



The British Superhero

Chris Murray

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Chris Murray reveals the largely unknown and rather surprising history of the British superhero. It is often thought that Britain did not have its own superheroes, yet Murray demonstrates that there were a great many in Britain and that they were often used as a way to comment on the relationship between Britain and America. Sometimes they emulated the style of American comics, but they also frequently became sites of resistance to perceived American political and cultural hegemony, drawing upon satire and parody as a means of critique.

Murray illustrates that the superhero genre is a blend of several influences and that in British comics, these influences are quite different from those in America, resulting in some contrasting approaches to the figure of the superhero. He identifies the origins of the superhero and supervillain in nineteenth-century popular culture such as the penny dreadfuls and boys' weeklies and in science fiction writing of the 1920s and 1930s. From the emergence of British superheroes in the 1940s, the advent of "fake" American comics, and the reformatting of reprinted material to the British Invasion of the 1980s, and the pivotal roles in American superhero comics and film production held by British artists today, this book will challenge views about British superheroes and the comics' creators who fashioned them.

Murray brings to light a gallery of such comics heroes as the Amazing Mr X, Powerman, Streamline, Captain Zenith, Electroman, Mr Apollo, Masterman, Captain Universe, Marvelman, Kelly's Eye, Steel Claw, the Purple Hood, Captain Britain, Supercats, Bananaman, Paradax, Jack Staff, and SuperBob. He reminds us of the significance of many such creators and artists as Len Fullerton, Jock McCail, Jack Glass, Denis Gifford, Bob Monkhouse, Dennis M. Reader, Mick Anglo, Brendan McCarthy, Alan Moore, Grant Morrison, Dave Gibbons, and Mark Millar.

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