



The Meaning of Superhero Comic Books

Terrence R. Wandtke

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"For decades, scholars have been making the connection between the design of the superhero story and the mythology of the ancient folktale. Moving beyond simple comparisons and common explanations, this volume details how the workings of the superhero comics industry and the conventions of the medium have developed a culture like that of traditional epic storytelling. It chronicles the continuation of the oral/traditional culture of the early 20th century superhero industry in the endless variations on Superman and shows how Frederic Wertham's anti-comic crusade in the mid-1950s helped make comics the most countercultural new medium of the 20th century. By revealing how contemporary superhero comics, like Geoff Johns' Green Lantern and Warren Ellis's The Authority, connect traditional aesthetics and postmodern theories, this work explains why the superhero comic book flourishes in the "new traditional" shape of our acutely self-conscious digital age."

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