



Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of American Comic Books

Jean-Paul Gabilliet

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Originally published in France and long sought in English translation, Jean-Paul Gabilliet's *Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of American Comic Books* documents the rise and development of the American comic book industry from the 1930s to the present. The book intertwines aesthetic issues and critical biographies with the concerns of production, distribution, and audience reception, making it one of the few interdisciplinary studies of the art form. A thorough introduction by translators and comics scholars Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen brings the book up to date with explorations of the latest innovations, particularly the graphic novel.

The book is organized into three sections: a concise history of the evolution of the comic book form in America; an overview of the distribution and consumption of American comic books, detailing specific controversies such as the creation of the Comics Code in the mid-1950s; and the problematic legitimization of the form that has occurred recently within the academy and in popular discourse.

Viewing comic books from a variety of theoretical lenses, Gabilliet shows how seemingly disparate issues--creation, production, and reception--are in fact connected in ways that are not necessarily true of other art forms. Analyzing examples from a variety of genres, this book provides a thorough landmark overview of American comic books that sheds new light on this versatile art form.

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