



# Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers (Studies in Popular Culture)

*Matthew J. Pustz*

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What are super-devoted fans of comic books really like? What draws them together and energizes their zeal? What do the denizens of this pop-culture world have in common?

This book provides good answers as it scrutinizes the fans whose profiles can be traced at their conventions, in pages of fanzines, on websites, in chat-rooms, on electronic bulletin boards, and before the racks in comic-book stores. They are a singular breed, and an absorbing interest in comic books (sometimes life-consuming) unites them.

Studies have shows that the clustering, die-hard disciples of *Star Trek* have produced a unique culture. The same can be said of American enthusiasts of comic books. These aficionados range from the stereotypical "fanboy" who revels in the minute details of mainstream superhero titles like *X-Men* to the more discriminating (and downright snobbish) reader of idiosyncratic alternative comics like *Eightball*. Literate comics like *Watchman*, *Radioactive Man*, and *Peepshow* demand a knowledgeable audience and reward members of the culture for their expertise while tending to alienate those outside. This book shows how the degree of "comics literacy" determines a fan's place in the culture and how the most sophisticated share the nuanced history of the format.

Although their interaction is filled with conflicts, all groups share an intense love for the medium. But whether one is a Fanboy or a True Believer, the preferred hangout is the specialty store. Here, as they talk shop, the culture proliferates. They debate among themselves, spread news about the industry, arrange trades, discuss collectibles, and attach themselves to their particular mainstream.

With history, interviews, and textual analysis *Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers* examines the varied reading communities absorbed by the veneration of the comics and demonstrates how each functions in the ever-broadening culture.

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