

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

By 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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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap
An analysis of the production, content, and techniques of comic books and graphic novels

About the Author
Jean-Paul Gabilliet is professor of American studies at the University of Bordeaux, France.

Bart Beaty is associate professor of communication and culture at the University of Calgary. He is the author of *Unpopular Culture: Transforming the European Comic Book in the 1990s* and *Fredric Wortham and the Critique of Mass Culture*. He is also the translator (with Nick Nguyen) of *The System of Comics* by Thierry Groensteen.

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