



Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes

By Adilifu Nama

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Super Black places the appearance of black superheroes alongside broad and sweeping cultural trends in American politics and pop culture, which reveals how black superheroes are not disposable pop products, but rather a fascinating racial phenomenon through which futuristic expressions and fantastic visions of black racial identity and symbolic political meaning are presented. Adilifu Nama sees the value—and finds new avenues for exploring racial identity—in black superheroes who are often dismissed as sidekicks, imitators of established white heroes, or are accused of having no role outside of blaxploitation film contexts.

Nama examines seminal black comic book superheroes such as Black Panther, Black Lightning, Storm, Luke Cage, Blade, the Falcon, Nubia, and others, some of whom also appear on the small and large screens, as well as how the imaginary black superhero has come to life in the image of President Barack Obama. *Super Black* explores how black superheroes are a powerful source of racial meaning, narrative, and imagination in American society that express a myriad of racial assumptions, political perspectives, and fantastic (re)imaginings of black identity. The book also demonstrates how these figures overtly represent or implicitly signify social discourse and accepted wisdom concerning notions of racial reciprocity, equality, forgiveness, and ultimately, racial justice.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This well-conceptualized, well-written book is enriched by Nama's witty turns of expression, occasional corrections of earlier errors and omissions, and fascinating background material." Choice "Throughout, Nama takes a refreshingly nuanced approach to his subject. Nama complicates the black superhero by also seeing the ways that they put issues of post-colonialism, race, poverty, and identity struggles front and center." Rain Taxi

About the Author

Adilifu Nama is an Associate Professor at California State University Northridge. He is the author of the award-winning *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*, the first book length examination of the topic. Throughout his books, various articles, and presentations, Nama has explored how race and media intersect in television, film, and hip-hop music with a critical eye toward contextualizing black representation along with black racial formation.

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