

[Comic strip characters -- History.](#)

[Heroes -- Comic books, strips, etc. -- History.](#)

Summary: Supermen! contains 9 covers and twenty full length stories featuring the earliest comic book superheroes, including Marvelo, The Flame, Silver Streak, Spacehawk and Blue Bolt.

Wolk, D. (2007). *Reading comics: How graphic novels work and what they mean*. New York: Da Capo Press.

Topics:

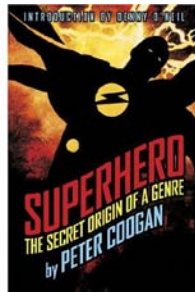
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[www.:http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0710/2007005232.html](http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0710/2007005232.html)


Personal Library:

1. Superhero: The Secret Origin of a Genre

~ [Peter Coogan](#)

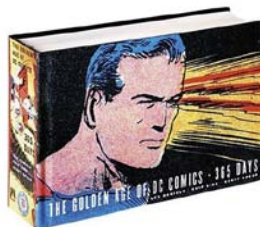


An Engrossing and Pioneering Work, August 7, 2006

By [Brent M. Heady](#)  (Missoula, MT) - [See all my reviews](#)
REAL NAME™

In *Superhero: The Secret Origin of A Genre*, Peter Coogan skillfully traces the evolution of a distinct and often underrated literary genre. Coogan provides a diagnostic clarification of the conventions of the genre and is sure to become a landmark study in an emerging field. *Superhero* is an adaptation of Coogan's doctoral dissertation which demonstrates the development of the superhero genre from heroic myths and frontier literature, through Victorian science fiction, culminating in the birth of the comic book superhero as a distinctive variety of literature. Coogan exhaustively identifies the conventions of the genre and its symbiotic relationship with the comic book medium. While Coogan explores the popularity of the superhero in various media, he really excels when discussing the intricacies of the comic book superhero in its indigenous format. *Superhero* provides an excellent analysis of the genre and will surely find a wide audience of both faculty and fanboy. To paraphrase a casual remark by a friend, Peter Coogan has quite literally written the book on superheroes.

2. *The Golden Age of D.C. Comics*, by Les Daniels.



This gorgeous full-color volume, part of Abrams' line of "365 Days" illustration books, presents early comics as Pop Art. In a horizontal format, it spotlights isolated images from DC Comics spanning the years 1937 to 1956, selected by comics historian Daniels (*DC Comics: A Celebration of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes*) and book designer Chip Kidd (*Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross*) and photographed by Geoff Spear from DC's own archives. Sometimes it showcases individual story panels, sometimes parts of pages or covers

with some captions or word balloons incomplete and unreadable. It's an unusual way to present the comics, as Daniels and Kidd acknowledge in their introductions, but largely it works.

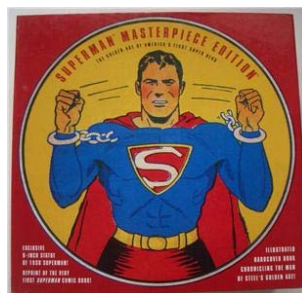
Comics historian Les Daniels, graphic designer Chip Kidd, and photographer Geoff Spear have delved deep into the DC archives, to which they were granted unprecedented access, highlighting not only the classics that have become pop-culture icons but also lost gems like *More Fun Comics* and *Comics Cavalcade*. The 365 images, shot especially for this book, along with the impeccably researched text and informative introductory essays, ensure that this blast from the past will have a huge appeal for both comic-book devotees and newcomers.

3. **Superman: The Complete History**, by Les Daniels.



Faiz Rehman (faiz79@hotmail.com) from Wales welcome look at the history of the man of steel Heavy on the pictures, this book is an excellent look at 60 years of Superman. Don't miss the covers - the dust jacket has original art work from the past, while the cover of the book proper has modern versions of the same art by the one and only Alex Ross. It overs the origins, the merchandise, and the adaptations. Although not as detailed as you may hope for, there are still plenty of facts to discover. The book does not gush over all aspects of the legend - it is critical of some aspects of, for example, the Dean Cain series. The books is not complete - for example, it does not mention the excellent radio series produce by Dirk Maggs in the BBC which is probably the closest adaptation of the comics stories. It does look gorgeous, though, and is much better than the majority of books of this type.

4. **Superman: The Golden Age**, by Les Daniels.



This book was sold as part of the "Superman Masterpiece Edition" box set, along with a replica of the Superman #1 comic book and a statue designed by Alex Ross, sculpted by Joe DeVitp, and colored by Chris Ware. Apart from the comic story on pages 84-93, it presents the contents, in re-fashioned form, of the first two chapters of Daniels' book [Superman: The Complete History](#).]

5. Spider-Man: The Ultimate Guide (Spiderman)

~ [Tom de Falco](#)



6. Superman on the Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society

~ [Danny Fingeroth](#)



Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

The golden age of comic books may be over, but our "hope (and fear) that there may be more to this world than what we see" draws us to pop culture heroes who mesh otherworldly powers and smarts with a sense of duty and even some human frailty. This is part of a global "superhero comic consciousness" that, observes Fingeroth, transcends religious and national boundaries to infect us with do-gooder inclinations while still letting us delight in violent retribution against imagined villains. Connecting the dots from ancient warriors and biblical figures to modern-day superheroes, Fingeroth analyzes archetypes like the angry young man (Wolverine), the avenging orphan (Batman), the dual personality (Superman) and other modern derivatives like Dirty Harry and Rambo. Not surprisingly, super-heroines have struggled for decades to achieve the popularity of their male counterparts. Powerful women are threatening whether drawn or born, concludes Fingeroth, and until the 1990s advent of Buffy and Xena, Wonderwoman was a lonely lady at the top. With humor and a touch of comic book hyperbole, the author capably mines the genre's cultural morphologies and the societal changes it reflects – a subject largely overlooked by contemporary pop psychologists and academics. While this psychological journey through comic hero history can seem reductive at times with page-filler statements like "We achieve immortality through the superheroes," the book, like the escapist but enduring media it chronicles, proves an illuminating read.

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7. Men Of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book

~ [Gerard Jones](#)



"Biography not bibliography", November 4, 2004

By [Jason Kirk "geek"](#)  (Transatlantic, US/UK) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This review is from: [Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book \(Hardcover\)](#)

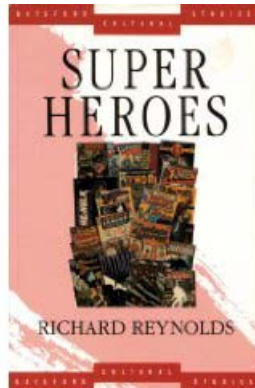
By Gerard Jones's own admission this book is a biography and not a bibliography, it's more about the real world Golden Age players than their brightly costumed alter egos. It should technically be described as a comparative social biography of Superman's creators (Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster) and Superman's publishers (Harry Donenfeld and Jack Liebowitz). The introduction is dynamite and really sets the scene for where Jerry Siegel was on the day Superman The Movie was announced. The first act paints a broad picture of 1920s and 1930s New York and Cleveland, and illustrates how different social conditions shaped the lives of very different groups of immigrant Jews.

The dense, dangerous world of early 20th century New York is perhaps the most emotive and Jones expertly draws the reader into the world of the street gangs and Prohibition era alliances that gave birth to the Jewish dominated New York mob. His portrait of Harry Donenfeld is as an opportunistic, if charismatic, rogue and he portrays Liebowitz as a humourless straight man - a real-life double act. By contrast Cleveland comes across as an icon of suburban American life and we get a real sense of Jerry Siegel's childhood - including the revelation that Siegel's father had been murdered. Of the four leads Joe Shuster remains the most enigmatic.

Woven through these histories are the side stories of the elder and younger Gaines, Bob Kane, Bill Finger, Julius Schwartz, Mort Weisinger, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, and a host of other names. Most of them were from the same generation, most of them were Jewish and most of them were drawn to New York by a powerful new medium. Something Jones doesn't do is to carry the sense of the Jewishness much further. He uses it to give us a sense of the New York scene and to show the growth of the businesses on the edge of the mob, but it isn't followed through and all we are left with is links between former mob businesses. It would have been nice to have more of a sense of how the strong Jewish roots of the industry became eroded.

8. Superheroes: A Modern Mythology (E-book), by Richard Reynolds:

http://books.google.com/books?id=Rrx-5cn1F8oC&dq=super+heroes&printsec=frontcover&source=bll&ots=sZ4qrKBycP&sig=VpvocUNqTKITFILMFdCVWp1UoLo&hl=en&ei=7n7FSsnBEIzf8Qaa08k8&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=13#v=onepage&q=&f=false



Book overview

The super hero has been the staple of the modern comic book since the late 1930s. The phenomenally successful movies Superman and Batman have made these two comic book super heroes as familiar worldwide as any characters ever created. Yet to relatively few aficionados are they known at first hand from their appearances in comic books. "Super Heroes: A Modern Mythology" explores the origins of the super hero by documenting how heroes emerged from the comic book genre and are defined both by its history and by audience expectations. To show some of the most influential and paradigmatic figures, this study focuses on the texts of three comic books in the genre "The X-Men," "The Dark Knight Returns," and "Watchman." It examines ways in which the comics mythologize both the role of the hero and the nature of consensus, authority, and moral choice, blending academic scholarship with specialized knowledge of the comic book medium.

9. The Psychology of Superheroes: An Unauthorized Exploration (Psychology of Popular Culture series)

~ [Robin Rosenberg PhD](#)



Clever, witty and intriguing, February 23, 2008

By [Malvin](#)

[Amazon Verified Purchase](#) ([What's this?](#))

"The Psychology of Superheroes" by Robin S. Rosenberg (editor) is an outstanding collection of eighteen essays about the insights we can gain in human psychology by studying the behavior of comic book superheroes. Almost all of the authors are college professors or doctoral candidates in psychology who expertly blend their professional knowledge with their love of comics. The result is a clever, witty and intriguing book that should appeal to anyone interested in psychology or pop culture.

Several authors dedicate their essays to studying how individual superheroes fit or deviate from standard psychological models and practices. For example, Christopher Patrick and Sarah Patrick contend that the Incredible Hulk suffers from a textbook example of reactive aggression triggered by the extreme physical and emotional maltreatment he suffered as a youth. Robert Biswas-Diener finds that the Spider-Man alter ego allows Peter Parker to gain encouragement through performance and an increase in personal happiness in general accordance with positive psychology theory. On the other hand, Bradley Daniels informs us that the insanity plea seems to be used far more frequently in the comics than in real life; and thankfully, no realworld mental institution exists that is as easily escapable as Gotham's notorious Arkham Asylum.

The moral behavior of superheroes is discussed in several pieces. Peter DeScioli and Robert Kurzban compare and contrast the absolutist ethics of Superman with the more complex utilitarian ethics of Batman, who nonetheless retains a consistent sense of purpose to ensure socially just outcomes. Andrew Getzfeld suggests that The Punisher's moral outrage over the murder of his family compels him to engage in an extreme form of vigilantism that, unfortunately, would probably remain intractable even if he was afforded the benefit of intensive clinical treatment.

Other articles shed light on the psychology of groups, institutions and society. Mikhail Lyubansky shows how the X-Men embody the ideology of tolerance and diversity within the walls of the Xavier Institute but are unfairly scapegoated for their enviable talents by human society. Chuck Tate studies the history of Wonder Woman to discuss how changing societal attitudes towards women has made the struggle to depict a strong, independent woman to remain a highly problematic task.

10. Marvel Universe

~ [Peter Sanderson](#)



An appreciative and affectionate look at Marvel Comics, May 5, 2003

By [Lawrance M. Bernabo](#) (The Zenith City, Duluth, Minnesota) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 10 REVIEWER COMMUNITY FORUM #4 VINE™ VOICE

"Marvel Universe" is the companion volume to "Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics," but I did not read that volume so I am looking at the volume introducing the superheroes and supervillains of Marvel Comics. Unlike the other volume, which looked at the history of Marvel Comics decade by decade, author Peter Sanderson takes a more thematic approach, although there is a semblance of chronology involved in the order, beginning with the Fantastic Four, the comic book that effectively created Marvel Comics, and ending with the X-Men, the most popular series of today (comics like "Conan the Barbarian" therefore fall outside the scope of the "Marvel Universe"). Specifically the eight chapters divide the Marvel Universe as follows:

1. The Fantastic Four: Marvel's First Family, begins with the working relationship of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, relates the origin of the FF, focuses on the compelling character drama of the Thing, and the group's main villain Dr. Doom. After covering some of the FF's epic adventures, including the first confrontation with Galactus and the Silver Surfer, the chapter looks at some of the heroes that were created in the comic such as the Black Panther and the Inhumans.
2. The Antiheroes: Human Torch, Sub-Mariner, and Hulk looks at how two Silver Age heroes were updated for the modern era but focuses primarily on old Greenskin, including the pivotal issue #140 written by Harlan Ellison.
3. Your Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man looks at Marvel's most popular superhero, drawn originally by Steve Ditko. This chapter covers the problems of a teenage superhero, his remorse over Uncle Ben's death, and the supporting cast, as well as the darker vision of Spider-Man brought to the comic by Todd McFarlane. Special consideration is given to the "Kraven's Last Hunt" storyline and "The Death of Aunt May" issue.
4. Avengers Assemble! covers not only Marvel's answer to the Justice League of America as a group, but the individual comic books of Captain America, Henry Pym and the Wasp, Iron Man, Hawkeye and the Black Widow, the Mighty Thor, the Vision, Wonder Man, and even the Black Knight (so you know they have covered pretty much everybody).
5. Strange Tales: Heroes of the Supernatural covers a lot of ground as well with Doctor Strange, Dracula, The Man-Thing, Howard the Duck, Ghost Rider, and other Marvel monsters.
6. Protectors of the Universe is mostly about aliens such as Captain Mar-vel, the Silver Surfer, Adam Warlock, and Nova. Also covered are such diverse comics as "Power Pack," Don McGregor and P. Craig Russell's "Killraven," and Jack Kirby's last comic creations.
7. Vigilantes and Lawmen starts with Daredevil and the Electra Saga, continues with Nick Fury (both with his Howling Commandos and as an Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.), and ends with the Punisher.
8. Mutantis Mutandis: The X-Men begins with the original X-Men and Magneto, through the Second Genesis and the Dark Phoenix saga, the ascendancy of Wolverine, to the proliferation of mutants in Alpha Flight, Excalibur, X-Force, and Generation X. Artists Neal Adams, Bill Sienkiewicz, and Rob Liefeld are featured in this section.

11. Ultimate X-Men

~ [Peter Sanderson](#)



Good Overview of the X-Men for New Fans, December 24, 2000

By [Professor Donald Mitchell "Jesus Makes Me a Practical Optimist"](#) 

Those who have been reading the X-Men for only a year or two will find this volume an inexpensive, visually-exciting way to connect into the 37 year history of the various X-Men series. For those who have been following the X-Men all along, this book will fall short of their expectations for completeness, depth, and accuracy about the various characters.

The visuals are the most interesting part of the book. Marvel opened up its archives to make it possible to have a wide choice of art. You can compare the various ways the key characters were drawn over time. The design of the book is not nearly as good as the art itself. Many pages have the feeling of a scrapbook done by an 8 year old. Some images are way too small. Some sketches are included for no apparent reason.

The book is also improved by many cutaways such as of Xavier's estate, Xavier's mansion, the Danger Room, and Magneto's bases. A number of maps help keep everything in proper perspective.

I also enjoyed the foreword by Stan Lee in which he explained how he made his initial decisions about the sources and types of the various super-hero powers, and how the title of the series was selected. The afterword by Chris Claremont was interesting as well, but more as a perspective on his personality than on the series itself. New fans will be amazed to read that the original X-Men were a flop commercially, even though they are the top series now.

12. Superman: Sunday Classics 1939-1943

~ [Jerry Siegel](#) (Creator), [Joe Shuster](#) (Creator)



Colorful Coffee Table Book

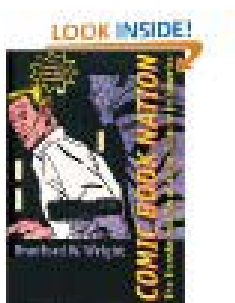
By [Nelson Aspen "Author/Journalist"](#) 

This handsome, colorful coffee table book at an affordable price is a fun gift for both the casual pop culture observer and the die-hard comics fan. All of Superman's early newspaper adventures are beautifully reproduced here for nostalgic enjoyment. Never has the Man of Steel look more square-jawed and heroic...and never was there a damsel in more constant distress than Lois Lane! Supes' arch nemesis, Lex Luthor, even makes an early appearance. It's especially interesting to see the effect that WWII had on Superman's adventures.

Definitely a great addition to anyone's library. Up, up and away!

13. Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America

~ [Bradford W. Wright](#)



Thorough survey of the business and culture of comic books

By [D. Cloyce Smith](#) (Brooklyn, NY) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 500 REVIEWER

This review is from [Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America](#)

In jargon-free, exuberant prose, Bradford Wright has written what may well be the definitive history of comic books. As Wright notes in his introduction, however, since his investigation is also a survey of mass adolescent culture, he properly focuses on "popular" commercial magazines--especially on superhero-themed comics--to the exclusion of newspaper funnies (like Dick Tracy and Li'l Abner), underground comics and graphic novels (such as works by R. Crumb and Daniel Clowes), and cartoon series for children (Archie and the Disney characters). Painstakingly researched, "Comic Book Nation" is really three books in one. Wright provides both plot outlines and summaries of trends in subject matter, from the launch of Superman to the sinister underworld of the Watchmen. He also places those themes and developments in the larger cultural context, from Depression-era longings and liberalism, through the patriotism induced by World War II and the Cold War, to the anti-crime vigilantism of the Reagan era. Finally, he charts the multiple peaks and valleys experienced by the business itself: its unpredictable sales patterns, the unhappiness of its work force, the rise and fall of the largest publishers, and the takeover of the industry by corporate and licensing interests. Along the way, he examines the 1940s and 1950s backlash against the violent and sexual nature of comic books (which resulted in the Comics Code Authority, an agency of censorship unparalleled in its broad sweep and its power); the heyday of EC Comics, purveyor of classics ranging from "Tales from the Crypt" to "Mad Magazine"; and the brilliant, original creation of "Spider-Man" and the succeeding generation of reluctant, misunderstood heroes.