



British Comics : A Cultural History

James Chapman

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We are all nostalgic about comics. Many of us still peek at them – some of us even collect them. British Comics: A Cultural History is the first historical study of these cherished British comic papers and magazines and their place in our society, from their origins in the late Victorian period to the present day.

Beginning with the first comic superstar, the likeable rogue Ally Sloper, cultural historian James Chapman traces the rise of comic publishing and comic reading in Britain. British Comics considers the major genres, including comics for girls, boys' adventure, sports and war stories. The heyday of British comics came in the 1950s and '60s when titles such as Eagle and School Friend sold nearly a million copies a week. A new breed of violent comics appeared in the 1970s, including the controversial Action and cult favourite 2000AD, and in the 1980s came the rise and fall of adult comics such as Warrior, Crisis, Deadline and Revolver. Chapman discusses alternative comics such as Viz, and analyses the work of contemporary British comic writers including Alan Moore, Ian Edginton, Warren Ellis and Garth Ennis whose success has prompted a renaissance of British comics.

Examining both the creators of comics and their readers, Chapman argues that British comics have a distinctive identity in their own right that is different from the comic books of America, France and Japan. They have responded to cultural and ideological currents in British society, not only providing escapism for their readers but also offering a mirror of their times. An invaluable reference for all comic fans and collectors, British Comics showcases the major role they have played in the imaginative lives of British children, teenagers – and many grown-ups too.



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