**EC Comics: race, shock, and social protest**

Whitted, Qiana J. by Whitted, Qiana J. Rutgers, 2019

181p bibl index, 9780813566320 $99.95, 9780813566313 $29.95, 9780813573106 $29.95

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EC Comics’ horror, crime, and science fiction anthologies (including Tales from the Crypt) lasted barely five years before censorship from the Comics Code Authority caused EC to cease publication of them in 1956. Despite this, fan-written books and articles continue to reveal the strong influence of EC Comics, so this scholarly title is a welcome addition to the literature. Whitted (English and African American studies, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia) provides in-depth examinations of specific EC Comics stories featuring African American, Hispanic, and Jewish characters. Context is provided through discussions of the intended audience and their reactions, comics and other media from the same time period, and the political and civil rights climate in the US in the 1940s–50s. Whitted also shows how different elements of the comics (art, dialogue, and narrative captions) were used by EC in the creation of “preachies,” stories dealing with social injustice. As it is in any comics scholarship, the full-color art included is valuable, but it is not a replacement for reading the original stories. Reprints of EC’s comics would be a valuable complement to this book. Thankfully, these are readily available from Dark Horse Comics and Fantagraphics Books.

Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty

Reviewer: M. Murray, University of Guelph

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: Lower-division Undergraduates, Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: Humanities - Communication

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