From *Captain America* to *Watchmen*: Comic Book Superheroes and War in Twentieth Century America

Chelsea Tatham Zukowski
American Public University

Abstract

Since their beginnings in the early twentieth century through the post-Cold War era, comic books have entertained readers while also reflecting American cultural ideals amid war and political conflict. Almost every comic book character and superhero ever created in the United States was some sort of reflection of the political or cultural climate in which it was created. It would take volumes to categorize and analyze all the characters' and superheroes' wartime influences, but this survey chronicles the major characters that shaped wartime comic books from World War I through the post-Cold War era following decades of constant conflict. Those characters are Superman, Captain America, Wonder Woman, Iron Man, the Incredible Hulk, Spider-Man, The Dark Knight, and Dr. Manhattan. These characters' stories were not solely about their respective time period's conflict, but their personalities and heroic missions were deeply entrenched in those era's fears, hopes, and cultural ideals. Despite the comic book medium only recently being included and analyzed for its historical scholarship value, this research shows comic books as primary sources for a critical understanding of how American society grappled with war through entertainment.

Keywords: Comic books; superheroes; popular culture; war; the Great War; World War II; Cold War; War on Terror; Captain America; Superman; Iron Man; The Dark Knight; war culture

Del Capitán América a Watchmen: superhéroes del cómic y guerra en los EE. UU. del siglo XX

Resumen

Desde sus inicios a principios del siglo XX hasta la era posterior a la Guerra Fría, los cómics han entretenido a los lectores y al mismo

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tiempo reflejan los ideales culturales estadounidenses en medio de la guerra y el conflicto político. Casi todos los personajes de cómics y superhéroes creados en los Estados Unidos fueron algún tipo de reflejo del clima político o cultural en el que se crearon. Se necesitarían muchos volúmenes para categorizar y analizar todas las influencias de los personajes y superhéroes en tiempos de guerra, pero esta encuesta relata los personajes principales que dieron forma a los cómics en tiempos de guerra desde la Primera Guerra Mundial hasta la era posterior a la Guerra Fría después de décadas de conflicto constante. Esos personajes son Superman, Capitán América, Wonder Woman, Iron Man, el Increíble Hulk, Spider-Man, The Dark Knight y el Dr. Manhattan. Las historias de estos personajes no trataban únicamente del conflicto de su período de tiempo respectivo, sino que sus personalidades y misiones heroicas estaban profundamente arraigadas en los temores, esperanzas e ideales culturales de esa época. A pesar de que el medio de los cómics se ha incluido y analizado recientemente por su valor académico histórico, esta investigación muestra a los cómics como fuentes primarias para una comprensión crítica de cómo la sociedad estadounidense lidiaba con la guerra a través del entretenimiento.

Palabras clave: Libros de historietas; superhéroes; cultura popular; guerra; la gran Guerra; Segunda Guerra Mundial; Guerra Fría; Guerra en terror; Capitán América; Superhombre; Hombre de Acero; El caballero oscuro; cultura de Guerra

从《美国队长》到《守望者》：二十世纪美国的漫画书超级英雄和战争

摘要

自20世纪早期开始到后冷战时代，漫画书在娱乐读者的同时也反映了战争和政治冲突期间美国的文化理想。美国塑造的几乎每个漫画书角色和超级英雄都在一定程度上反映了当时的政治环境或文化环境。对所有角色和超级英雄的战争时期影响加以分类和分析将花费大量篇幅，但本篇调查按时间顺序记录了从一战到几十年持续冲突之后的后冷战时代期间漫画书的主要角色。这些角色分别为超人、美国队长、神奇女侠、钢铁侠、绿巨人、蜘蛛侠、黑暗骑士和曼哈顿博士。这些角色的故事不仅仅有关于各自时期发生的冲突，他们的个性和英雄使命也根植于当时的恐惧、希望和文化理想。虽然

漫画书媒介仅在近年来被用于分析其历史学术价值，但本篇研究表明，漫画书能作为原始资料，用于批判地理解美国社会如何通过娱乐度过战争。

关键词：漫画书，超级英雄，流行文化，战争，一战，二战，冷战，反恐战争，美国队长，超人，钢铁侠，黑暗骑士，战争文

Collins, Marjory, photographer. *New York, N.Y. Children's Colony, a school for refugee children administered by a Viennese. German refugee child, a devotee of Superman.* New York, 1942. October.
Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/2013649072/.

From the striking political cartoons of World War I and post-Great Depression stories of Superman fighting for the less fortunate, to the violent, anti-heroic sentiments of the Watchmen and the Dark Knight, the comic book medium has housed colorful characters and stories that promoted American ideals and patriotism, criticized political leaders and acts, and reflected feelings and culture during times of war and domestic conflict. In times of war and in times of peace, comic books and their superheroes have been an important piece of America's social fabric since their beginnings in the 1930s as

both quirky, colorful entertainment and cultural and historical commentary. Superheroes—namely Superman, Captain America, Batman, and Wonder Woman—are unique cultural icons that have only recently been studied as primary sources and as windows into the history of American culture and entertainment during war times. Just as certain forms of art are products of their times, comic books offer an artistic and entertaining lens through which to study twentieth-century America. Beginning with the first several decades of the 1900s, through World War II, the Cold War era, the post-nuclear era, and the War on Terror, there are many comic book storylines and characters that not only reflect American society during times of foreign and domestic conflict, but they also show how that society reacted. These books are "mythology that is forever adjusting to meet society's needs."[1] Perhaps more than any other medium of entertainment in the twentieth century, superhero comics are primary sources of historical events told through cape-wearing, shield-wielding, superpowered fictional heroes.

DC's Superman is widely considered to be the first comic book superhero in American literature, but before his debut in 1938 and the subsequent superhero boom of World War II, comic strips were primarily devoted to condemning vices like gambling and drinking or supporting a cause in foreign conflicts.[2] Newspapers and periodicals during World War I became famous for publishing short political cartoons that showed the United States as a savior of Europe, condemning Germany and German culture, and promoting American patriotism and the domestic war effort. Though political cartoons are a different medium with a different audience, its use of colorful characters, caricatures, and quote blurbs are a similar style of entertainment and social commentary as that of comic books. It was during World War I that the venerable image of Uncle Sam cemented its place in American literary and art history. Just as "doughboys" became slang for American soldiers and symbolized heroism during the war, Uncle Sam called for patriotic duty in joining the U.S. Army.[3] The poster designed by James Montgomery Flagg was one of 46 the artist did as patriotic propaganda for the U.S. government. The character of Uncle Sam is drawn as a stern, strong older man wearing a blue coat, a red bowtie, and a white hat with a ribbon of white stars on a blue background. The poster reads: "I want YOU for the U.S. Army. Enlist Now."[4] This recruitment poster, done in 1917—when the U.S. entered the war—was a precursor to American comic book artists summing up "an entire national character in the form of a single iconic figure."[5]

For those back home during World War I, comic strips in newspapers and periodicals offered a window into soldiers' lives overseas. Comics like Bud Fisher's "Mutt and Jeff" and Capt. Alban Butler's "Happy Days" allowed "readers of all levels of education to participate virtually in a fight they had to support remotely."[6] Before moving pictures and television, comics were a widely accessible way to promote causes and entertain the masses. Some

"Mutt and Jeff" comic strips promoted buying liberty bonds to support the war effort and had the dynamic duo serve in various Allied armies while poking fun at themselves.[7] Butler, who served in the American First Infantry Division, had his comics contain content "far more meaningful than the simple sight gags might suggest."[8] Butler chronicled his experiences of life in the trenches, foreign food, language barriers, and new cultural customs. While his comics were suitable for younger readers to get an idea of what life as a G.I. was like, his collection also featured underlying moral and political complexities of war.[9]

Charles Schulz' "Peanuts" comics and later animated features memorialized World War I nearly fifty years after it ended. Snoopy, the loveable beagle of the "Peanuts" gang, had his first appearance in 1965 and was drawn pretending his doghouse was a Sopwith Camel biplane. Snoopy became the First World War Flying Ace and "imagined that he flew in hot pursuit of the Red Baron," a title given to German fighter pilot Manfred von Richthofen.[10] Though the "Peanuts" characters and stories didn't appear until decades after the first world war, Carrie Allen Tipton's "Snoopy Remembers the Great War" argues Snoopy's Flying Ace persona and "The Great Pumpkin" animated television special "helped enshrine the memory of the First World War in American popular culture."[11] In the animation, Snoopy dons his pilot outfit and goggles while the children are occupied with their Halloween costumes and plans. Situating himself atop his doghouse, the scene turns into Snoopy imagining himself in a "fierce aerial combat, ending with a crash behind enemy lines, punctuated by staccato artillery."[12] Escaping the crash site, Snoopy then climbs through trenches and passes signs for Châlons-sur-Marne, Pont-à-Mousson, and the River Moselle all while facing the sounds of sirens and machine guns. Schulz and his colleagues later said they did not deliberately aim to commemorate World War I with Snoopy's persona, but the First World War Flying Ace has since become synonymous with Great War and early aviation culture. Four years after his debut, Snoopy as the First World War Flying Ace even accompanied astronauts on the Apollo 10 mission, two months before the first humans landed on the moon.[13]

In the first several decades of the twentieth century, comics acted as illustrated short stories that could be used as propaganda to depict a foreign or domestic enemy to the United States. Before World War II, domestic crime was the main perceived threat to American society depicted in comics. Villainous characters could symbolize corporate greed, labor disputes, or controversial political policies.[14] Though the Great Depression had slowly abated in the late 1930s, the horrors of nationwide economic collapse were still fresh in the American people. Some of the earliest stories of Superman, Batman, and the Green Lantern were of these superheroes taking on corrupt businesses and businessmen who mistreated poor, struggling workers in the 1930s.[15] In his first issues, Superman stopped gangsters from fixing boxing machines, took on smugglers, prevented assassinations,

Astronaut John W. Young, Apollo 10 command module pilot, displays a drawing of Snoopy in this color reproduction taken from the fourth telecast made by the color television camera aboard the Apollo 10 spacecraft. When this picture was made the Apollo 10 spacecraft was about halfway to the moon, or approximately 112,000 nautical miles from Earth. Snoopy will be the code name of the Lunar Module (LM) during Apollo 10 operations when the Command Module (CM) and LM are separated. The CM's code name will be Charlie Brown. Also, aboard Apollo 10 were astronauts Thomas P. Stafford, commander; and Eugene A. Cernan, lunar module pilot. Credit: NASA, S69-34076 (19 May 1969)

created decent public housing, and combated political infighting at Metropolis city hall.[16] While Superman at the end of the Great Depression was a social savior, Batman was "an example of the common person helping herself or himself."[17] Though they came from different worlds—literally; Superman is an alien from the planet Krypton—they were both products of the era in which they lived and dealt with enemies and issues as such. These characters and stories made standard the superhero as a defender of the innocent and as socially conscious characters. These original superheroes were "New Deal avengers" who dealt with, discussed, and fought the same social problems plaguing American citizens in the early twentieth century.[18]

By the outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the United States entry into the war in 1941, domestic and foreign conflicts had become as intertwined in comic books as they were in the country.[19] In the 1940s, more than 80 percent of adolescents and more than 90 percent of children were reading comic books.[20] These popular illustrations and stories "helped determine the attitudes of Americans toward issues in the real world, including the use of military force abroad."[21] Leading comic books writers at Marvel Comics and DC discussed and included in their work subtle hints of the need for the United States government to become more involved with issues abroad. Even before the United States entered the war, comics had been attempting to build support among skeptical Americans of the superiority and morality of the Allied cause.[22] Eight months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby published the first issue of "Captain America," a red, white, and blue clad super patriot who fought the enemies of the United States both at home and overseas. While Adolf Hitler proclaimed American popular culture to be inferior to that of any other European country, the first issue of "Captain America" featured a colorful illustration of Captain America punching Hitler in the face.[23]

Simon described Captain America as the "first major comic book hero to take a political stand."[24] During his first appearance in March 1941, Captain America took on sabotage within the U.S. Army, villainous caricatures of German scientists and Nazi leaders attempting to infiltrate the U.S., and the "flaming red terror" of the Red Skull.[25] By the third issue, Marvel Comics co-creator Stan Lee contributed Captain America's first use of his star-spangled shield as a throwing weapon.[26] How the character Steve Rogers came to be Captain America "mimicked the transition the United States needed at the outset of World War II."[27] Steve Rogers was a scrawny weakling unfit for service in the U.S. Army, but a team of government scientists used an experimental serum to transform him into the perfectly strong and moral soldier with superpowers to defend his country. Just as Steve Rogers went from weakling to war machine, the United States transformed from a nation concerned only with itself to a country able to defend itself and crush any enemies.[28]

The American public needed hope and entertainment during World War II, and Captain America's stories provided them, along with the assertion that America's cause and the Allied cause were right and moral. Lee's storylines advocated U.S. intervention and resources, and the Captain America story arcs emphasized Germany's threat to the entire world, explaining the Axis efforts to rule the world through fictional characters and stereotypes.[29] The "Captain America" comics contained all the key elements of contemporary American propaganda: "German atrocities, Allied war goals … vengeance against the evil enemy, and … a sense of adventure and excitement."[30] The stories of Captain America fighting Nazis, the Japanese, and Axis spies helped define the "American way" and asserted

American moral superiority to young readers. Simon and Kirby even gave Captain America a sidekick: 12-year-old Bucky Barnes. With an adolescent sidekick dedicated to the cause and the later foundation of the Sentinels of Liberty youth group, Captain America's comics allowed young readers to "imagine themselves in the action."[31]

Just as the Sentinels of Liberty promoted patriotism in young people on the domestic front, Wonder Woman also promoted the American cause, wore red, white, and blue, and catered to young girls. Though she eschewed traditional gender norms of the time, she rarely took on any of the Axis powers directly. In her early stories, Wonder Woman mostly took on domestic spies, criminals, and "the world's most villainous men."[32] Though the possibility of women in combat was still difficult for readers and the general public to accept, Wonder Woman encouraged children of all ages to collect scrap metal, be vigilant for foreign intervention, and keep faith in the American cause.[33] Comic book superheroes like Wonder Woman and Captain America provided an entertaining escape from a world of violence and death, and acted as an outlet for the young people of America to understand and even take part in a cause that was being promoted as helping America win. Beginning with the comics and characters created during World War II, fighting an enemy during war was not just about physical violence or military tactics—the "common denominator in the struggle against each opponent was patriotism" at home.[34] The American flag became an essential symbol of patriotism during war time. Comic book characters who wear variations of red, white, and blue—including Captain America, Wonder Woman, and the Shield—became "a vehicle for nationalist sentiment."[35]

This pure patriotism and promotion of the United States as "a place where science and equality prevailed over ignorance" continued in comic books long after World War II ended.[36] The Cold War began barely two years after the end of World War II and continued through the end of the 1980s, though it can be explored by the different comic book trends and stories found in the post-war 1950s, the counterculture of the 1960s and the American malaise of the 1970s.[37] While Germany, Nazism, and the Axis powers were the main threats during World War II, the United States and its Allies faced the Soviet Union and the threat of communism for decades after. Comic books during this "Nuclear Era" explore how superheroes reflected American feelings about communism, nuclear weapons, the meaning of family and domestic tranquility, and the role superheroes played in all of it.[38]

One of the first superheroes to directly address anti-communist fervor associated with Sen. Joseph McCarthy was Simon and Kirby's Fighting American, published in 1954 by Prize Comics. McCarthy, who served on the Senate Committee on Government Operations from 1953 to 1954, whipped up an anti-communist frenzy that had both political leaders and the public skeptical of their friends and neighbors and anxi-

ous about Soviet infiltration in the United States.[39] Fighting American's stories had five main themes that reflected American fears and anxieties in the first years of the Cold War: domestic foreign spies, organized crime, foreign troops on American soil, worldwide communist sabotage, and the loss of American freedom and ideals.[40] Simon and Kirby both stated their character was dedicated to taking on the "red menace" and were proud to create "the first commie-basher in comics."[41]

The comics that most acted as a mirror for feelings and events of the Cold War in America were the "Fantastic Four" from Marvel Comics. These superheroes who did not act like superheroes explored themes of atomic anxieties, gender roles, the family, science and new technology and communism—all in the first eight issues of a series about four bickering superpowered humans.[42] The first issue of "Fantastic Four" had its origins in the race to get to space, which was an offensive tactic against the Soviet Union and Communism. Brilliant scientist Reed Richards, his girlfriend Susan Storm, her younger brother Johnny Storm, and Reed's best friend Ben Grimm take a prototype spaceship to space to "beat the 'commies.'"[43] Throughout this first issue, Susan worries about the effects of "cosmic rays," which when they go to space, give the four superpowers. Reed becomes Mr. Fantastic and can stretch and twist his body in unnatural ways, Susan gets powers of invisibility, Johnny becomes a human fireball, and Ben transforms into a monstrous, rock-like humanoid with super strength.[44] In comic book historiography, Dr. Reed Richards is considered a "personification of science and technology as an expression of America's greatness" while also reflecting public fears about scientists and technology in the years following the creation of the atomic bomb.[45] This debate over scientists is also reflected again in "Fantastic Four #5," when the group first encounters Doctor Doom, real name Victor von Doom. Doctor Doom is a scientific match for him, but Reed Richards explains that Doctor Doom is only interested in forbidden experiments, magic, and time travel. Doctor Doom is even drawn at a desk with books about "Demons" and "Science and Sorcery" on top.[46] This issue gives the Fantastic Four an arch enemy, but it also explains "that it is not the science, but the scientists, that is good or evil."[47]

Other "Fantastic Four" comics explore the American fear of communist brainwashing and the government's awareness of the effects of the Manhattan Project and the atomic bomb. In "Fantastic Four #2," the group fight the "Skrulls from Outer Space," who can transform themselves into an exact match of any living being. The Skrulls turn themselves into the Fantastic Four and wreak havoc, turning the community against the Fantastic Four. To defeat them, Reed Richards uses hypnotism to imprison the Skrulls and make them transform into cattle.[48] This new fear of brainwashing manifested in American minds in the years following the Korean War, with the worry that good people could be involuntarily turned into communists. The Skrulls also reflected

the fear of imposters running rampant in the United States.[49] In a later issue, the Fantastic Four fight the Sub-Mariner when he unleashes an atomic bomb over New York City. The group retaliates with its own bomb, inferring that the "government is not only aware of the intended use of the bomb, but that it is complicit in the bomb's detonation."[50]

The appearance of Marvel Comics' Incredible Hulk and Iron Man around the same time as the Fantastic Four directly reflected American opinions of science and atomic energy and the Vietnam War's role within the overall Cold War era. During the detonation of the experimental bomb, Dr. Bruce Banner is exposed to gamma rays, which give him the ability—or rather, instability—of transforming into the monstrous, super strong Incredible Hulk.[51] Hulk is neither hero nor villain and like nuclear energy itself, "is a complex and often uncontrollable natural force."[52] Hulk's arch enemy, General Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross, wants to contain the nuclear threats, the Hulk, and the military experiments that created him. However, Hulk's stories show the human inability to control human nature and atomic energy.[53] In 1963's "Tales of Suspense #39," Tony Stark and Iron Man are first introduced. Tony Stark is a weapons creator and dealer and is presenting a new weapon to the American war effort in Vietnam. Tony Stark and his group are attacked, he is gravely injured and captured by the "Red Guerilla Tyrant Wong-Chu," and must make a suit of iron to stay alive. Though Tony Stark survives thanks to his genius and technological skill, the early Iron Man stories showed how the Vietnam War made the public doubt America's "military invincibility."[54]

The fear and anxieties of the 1950s gave way to the decades of the ongoing Cold War marked by youth counterculture and malaise. Incredible Hulk and Fantastic Four stories continued to explore national feelings around science, technology, and communism, but also began confronting real-world problems and showcasing the youth point of view of the world. Marvel Comics also added to their list of Cold War comics with Spider-Man in 1962, which when he appeared in "Amazing Fantasy #15," gave teenagers a starring role in a superhero story. The Spider-Man stories also gave America's youth a voice and reflected the tumultuous relationship between teenage immaturity, science-enhanced powers, and community responsibility. The malaise of the 1970s is reflected in prominent characters like the Hulk, Superman, and Iron Man, and new characters like Deathlok and the Inhumans, struggling with who they are and their role in the world. These malaise-themed stories demonstrated that President Jimmy Carter was right in his proclamation that the country was suffering from a "crisis of confidence."[55] The Iron Man "Demon in a Bottle" storyline from 1979 shows Tony Stark struggling with alcoholism, the "Secret Empire" storyline in Captain America comics during 1973 and 1974 allude to President Richard Nixon and Watergate, and Jack Kirby's "The Eternals" stories create a mood of "human insignificance" and complete powerlessness.[56]

The Cold War and other events of the 1970s gave Americans the feeling that the country was on a downward spiral, and comics books reflected that not even superheroes could save the nation and its ideals. As the malaise gave way to the conservative era of President Ronald Reagan and the 1980s, comic book creators crafted and reimagined superheroes as violent vigilante that "no longer exclusively followed the traditional comic book view of right and wrong."[57] In the 1980s and into the 1990s, scholars began studying comic books as historical material and writing of the role these colorful texts played in American culture.[58] At the same time, while some comic characters returned to their 1940s or 1950s innocent roots, new characters emerged that violently "critiqued and criticized" society's direction.[59]

In 1986, two comic series emerged that directly reflected the last years of Cold War anxieties and skepticism and the rise of radical conservativism in America. British writer Alan Moore's "Watchmen" series presents an alternative history where superheroes are real, the United States won the Vietnam War, and Watergate never happened. The superheroes in "Watchmen" are not moral patriots, but rather brooding, costumed vigilantes. As World War III and the Soviet Union loom in the series, Moore explores the fear of "impending atomic doom and how even superheroes appear to be unable to prevent a nuclear holocaust."[60] "Watchmen" showed what a world with unregulated and unsupervised superheroes would be like and how America would react to knowing these heroes could not save them from themselves. With the series' writer, artist, and colorist being British, "Watchmen" was also commentary on how other countries viewed American ideals and culture at the end of the Cold War. One character, Dr. Manhattan, shows a man who's lost his humanity and now embodies the 1980s understanding of nuclear power: "cold, calculating, and extremely dangerous."[61] Dr. Manhattan, named after the Manhattan Project that created the first atomic bomb, is the only character in "Watchman" with superpowers and lives on Mars after allegations that he gave people cancer.[62]

Frank Miller's "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns" also draws on 1980s post-Watergate opinions about political leaders and American society. Contradicting fellow DC character Superman, Batman as The Dark Knight was a billionaire vigilante with no powers but exuding skepticism of the government and promoting individualism above all else.[63] "The Dark Knight Returns" was Miller's view of Reagan-era America told through the lens of a fictional caped crusader fighting Gotham City gangs and old enemies like the Joker and Two-Face. Within this series that eventually pitted Superman against Batman at the request of President Reagan, Miller critiqued the news media, local government and law enforcement corruption, and American culture.[64] Miller's series illustrated what the creator considered acceptable comic tales during the mid-1980s and how Miller concluded that society and superheroes suffer from the same flaws.

In his research of comic books and American society, Jeffrey K. Johnson said Miller showed through "The Dark Knight Returns" that both society and comic book heroes are "overly violent, self-righteous, and self-absorbed, and should not be praised for these qualities."[65]

As the Cold War finally ended and the 1990s began, comic books continued with more violent, vigilante content, but some of the most popular series of this decade focused on characters reimagined for a generation gearing up for a new millennium. The new Spider-Man and X-Men comics that came out in 1990 and 1991 became the most popular of the decade and featured classic superhero style and stories packaged in colorful, flashy packaging.[66] These characters mirrored the hopes of a decade focusing on the future and reflected the "unencumbered energy and enthusiasm" released after the Cold War ended.[67] By the end of the 1990s, Superman—once thought to be invincible and unstoppable—died, the original Spider-Man and Batman quit their superhero jobs, and new publishing houses, characters, and forward-looking stories emerged.[68]

Comic books have been colorful mirrors to America's fears, hopes, desires, and culture since their creations in the early twentieth century. These fictional characters and stories often alluded to or directly addressed current events, figures, and war, and helped shape the country's social history. For readers during times of war, comic books "promote different ideologies or specific economic or political positions," and provided an entertaining, fictional outlet to see their emotions, confusion, and questions portrayed in printed panels.[69] These books depicting the unreal and the fantastic were once considered lowbrow entertainment for children with little educational or historical value. What we can see with comic books published during war, however, is a basis in reality that may not detail exactly how America's conflicts played out but does show how the American public felt about World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, and the beginnings of the War on Terror. Through the lens of comic books, society's feelings about war evolved from patriotism, moral superiority, and fear, to anxiety, skepticism, and eventually relief and hope for a brighter, super heroic future.

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