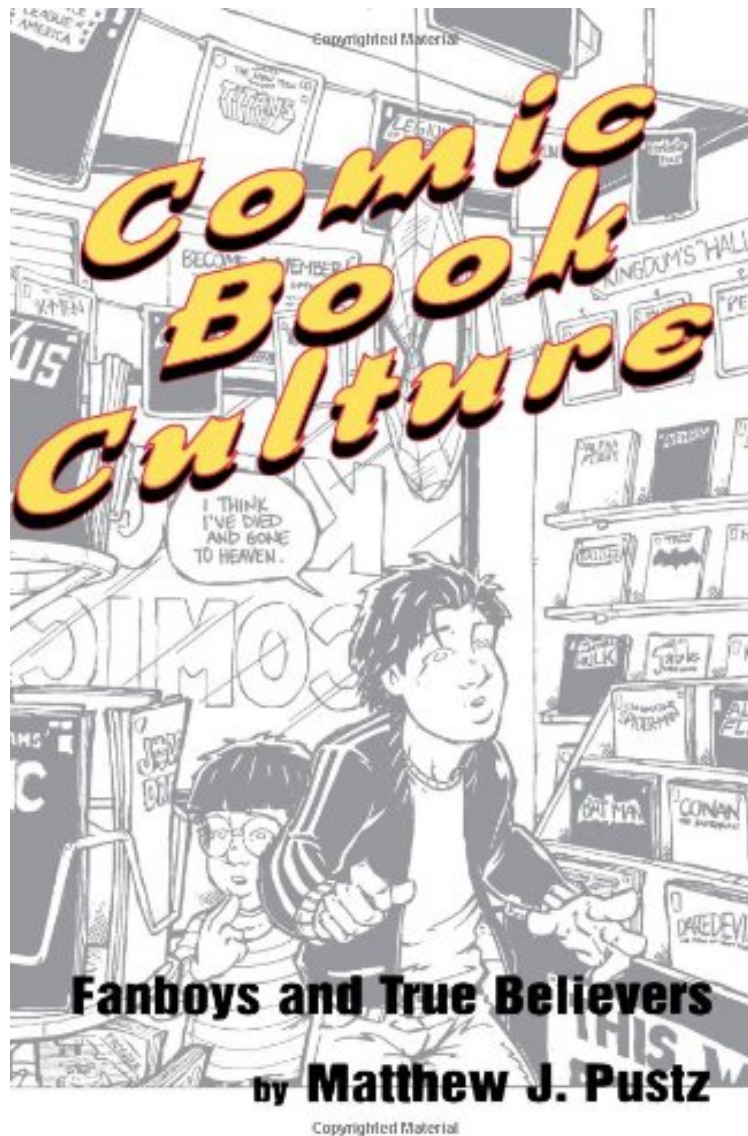


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## Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers (Studies in Popular Culture (Paperback))

Matthew J. Pustz

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**Matthew J. Pustz : Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers (Studies in Popular Culture (Paperback))** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Comic Book Culture: Fanboys and True Believers (Studies in Popular Culture (Paperback)):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It was pretty helpful  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Good Read!  
By LMM  
This has some awesome history and is a good starter for anyone looking to get into the comic scene, fan fiction, and its cultural beginnings.  
11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A good start for understanding  
By Glen Engel-Cox  
I'm using this book in my college writing course ("text+vision") this semester, and it is exactly what I wanted from a cultural overview of comic book fandom. Pustz does a great job of explaining how fandom came about, how it compares to other cultures (with a consistent reference to baseball fans, for example), and some of its peculiarities. In particular, he is able to partly explain the incestual nature of consumer and producers in comics, where each is a responsible party to the worst excesses of the medium, yet Pustz is careful to not make a judgment statement about this (unlike me). This book is not a history of comics, of who published what first and which creator sued which publisher. For that, you should check out Bradford Wright's *Comic Book Nation*. It's not even a history of comics fandom, although it does gather quite a bit of that together in its pages (Bill Schelly covers the history of fandom in more detail). What Pustz tries to cover is the area inbetween--where fans and publishers met. This is the culture of comic books, the place where the two groups make something together, and at first it may seem strange to think of consumers as producers, or producers as consumers. But, through his analysis of comics letters pages and fanzines, Pustz shows how the two groups affected each other. *Comic Book Culture* is copyright 1999, but feels like it was written in 1996 or 1997, mainly for the lack of focus on the incredible growth of manga in America and how *Pokemon*, *DragonBall Z*, and *Sailor Moon* are revitalizing comic book culture by bringing children back to comics. The last three years have also increased the importance of the Internet on the culture, which Pustz talks about briefly in the chapter 5. Finally, he really doesn't get much chance to focus on the rise of the graphic novel as an option for reading the medium compared to the ephemeral magazine. As a textbook in a cultural study hybrid course, this book is perfect. For the average comic reader, it might be interesting to discover aspects of the hobby that you didn't know about. And it might just be the thing to share with parents or friends who don't understand why you keep reading *Spider-Man*, even though you're over 30.

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 shown 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.

From the Inside Flap  
A close inspection of comic-book lovers and their ever-expanding culture  
About the Author  
Matthew J. Pustz is an adjunct professor of American studies at the University of Iowa.