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## **Marvel Comics In The 1980s: An Issue-By-Issue Field Guide To A Pop Culture Phenomenon**

*Pierre Comtois*

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**Pierre Comtois : Marvel Comics In The 1980s: An Issue-By-Issue Field Guide To A Pop Culture Phenomenon** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Marvel Comics In The 1980s: An Issue-By-Issue Field Guide To A Pop Culture Phenomenon*:

15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. This is an Opinion Piece, Not an Unbiased Look at History By Jimmy Hanzo For those unfamiliar with this series, it should be noted that this isn't a stand-alone book that gives an unbiased review of notable comics in Marvel's publication history from the 1980s. This book is a continuation of the *TwoMorrows* series reviewing Marvel Comics in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. These books represent author Pierre Comtois' opinion that Marvel went through a creative explosion in the 1960s (Formative Years, Consolidation

Years, Grandiose Years) and a long, sustained creative decline in the 1970s and 1980s (Twilight Years). This is important to know going in -- if you want a nostalgic and positive look back at this decade of Marvel Comics, this is not the book for you. Its central premise is that Marvel in the 1980s was undergoing a creative decline and as such, the author has a negative outlook on many books from this time period. Personally, I don't completely agree with the author's premise, nor do I share his personal tastes -- for example, he seems to feel that the introduction of Elektra and The Hand were negative aspects of Frank Miller's Daredevil run, despite them being two of the most popular elements of Miller's work on the character. Comtois is also very opinionated on the output of various creators -- he gives John Byrne nothing but glowing praise while criticizing most of Chris Claremont's work, even suggesting that the success of Claremont's 16-year run on Uncanny X-Men was largely due to goodwill from the John Byrne collaboration on the title (since the book was a best-seller with Claremont at the helm for a decade after Byrne left, this idea seems preposterous). The author doesn't mince words -- if he dislikes a creator's output, he can be very harsh with his criticism and even insulting at times. He also seems to put forth some unusual reasoning at times as well -- he mentions how ridiculous it is for female characters like the Black Widow and Elektra to physically contend and defeat men twice their size, but doesn't seem to have an issue suspending disbelief when a blind man like Daredevil pummels a room full of seasoned thugs. For Comtois, it seems a genetic abnormality giving a man the ability to fire an unending stream of energy from his eyes is plausible, but a woman beating up a larger man stretches the imagination too far. The power fantasy of superhero comics only extends toward the male gender, it seems. So despite all this, why do I give the book four stars? I like reading other people's opinions, even if they're contrary to my own, and find his premise interesting. He does a good job of clearly presenting his views on notable and important comics in Marvel's publishing history. I find myself briskly moving through the book and enjoying myself along the way. Simply put, I like reading what Pierre Comtois has to say. And if you enjoyed the 1960s and 1970s books of the series, you'll likely enjoy this volume as well -- it continues along the same lines. This is a book ideally suited to Silver Age readers who think comics have been all downhill since the end of the 1960s and wants to read validation of that opinion. However, it's also a book ideally suited to people who like alternate viewpoints to their own and enjoy interesting, conversational writing.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Critical, but still entertaining. By Peter J. McGill This is a great addition to Comtois' previous books. A number of reviews have canned this volume for the author's negativity. If you are looking for a book that paints a rosy picture of comics in the 1980s, this isn't for you. It's a great read, even if many of the author's opinions may be confronting. The book appeals to me as it supports my opinion of Marvel's decline after the (very) early '70s. As with the previous books, some syntax of its grates; characters (I feel) are created, not invented, but other than that minor criticism, I recommend the book. A good read that covers the end Bronze Age into the beginning of the Modern Age of Comic Books. Expect to be infuriated! 10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Political rantings do not make for legitimate literary criticism. By T. S. Turner Here's the thing. I love the approach to the material, with a breakdown of what the author considers key material. However, the book is absolutely marred by several key things: 1. His insistence on insulting female characters unless they fit into his narrow view of the role of a woman. 2. His constant praise for John Byrne and John Romita Jr., despite the absolute hackery of most of their later work, while at the same time insulting and dismissing fan favorites such as Mike Zeck, Gene Day, Todd McFarland, etc. 3. This is the worst offense. If I buy a book about comic book history, I don't need to hear his conservative political rants about how liberalism destroyed comics. It becomes so over the top, going so far as to say that empowering the Wasp and Captain Marvel is just kissing up to feminists. His book becomes a right wing rant about how the world isn't what he wants it to be. Well, boo hoo. My book isn't what I wanted it to be, either.

TwoMorrows Publishing presents *Marvel Comics in the 1980s*, the third volume in Pierre Comtois' heralded series covering the pop culture phenomenon on an issue-by-issue basis! This new book covers Marvel's final historical phase, when the movement begun by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko moved into a darker era that has yet to run its course. The 1980s saw Stan Lee's retreat to the West Coast, Jim Shooter's rise and fall as editor-in-chief, the twin triumphs of Frank Miller and John Byrne, the challenge of independent publishers, and the weakening hold of the Comics Code Authority that led to the company's creative downfall and ultimately the marginalization of the industry itself. Comics such as the Chris Claremont/John Byrne X-Men, Frank Miller's Daredevil, the New Universe, Roger Stern's Avengers and Spider-Man, the new wave of dark heroes such as Wolverine and the Punisher, and more are all covered, in the analytic detail and often irreverent manner readers have come to expect from the previous 1960s and 1970s volumes. However, the 1980s represented years of upheaval in the comics industry with Marvel at the center of the storm so expect a bumpy ride in the 1980s decade that marked the beginning of the end of Marvel Comics as you knew them!