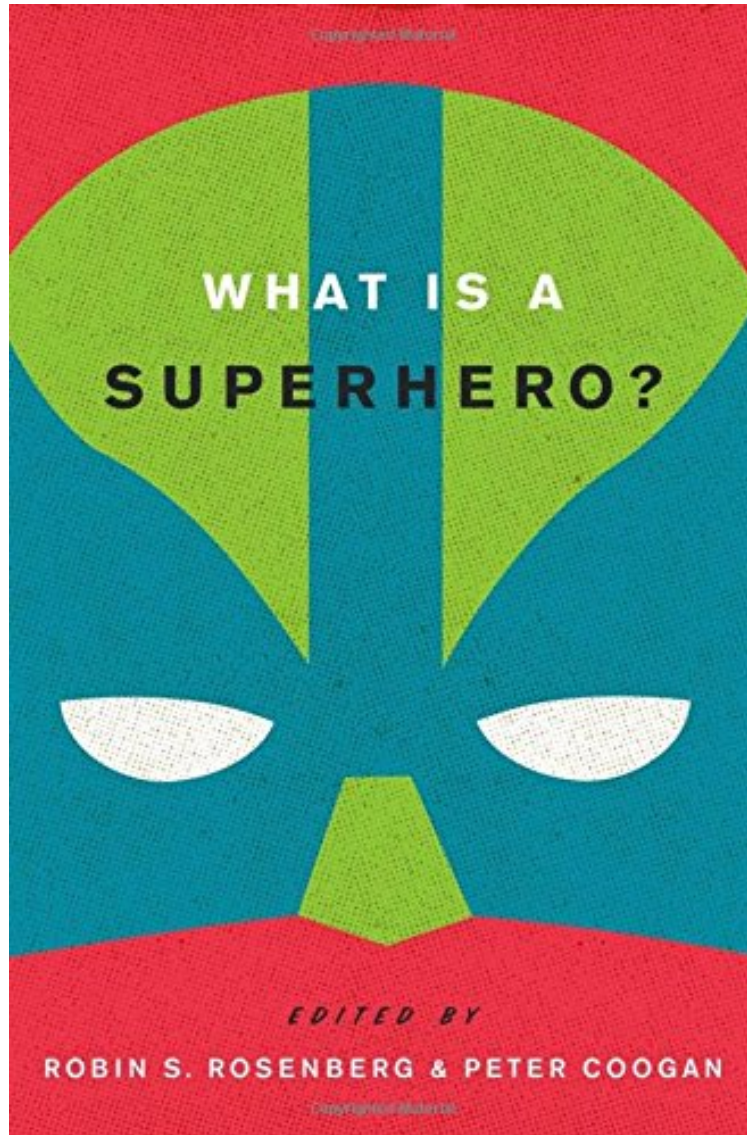


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## What is a Superhero?

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**From Brand: Oxford University Press : What is a Superhero?** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What is a Superhero?:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Awesome book! Read it all in one sitting By Charles DrewekAwesome book! Read it all in one sitting. I've always wondered why I resonate so strongly with superhero stories and now I know why on a psychological level. Very fascinating idea for a book. I looked all over for research on this and Dr. Rosenberg has all of this information compiled neatly in one area. Would highly recommend this book

to someone else to read 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Introduction into the Realm of Superhero Therapy By PTD. Rosenberg has compiled exciting writers to contribute to new realm of mental health treatment. This book serves as a great introduction to those who wish to study creative intervention for mental health. The audience can range from fans of superheroes, mental health professionals, individuals who may benefit from the book's themes, or general readers. Superhero Therapy is on its way to become empirically supported as an evidence-based practice 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A thoughtful collection of essay reflections on superheroes - our modern mythological figures By Daniel You can hardly turn around today without seeing a movie or television show featuring a superhero and they're often on the covers of magazines and there are novelizations of their stories. And of course there are the comic books and graphic novels from which many of them sprouted. But what is a superhero? Such is the general question asked and addressed in the collection of essays edited by Robin S. Rosenberg Peter Coogan. There is a strong collection of writers included here, musing on what makes a superhero and the social issues surrounding a society's reasons for having superheroes. The collection includes essays from those who might understand the genre the best - writers of superhero stories such as: Stan Lee, Dennis O'Neil, Kurt Busiek, Joe Quesada, and a few others. I was impressed right out of the gate with Peter Coogan's article, "The Hero Defines the Genre, the Genre Defines the Hero." I'd like to quote from the article but the truth is I would simply copy the eight pages and reprint it - the article was packed with thoughtful reflection and commentary. Coogan clearly understands the modern mythology of superheroes. I did a lot of comic book reading in the 1970's so it's no surprise that talent from that era has a big impact on me. And perhaps it's because of this that I found Denny O'Neil's article, "Superheroes and Power," so meaningful. After all, who should know how to write about superheroes and their power than someone who did it so well? His words can be applied not just to superheroes, but to any character who is worth writing about. I really appreciated his comment: A writer fails the genre when a story depicts superheroes who are weak or do not use their powers. What makes a character interesting (both superheroes and other types of characters) is what he does to solve problems. You give him a knotty situation and he gets out of it. Well, by definition, superheroes use extraordinary physical means. While I'm only pointing to two articles, this is one of those rare collections in which there are no duds. Every essay is thoughtful and well articulated. I gained some insight and felt that I left the book smarter than when I started. I like that feeling. This book contains the following: Foreword - Michael Uslan "Introduction: What Is a Superhero?" - Robin Rosenberg Peter Coogan Super and Hero: Powers and Mission Section Introduction "The Hero Defines the Genre, the Genre Defines the Hero" - Peter Coogan "We Could Be Heroes" - Will Brooker "What is a Female Superhero?" - Jennifer Stuller "Straddling a Boundary: The Superhero and the Incorporation of Difference" - Clare Pitkelthy "Save the Day" - A. David Lewis Context, Culture, and the Problem of Definition Section Introduction "Superheroes and the Modern(ist) Age" - Alex Boney "Heroes of the Superculture" - Richard Reynolds "Superhero by Design" - John Jennings "The Experience of the Superhero: A Phenomenological Definition" - Dana Anderson "What is a Superhero? No One Knows That's What Makes em Great." - Geoff Klock Superheroes Need Supervillains Section introduction "Why Supervillains?" - Paul Levitz "Superheroes Need Supervillains" - Frank Verano "Superheroes Need Superior Villains" - Stanford Carpenter "Super and Villain: A bad guy with superpowers" - Curtis Deis "Supervillains Who Need Superheroes (Are the Luckiest Villains in the World)" - Andrew Smith "Sorting Out Villainy: A Typology of Villains and Their Effects on Superheroes" - Robin Rosenberg From the Experts: Comic Book Writers Define the Superhero Section Introduction "More Than Normal, But Believable" - Stan Lee "Making the World a Better Place" - Jeph Loeb "Nobility of Purpose" - Danny Fingerth "Superheroes and Power" - Dennis O'Neil "The Importance of Context: Robin Hood Is Out and Buffy Is In" - Kurt Busiek "Superheroes Are Made" - Tom DeFalco "Extraordinary" - Joe Quesada "The Superprotagonist" - Fred Van Lente "Superheroes and Supervillains: An Interdependent Relationship" - Ivory Madison Looking for a good book? The collection of essays, What Is a Superhero? edited by Robin Rosenberg and Peter Coogan is a thoughtful reflection on superheroes - who are our modern mythological figures. The book is highly recommended. I received a digital copy of this book from the publisher, through Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review.

It's easy to name a superhero--Superman, Batman, Thor, Spiderman, the Green Lantern, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Rorschach, Wolverine--but it's not so easy to define what a superhero is. Buffy has superpowers, but she doesn't have a costume. Batman has a costume, but doesn't have superpowers. What is the role of power and superpower? And what are supervillains and why do we need them? In What is a Superhero?, psychologist Robin Rosenberg and comics scholar Peter Coogan explore this question from a variety of viewpoints, bringing together contributions from nineteen comic book experts--including both scholars in such fields as cultural studies, art, and psychology as well as leading comic book writers and editors. What emerges is a kaleidoscopic portrait of this most popular of pop-culture figures. Writer Jeph Loeb, for instance, sees the desire to make the world a better place as the driving force of the superhero. Jennifer K. Stuller argues that the female superhero inspires women to stand up, be strong, support others, and most important, to believe in themselves. More darkly, A. David Lewis sees the indestructible superhero as the ultimate embodiment of the American "denial of death," while writer Danny Fingerth sees superheroes as embodying the best aspects of humankind, acting with a nobility of purpose that inspires us. Interestingly, Fingerth also expands the

definition of superhero so that it would include characters like John McClane of the Die Hard movies: "Once they dodge ridiculous quantities of machine gun bullets they're superheroes, cape or no cape." From summer blockbusters to best-selling graphic novels, the superhero is an integral part of our culture. What is a Superhero? not only illuminates this pop-culture figure, but also sheds much light on the fantasies and beliefs of the American people.

"This collection is lively, insightful, thoughtful and often funny discussion of what exactly it means to be a superhero. What Is a Superhero? opens up the world of heroes to everyone and shows us what they truly mean in our lives." -- New York Journal of Books "What I loved was that none of the extraordinary essayists seemed able to restrict him or herself to WHAT IS A SUPERHERO without venturing into the WHY--why read them? Why write them? Why superheroes at all? And the consensus is a validation of all my hopes and suspicions about the genre: that like its cousins (opera, melodrama, Commedia dell'Arte and Greek myth, among them), the superhero genre has the ability to act as a cultural magnifying glass or perhaps funhouse mirror, connecting us to truths about our best and worst selves more viscerally than anything that can be accomplished by pure naturalism. Then, not content with just what and why, my favorite pieces braved the question of HOW too... I can't help but imagine my own craft will be deepened for having spent some time with these writers' reflections." -- Kelly Sue DeConnick, writer of Marvel's Avenge and Captain Marvel series "This is a focused effort that advances understanding of comics from a psychological perspective. While the editors make clear that the book will not provide any definitive answer, the wide-ranging chapters push scholars to investigate superheroes and supervillains as cultural 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 "This collection is a helpful glimpse into the current opinions on the nature and meaning of the superhero among scholars and creators." --The Journal of American Culture

About the Author Robin S. Rosenberg is a clinical psychologist. In addition to running a private practice, she writes about superheroes and the psychological phenomena their stories reveal. She is editor of *Psychology of Superheroes and Our Superheroes, Ourselves*. Peter Coogan is director of the Institute for Comics Studies, co-founder and co-chair of the Comics Arts Conference, and an instructor at Washington University in St. Louis. He holds a Ph.D. in American Studies, and authored *Superhero: The Secret Origin of the Superhero*, a monograph on the development, history, and functioning of the superhero genre. He is a nationally known commentator on comics and superheroes, is a semi-regular pundit on the Major Spoiler Podcast, and is co-editor of this volume.