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Superman: The Persistence of an American Icon (Comics Culture)

Ian Gordon

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After debuting in 1938, Superman soon became an American icon. But why has he maintained his iconic status for nearly 80 years? And how can he still be an American icon when the country itself has undergone so much change?

Superman: Persistence of an American Icon examines the many iterations of the character in comic books, comic strips, radio series, movie serials, feature films, television shows, animation, toys, and collectibles over the past eight decades. Demonstrating how Superman's iconic popularity cannot be attributed to any single creator or text, comics expert Ian Gordon embarks on a deeper consideration of cultural mythmaking as a collective and dynamic process. He also outlines the often contentious relationships between the various parties who have contributed to the Superman mythos, including corporate executives, comics writers, artists, nostalgic commentators, and collectors.

Armed with an encyclopedic knowledge of Superman's appearances in comics and other media, Gordon also digs into comics archives to reveal the prominent role that fans have played in remembering, interpreting, and reimagining Superman's iconography. Gordon considers how comics, film, and TV producers have taken advantage of fan engagement and nostalgia when selling Superman products. Investigating a character who is equally an icon of American culture, fan culture, and consumer culture, *Superman* thus offers a provocative analysis of mythmaking in the modern era.

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