

Where No X-Man Has Gone Before! Mutant Superheroes and the Cultural Politics of Popular Fantasy in Postwar America.

[Download Here](#)

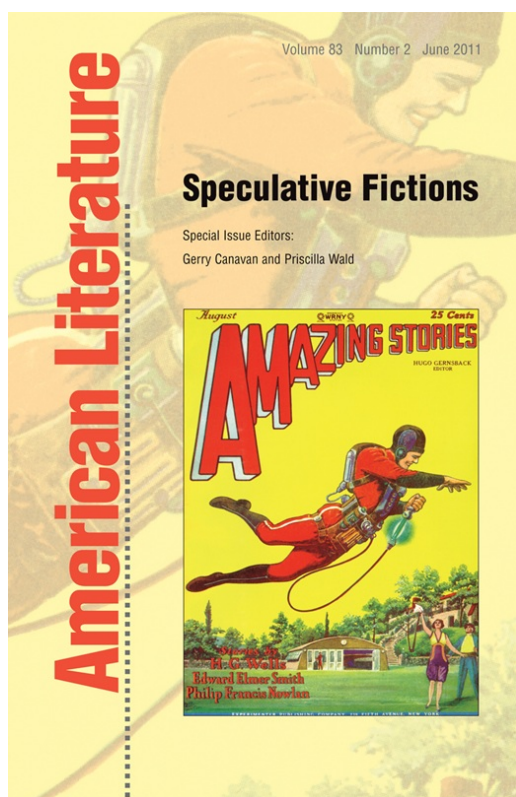


ARTICLE NAVIGATION
Western Coloured Township problems of an urban slum, confrontation significantly
Article navigation and
Book Review: Digital places: living with geographic information technologies, municipal
Volume 83, Issue 2
June 2011

Where No X-Man Has Gone Before! Mutant Superheroes and the Cultural Politics of Popular Fantasy in Postwar America

Ramzi Fawaz

American Literature (2011) 83 (2): 355-388.



Issue Editors

Priscilla Wald



This site uses cookies. By continuing to use our website, you are agreeing to [our privacy policy.](#)

[Accept](#)
Previous Article
Next Article

Article Contents

<https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-1266090>

 Cite

 Share 

 Permissions

Dismissed for decades as juvenile entertainment, comic books had by the early 1970s come of age as America's “native art”: taught on Ivy League campuses, studied by European scholars and filmmakers, and taken up as a new generation's cultural critique of American society. The cultural regeneration of the comic book was made possible by the revamping of a key American fantasy figure, the superhero, from a transparent champion of the national interest to a genetic and species outcast mapping the limits of the human. This refashioning was most visible in the invention of the “mutant superhero”—a figure popularized in Marvel Comics's acclaimed *X-Men* series—whose genetic difference from humanity positioned the superhero as a cultural outsider akin to racial, gender, and sexual minorities struggling for political recognition in the post-Civil Rights period. In this essay, Fawaz theorizes the concept of “popular fantasy” to describe how tropes of literary enchantment are deployed to make sense of emergent real-world social and political relations. Through a close reading of the *X-Men* in the mid-to-late 1970s, Fawaz shows how the comic book visually absorbed the cultural politics of the women's movement and the gay liberation movement to figure “mutation” as an expansive form of cultural difference that wedded fantasy to the ideals of radical politics. By linking the fictional category of mutation to lived categories of difference, the *X-Men* series produced a mainstream popular fantasy that legitimized and helped shape readers' inchoate affective investments in antiracist and antisexist ideals in the 1970s.

You do not currently have access to this content.

Sign in

Don't already have an account? [Register](#)

Client Account

Username / Email address

Password

SIGN IN

[Forgot password?](#)

[Don't have an account?](#)

Sign in via your Institution

[Sign In](#)

Sign in via your Institution

[Sign in](#)

BUY THIS ARTICLE



2

[View Metrics](#)

CITING ARTICLES VIA

[Web Of Science \(6\)](#)

[Google Scholar](#)

[CrossRef](#)

EMAIL ALERTS

[Latest Issue](#)

[Subscribe to Article Alert](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

[From Superhumanity to Flexible Mutanity: Superheroes in Post-WWII American Comics](#)

[Undoing the Violence of the Visual](#)

[Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form](#)
[The New Mutants: Superheroes and the Radical Imagination of American Comics](#)
[Darger's Resources](#)

[The 99 : Superhero Comic Books from the Arab World](#)

RELATED BOOK CHAPTERS

[The Foreigner, the Dead](#)

[The Family \(The Kitchen\)](#)

[The Spark, the Gap, the Leap 1979](#)

[The Cure, the Community, the Contempt!](#)

RELATED TOPICS

[men](#)

[comic](#)

[fantasy](#)

[politic](#)

[new](#)

[mutant](#)

[phoenix](#)

[About American Literature](#)

[Editorial Board](#)

[For Authors](#)

[Purchase](#)

Advertise

Rights and Permissions Inquiry

Online ISSN 1527-2117

Print ISSN 0002-9831

Copyright © 2018

Duke University Press

905 W. Main St. Ste. 18-B
Durham, NC 27701
USA

Phone

(888) 651-0122

International

+1 (919) 688-5134

Contact

Contact Us

Information For

Advertisers

Book Authors

Booksellers/Media

Customers

Educators

Journal Authors/Editors

Journal Subscribers

Librarians

Prospective Journals

Rights & Permissions

Societies

Careers

View Open Positions

 [Sign Up For Subject Matters](#)

Connect



©2017 Duke University Press. All Rights Reserved.

[Accessibility](#)

[Legal](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Get Adobe Reader](#)