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The Blacker The Ink: Constructions Of Black Identity In Comics And Sequential Art



Synopsis

When many think of comic books the first thing that comes to mind are caped crusaders and spandex-wearing super-heroes. Perhaps, inevitably, these images are of white men (and more rarely, women). It was not until the 1970s that African American superheroes such as Luke Cage, Blade, and others emerged. But as this exciting new collection reveals, these superhero comics are only one small component in a wealth of representations of black characters within comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels over the past century. *The Blacker the Ink* is the first book to explore not only the diverse range of black characters in comics, but also the multitude of ways that black artists, writers, and publishers have made a mark on the industry. Organized thematically into 15 panels • in tribute to sequential art published in the funny pages of newspapers, the fifteen original essays take us on a journey that reaches from the African American newspaper comics of the 1930s to the Francophone graphic novels of the 2000s. Even as it demonstrates the wide spectrum of images of African Americans in comics and sequential art, the collection also identifies common character types and themes running through everything from the strip *The Boondocks* to the graphic novel *Nat Turner*. Though it does not shy away from examining the legacy of racial stereotypes in comics and racial biases in the industry, *The Blacker the Ink* also offers inspiring stories of trailblazing African American artists and writers. Whether you are a diehard comic book fan or a casual reader of the funny pages, these essays will give you a new appreciation for how black characters and creators have brought a vibrant splash of color to the world of comics.

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Customer Reviews

It met all of my expectations!

“The Blacker the Ink,” edited by Professor Frances Gateward and John Jennings, is a collection of essays critiquing a diverse selection of significant sequential art works created by Black artists (and those sympathetic to their causes). This book has the distinction of being the first African-American Literature I’ve read since finishing Charles Mills’ potent book, “The Racial Contract” a few weeks ago. As some of The Blacker the Ink’s scholars broke down the dynamics of multilayered socio-political tissue that composed each subject, I was able to see which of these writers—both creators and critics—accepted the exploiter class in their self-appointed role as signatories of the West’s racial social contract or not. Of course this side diversion was only a tiny part of the reader’s enjoyment, and this book absolutely provided a lot to enjoy. A solid, high-level academic work, my favorite parts of “The Blacker the Ink” involved those socio-politically conscious scholars who would take the time to explain the source-cited details of a real life historical backdrop used by a given work, as well as the sections that introduced gifted talent I had previously been unaware of. The depth of my Wish List expanded continuously in leaps & bounds as fascinating new works were described/analyzed, often forcing me to skim and dodge to prevent spoilers from ruining a newly-anticipated reading experience. Highly recommended, this should be on the shelf of any serious fan of the cartooning medium.

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