

From pulp hero to superhero: Culture, race, and identity in American popular culture, 1900-1940.

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# From Pulp Hero to Superhero: Culture and Identity in American Popular Culture, 1900-1940

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### Abstract

Adventure characters in the pulp magazines and comic books of the twentieth century reflected development in the ongoing American cultural struggle of the American everyman with a modern, industrial world. Popular characters such as Tarzan, Conan, the Shogun, and the superhero perpetuated the individualistic archetype Americans associated with the cowboy and the struggles of manifest destiny while offering readers a world of adventure, exoticism, and escapism that modernity demanded.

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developed further with the advent of Superman and other superheroes, as confrontations with otherness transform to struggles internalized within the American city. Despite essential models of white male power provided by America and continued to assert the racial and civil superiority of its tradition. This paper explores the racial and civil ideas America promote in early twentieth century and their evolution in the press.

### Comments

The authors have included a revised version of this article in a collection of essays on superheroes in historical context: Chambliss, and Thomas Donaldson, eds. *Ages of Heroes, Eras of and the American Experience*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholarly Press.

Available from <http://www.amazon.com/Ages-Heroes-Era-Chambliss/dp/1443848034>

Publisher's site: <http://www.c-s-p.org/Flyers/Ages-of-Heroes-4803-4.htm>

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