



Our Superheroes, Ourselves

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Superhero fans are everywhere, from the teeming halls of Comic Con to suburban movie theaters, from young children captivated by their first comic books to the die-hard collectors of vintage memorabilia. Why are so many people fascinated by superheroes?

In this thoughtful, engaging, and at times eye-opening volume, Robin Rosenberg--a writer and well-known authority on the psychology of superheroes--offers readers a wealth of insight into superheroes, drawing on the contributions of a top group of psychologists and other scholars. The book ranges widely and tackles many intriguing questions. How do comic characters and stories reflect human nature? Do super powers alone make a hero super? Are superhero stories good for us? Most contributors answer that final question in the affirmative. Psychologist Robert J. Sternberg, for instance, argues that we all can learn a lot from superheroes--and what we can learn most of all is the value of wisdom and an ethical stance toward life. On the other hand, restorative justice scholar Mikhail Lyubansky decries the fact that justice in the comic-book world is almost entirely punitive, noting extreme examples such as "Rorschach" in *The Watchmen* and the aptly named "The Punisher, who embrace a strict eye-for-an-eye sense of justice, delivered instantly and without mercy.

In the end, the appeal of Superman, Batman, Spiderman, and legions of others is simple and elemental. Superheroes provide drama, excitement, suspense, and romance and their stories showcase moral dilemmas, villains we love to hate, and protagonists who inspire us. Perhaps as important, their stories allow us to recapture periods of our childhood when our imaginations were cranked up to the maximum--when we really *believed* we could fly, or knock down the bad guy, or save the city from disaster.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Dr. Rosenberg has given readers a collection of insightful and thought-provoking writings that enhance the myths we have embraced. These essays expand our understanding of our society as well as our understanding of who we are." -- *New York Journal of Books*

"OUR SUPERHEROES, OURSELVES is a fantastic collection of well developed studies and topics."

Ideas like Bullets

"This is a focused effort that advances understanding of comics from a psychological perspective. While the editors make it clear that the book will not provide any definitive answer, the wide-ranging chapters push scholars to investigate superheroes and supervillans as culturaleal evidence about who we were in the past and are today. These two books are important works in a burgeoning field." -A.W. Austin, Misericordia University, *CHOICE*

About the Author

Robin S. Rosenberg, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and author. Dr. Rosenberg writes college-level psychology textbooks and enjoys using superheroes and their stories to illustrate psychological phenomena. She blogs for *Huffington Post* and *Psychology Today* and has been featured in various media including the *Financial Times*, NPR, *Boston Phoenix*, *LiveScience*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, special features on superhero DVDs, and documentary films. She is editor of *The Psychology of Superheroes* and author of *What's the Matter with Batman? An Unauthorized Clinical Look Under the Mask of the Caped Crusader*.

Users Review

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