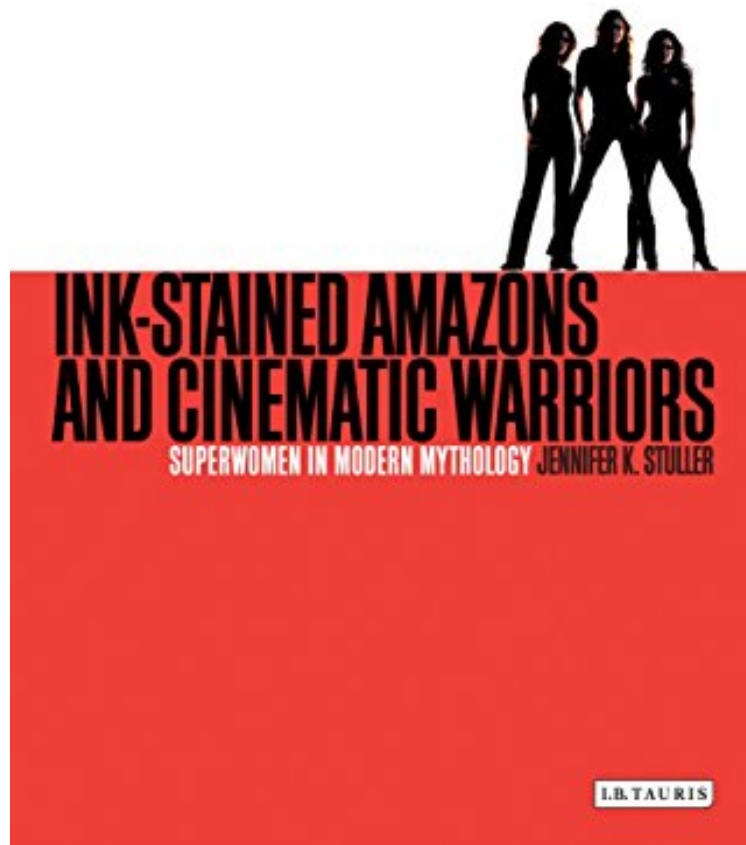


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Jennifer K. Stuller

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ink-Stained Amazons and Cinematic Warriors: Superwomen in Modern Mythology:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. a MUST HAVE for anyone who loves women superheroes By E L-

I am someone who thinks a lot about how comics, television, and movies shape how our culture sees itself and the higher wishes we may have for ourselves. Stuller's book is the something I didn't know I needed until I got it. This is a great historical social commentary. Chapter one starts with Wonder Woman and places her in her author's original historical context, and then she touches on just about every great (and silly) female super hero from the 1940s to the 2000s. Reading this book made me feel like I was a part of a very big family (a feeling I don't often have as a 30-something year old woman who reads comic books). After touching on the characters themselves, and how they reflected or inspired the time when they originally appeared, Stuller has an impressive glossary of superwomen with brief biographies, and a recommendation list of books, tv shows, movies, and internet sites to continue your exploration of fantastic women. Whether you are a man or a woman, whether you were inspired by Emma Peel, Lynda Carter, Buffy Summers, or Xena the Warrior Princess -- you will want this book next to your comic book or DVD collection.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent book about the evolution of the superpower female hero. By Erica McGillivray. *Ink-Stained s and Cinematic Warriors: Superwomen in Modern Mythology* is about heroic women characters in modern media (1940's to today) and what their stories say about our society and most importantly how our society views the roles of women and their potential. The book is very accessible and easy to read, even if you aren't familiar with every movie, show, comic book, or novel which Stuller references. (There's an appendix filled with footnotes and notes on characters and the author's own recommended reading and viewing.) It's definitely a geeky book as Stuller is very excited to share with you, the reader, about the media and super-powered women she loves. But at the same time, Stuller is very much an academic feminist, who chooses instead of harshly critiquing the flaws in the media she discusses to celebrate the strengths and the good points. This is not a bad view to have. It is just different than my own; and at many times in my reading, I wanted to say, "But!" (I can love Buffy: the Vampire Slayer without particularly loving Joss Whedon, for instance.) That said, I still enjoyed her viewpoint, and I do cherish many of the texts she discusses despite their flaws.

In Section I, *Ink-Stained s and Cinematic Warriors* flows really nicely from one topic to the next, in both a chronological and evolutionary development of the woman hero. I absolutely agree that most of our modern superwoman mythology is thanks to Wonder Woman and those hard-working, ever iconic Rose the Riveters of WWII. Stuller does a great job at addressing the political climates of the different eras and the resulting heroines without passing judgments. In Section II, Stuller covers what she calls the 'Journey of the Female Hero.' But I would rather say it's actually about the hero's family-structure as Stuller digs into how women heroes gain strength from those around them, e.g. Buffy and the Scoobies and Xena and her relationship with Gabrielle. I particularly enjoyed the chapter about mothers. Mostly because I love texts where women characters have good and inspiring relationships with their mothers. And I do agree with Stuller that good mother-daughter relationships in heroics could use a few more texts. In Section III, Stuller discusses current myth making by women creators and the question of where these texts are evolving too. This section was the least organized, and Stuller seemed to drift from topic-to-topic in a way that she previously did not. She also seemed to go back to some topics she'd already discussed, particularly journeys of heroic women and their mothers. And I can somewhat empathize with the task of trying to write history as it happens and not having the distance. I hope that Stuller can update this book as our female heroes grow.

Overall, as a pop culture fan, I enjoyed *Ink-Stained s and Cinematic Warriors* and would recommend it to anyone interested in how heroic women are portrayed in pop culture. This book would also make a great companion reader to a class about heroic women. I'm also happy that I got a few recommendations of texts to try myself that I hadn't heard of like the British spy Modesty Blaise.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A fantastic introduction to feminist pop culture studies. By Pamela. As I read *Ink-Stained s*, I found myself relapsing into grad school behaviors. I read with a pen in hand, annotating and underlining constantly. And I found myself wishing that I'd had this book while I was still in school, because Stuller's astute observations about tough women would have worked perfectly in the last paper I wrote, an examination of Zoe and Kaylee from *Firefly* as feminist heroes. I've even written about Hollywood's version of the tough woman on my blog, and no matter what your stand is on the matter, I think it's important to be aware of the history and the issues at play when Hollywood and the comic book industry creates these superwomen. Stuller's book serves as an excellent introduction to superwomen throughout entertainment's history, from Wonder Woman's early comic book days to television's relatively recent tough chicks, like Sydney Bristow and Dana Scully. Along with the useful history are a series of chapters about common issues in the portrayal of superwomen: redemption, collaboration, and compassion; superwomen and their fathers; and the maternal, filial, and mentoring relationships between women. The idea of collaboration between women is of particular interest to me. Most of the male heroes we see are loners, but many of the women work within a team. Female superheroes are often members of teams, but you also have collaboration and female friendship featured prominently in some fandoms such as Xena and Buffy. I wrote about this in my *Firefly* paper: all four of the women of *Serenity* depend on each other as well as the male members of the crew as a family unit. As Stuller says, this kind of collaboration is common in the female hero "not because she is incapable of succeeding on her own, but because she is more successful when she recognizes, encourages, and utilizes the talents of others" (92). The crew of *Serenity* and the Scoobies stick together because they love each other, and they work better as a unit than they would as loners. The third section of the book, "The Mythmakers," deals not only with female creators of popular culture and modern mythology, but also with fans stepping up and demanding better

portrayals of women, such as the creation of Project Girl Wonder and Gail Simone's "Women in Refrigerators" observations. This is a wonderful book if you're looking to dive into analysis of female characters in pop culture. I'm actually thinking about expanding my Firefly paper thanks to Stuller's fantastic book, though I haven't the foggiest idea what I'd do with it, heh.

In this comprehensive history, inquiry, critique, and reference guide, Stuller argues that Superwomen, from Wonder Woman to Charlies Angels, are more than just love interests or sidekicks who stand by their supermen. She shows how the female hero in modern mythology has broken through the traditional boy's club barrier to reveal the pivotal role of high-heeled crimefighters in popular culture. Chapter topics include love and compassion, spies and sexuality, daddys girls, and the complicated roles of superwomen who are also mothers. The book also includes a glossary of modern mythic women, as well as a foreword by acclaimed cultural commentator Roz Kaveney, author of *Superheroes! Capes and Crusaders in Comics and Films*.

Blogging as Ink-Stained in the Bitch blogs, Jennifer Stuller took on Barbarella, Lois Lane, and Tura Satana with her blog *Girl on Film*. With her new book, *Ink-Stained s and Cinematic Warriors*, you can find even more on kick-ass women in popular culture. --Kjerstin Johnson, *Bitch Magazine* (online) Female heroes abound in literature, film and all walks of life, although most people don't know that they do. Not surprising given how much they challenge the gender roles in which women and girls have historically been confined. This wonderful book shows female heroes breaking out of gender boxes left and right and illuminates new possibilities for the indomitable hero in all of us. --Kathleen Noble, Ph.D., author of *The Sound of the Silver Horn: Reclaiming the heroism in contemporary women's lives*. Once upon a time -- only a few years ago, actually -- women could turn on their TV sets and glory in the adventures of Buffy, Xena, Sydney Bristow, Dana Scully, and many more strong, ass-kicking women. Today there is not one show on the small screen that stars a female action hero. What happened? Comics are not much better. Aside from the occasional exception (for which we are grateful) like *Birds of Prey*, and women writers like Ivory Madison (*The Huntress*) and Gail Simone's newly feminist interpretation of Wonder Woman, most comic book action heroines continue to be male-written and drawn creations whose breasts are bigger than their personalities. Now along comes Jennifer Stuller, with her very entertaining book, *Ink-Stained s*, to explore the whys and wherefores of pop culture super women, and perhaps jolt us all into demanding more and stronger women characters. Thank you, Jennifer. We need those role models!--Trina Robbins author of *From Girls to Grrrlz: A History of Women's Comics from Teens to Zines* About the Author Jennifer K. Stuller is a writer and journalist, specializing in gender and sexuality in popular culture. She has been researching and speaking internationally on superwomen for over a decade, and has contributed to such publications as *Geek Monthly*, *Washington CEO* and the *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*. Stuller also teaches at the University of Washington, her alma mater, and maintains two blogs: *Ink-Stained Traveler* and *Ink-Stained*. She lives in Seattle, Washington.