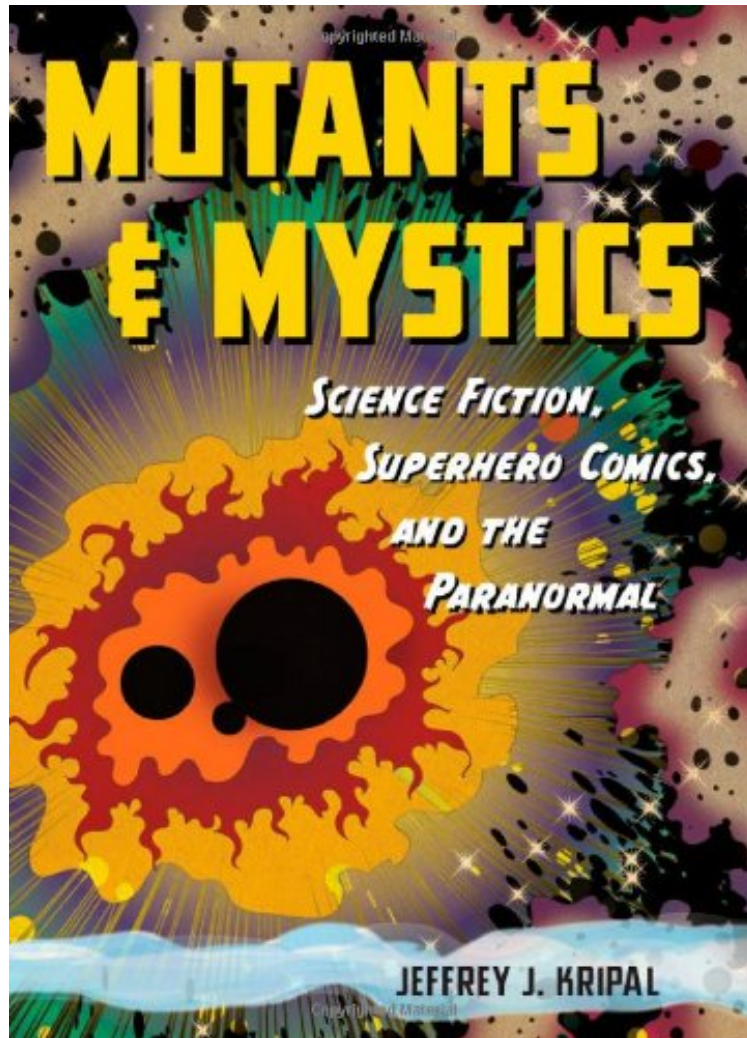


[Free and download] Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal

Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal

Jeffrey J. Kripal

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#1268217 in Books 2011-11-15Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x 1.60 x 6.13l, 2.19 #File Name: 0226453839376 pages | File size: 52.Mb

Jeffrey J. Kripal : Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Terrific and Utterly Unique Study!By cmysticismKripal has basically provided an in depth study into a subject that links the development of various paranormal phenomena from the turn of the 20th century to the present (i.e., to the beginning of the 2nd decade of the 21st century) with the growth of the fictional mediums of comic books and the sci-fi genre in general. The paranormal has always encompassed a set of chimeric phenomena, reacting and appearing to those who experience it in accordance with the specific cultural

beliefs, tropes, and expectations of any given society and time period. The role of human consciousness in determining what given form both reality and para-reality takes, the purpose of paranormal phenomena and sci-fi fiction in shaping human evolution, and the amazingly intriguing concept of what Kripal describes as the Super Script - the concept that humanity collectively "writes" our own reality in subtle but dramatic fashion through any given era's mythology, folklore, and fiction - is described in great detail culled from very thorough research. As part of this study, Kripal demonstrates how time is clearly not linear as it appears to be to our limited human perceptions - it seems the future can actually affect the past as well as the reverse in ways we are scarcely aware of - and he describes how many well-known personages in crafting the most enduring and iconic characters and stories in comic book fiction and sci-fi prose have experienced significant paranormal phenomena that had a profound impact on the fiction they crafted. The implications of the material researched in this book on the sometimes thin connection between reality and what we commonly consider fiction, and on the physical, mental, and spiritual development of the human species, is potentially staggering. If you are a fan of comic books and sci-fi in general as well as an avid student of the paranormal, this book is a must-read for you!

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Bridging the gap between spirituality and pop culture
By R. Parry
What do superheroes Superman, X-Men and Fantastic 4 have in common with the paranormal, Jacques Vallee, Whitley Streiber, Charles Fort, et.al. ? EVERYTHING . . . according to Jeffrey Kripal. WOW . . . what a cool book. Mutants and Mystics helps to bridge the gap between spiritually and pop culture with an exciting and thought provoking read, so much so, I had to put it down frequently to let his ideas just "soak in". Like many baby boomers, I've always been interested in comic books, super heros, sci-fi movies and paranormal phenomena. This scholarly and fun to read book focuses on how the paranormal has helped to generate the pop culture genres of science fiction, superhero comics and pulp fiction. The author details numerous personal histories and colorful anecdotes which include amazing paranormal experiences of authors and artists alike. I especially enjoyed learning more about Ray Thomas, the "Amazing Stories" history and his own paranormal experiences; Barry Windsor-Smith's UFO encounter and pre-cognitive experiences; Philip K. Dick's gnostic beliefs and fantastic personal visions, just to name a few. After reading the chapter discussing Jack Kirby's wonderful world of aliens, ancient astronauts, mutants, counter culture and consciousness, I've got a new appreciation for my childhood interest in comic books. I felt like I was reading a "hidden history" of American culture. Buy the book, you won't be disappointed.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The Uncanny Comics Connection
By Bill Bridges
This book was written just for me. I swear Jeffrey Kripal telepathically scanned my mind and knew all the buttons to push to make me devour this book. For someone like me who has spent years reading and writing sci-fi and weird horror in pop culture mediums - comics and games -- it's a welcome relief to see an academic take it all seriously. Well, not so serious as to make it boring and stuffy. Kripal admits that it was his remembering his love of comics as a kid that called him to take a fresh look at what comics have been telling us all these years, in light of his religious studies scholarship. That and a synchronistic X in a parking lot upon exiting an X-Men movie. The book explores the intersection of pop culture - specifically comics and the sci-fi pulps - and the paranormal, and finds things are stranger and more uncanny than most readers, let alone sci-fi fans, are aware of. Kripal reveals the many hidden themes that all-too-often synchronistically crop up in comics and the lives of those who author them. He proposes that we are living in a Super-Story, an over-riding narrative behind the many sub-narratives we tell ourselves in pop culture. Well, we think we're telling these stories, but we ourselves are being written. By what and by whom? That remains mysterious and rather Gnostic, but once we come to Realization we can move to Authorization and become "authors of the impossible" writing the stories of our own lives. This is a good companion book to Grant Morrison's Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human. It covers some of the same territory, but now from a broader perspective than the experiences of just one artist (Grant Morrison); we also discover the weird and prescient lives and art of other key comic-book and pulp prophets as Alan Moore, Jack Kirby, Barry Windsor-Smith, and Ray Palmer, among others. Next on my reading list is Kripal's previous book, Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred. I'd previously read portions of his book, The Serpent's Gift: Gnostic Reflections on the Study of Religion, and I plan to get back to that one soon, too. There's a cornucopia of rich ideas and connections in Kripal's work and I look forward to exploring them all.

In many ways, twentieth-century America was the land of superheroes and science fiction. From Superman and Batman to the Fantastic Four and the X-Men, these pop-culture juggernauts, with their "powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men," thrilled readers and audiences and simultaneously embodied a host of our dreams and fears about modern life and the onrushing future. But that's just scratching the surface, says Jeffrey Kripal. In *Mutants and Mystics*, Kripal offers a brilliantly insightful account of how comic book heroes have helped their creators and fans alike explore and express a wealth of paranormal experiences ignored by mainstream science. Delving deeply into the work of major figures in the field from Jack Kirby's cosmic superhero sagas and Philip K. Dick's futuristic head-trips to Alan Moore's sex magic and Whitley Streiber's communion with visitors, Kripal shows how creators turned to science fiction to convey the reality of the inexplicable and the paranormal they experienced in their lives. Expanded consciousness found its language in the metaphors of sci-fi's incredible powers, unprecedented mutations, time-loops

and vast intergalactic intelligences and the deeper influences of mythology and religion that these in turn drew from; the wildly creative work that followed caught the imaginations of millions. Moving deftly from Cold War science and Fredric Wertham's anticomics crusade to gnostic revelation and alien abduction, Kripal spins out a hidden history of American culture, rich with mythical themes and shot through with an awareness that there are other realities far beyond our everyday understanding. A bravura performance, beautifully illustrated in full color throughout and brimming over with incredible personal stories, *Mutants and Mystics* is that rarest of things: a book that is guaranteed to broaden and maybe even blow your mind.

"An invigorating read, and a cross-cultural bonanza you never saw coming. Boldly embracing the enigmatic Id, Jeffrey Kripal has gathered the silver threads of grand mythologies, sacred texts, and mystical creeds, binding them to the visionary Super-Ego at the heart of modern literatures' bastard sons--comic books and science fiction." (Barry Windsor-Smith) "*Mutants and Mystics* chronicles the emergence of a complex and startlingly dangerous energy in our world. Because we don't know what it is, we identify it as paranormal. But perhaps what it should really be called is 'abnormally powerful,' for, as Jeff Kripal reveals with satisfying skill in this book, it has come to define the very essence of the popular imagination. Instead of fairies and sylphs and gorgons, our rationalist world is defied by a folklore of superheroes, supervillains, and dangerous strangers, and, as I know all too well, can be shattered by them in some very real ways. *Mutants and Mystics* is the first book that shines the light of reason and insight into this swarming forest. As a wanderer here, I found the light that poured from these pages as blessed as it is breathtaking."