Comics and Conflict: War and Patriotically Themed Comics in American Cultural History From World War II Through the Iraq War

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Abstract
Illustration has been an integral part of human history. Particularly before the advent of media such as photography, film, television, and now the Internet, illustrations in all their variety have been the primary visual way to convey history. The comic book, which emerged in its modern form in the 1930s, was another form of visual entertainment that gave readers, especially children, a form of escape.

As World War II began, however, comic books became an integral part of war propaganda as well providing information and education for both children and adults. This dissertation looks at how specific comic books of the war genre have been used to display patriotism, adventure through war stories, and eventually to tell of the horrors of combat— from World War II through the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

This dissertation also examines how war- and patriotically-themed comics evolved from soldier-drawn reflections of society, eventually developing along with the broader comic book medium into a mirror of American society during times of conflict. These comic books generally reflected patriotic fervor, but sometimes they advanced a specific cause. As war comic books evolved along with American society, many also served as a form of protest against United States foreign and military policy. During the country's most recent wars, however, patriotism has made a comeback, at the same time that the grim realities of combat are depicted more realistically than ever before.

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Comics and Conflict is not for the casual comic book fan. So if you are curious about Namor’s superpowers, or when the Hulk first appeared, well, look elsewhere. What it does do, and does well, is tell us how wars have influenced comic books, and how comic book heroes have reflected our culture – for better or for worse. Recently I had the chance to ask Professor Scott a few questions about his book and comic book culture today. Cord A. Scott has a Doctorate in American History from Loyola University Chicago and currently serves as a Traveling Collegiate Faculty for the UMUC-Asia. He is the author of Comics and Conflict: Patriotism and Propaganda from World War II through Operation Iraqi Freedom, published by the US Naval Institute Press. However, in “Comics and Conflict: War and Patriotically Themed Comics in American Cultural History From World War II Through the Iraq War,” Cord Scott suggests that comics can also reflect cultural trends and historical events. Overall, after sharing a brief history, Cord posits that comics became a way for the public to understand and process conflicts in an entertainment format. Additionally, due to their accessibility to the public, became a for individuals to escape the reality of war. Scott traces the comic medium all the way back to ancient societies, and notes that comics became part of