



# How Superheroes Model Community: Philosophically, Communicatively, Relationally

By Nathan Miczo

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## How Superheroes Model Community: Philosophically, Communicatively, Relationally By Nathan Miczo

From the perspectives of positive psychology and positive communication, superheroes are often depicted as possessing virtues and serving as inspirational exemplars. However, many of the virtues enumerated as characterizing the superhero (e.g., courage, teamwork, creativity) could just as easily be applied to heroes of other genres. To understand what is unique to the superhero genre, *How Superheroes Model Community: Philosophically, Communicatively, Relationally* looks not only to the virtues that animate them, but also to the underlying moral framework that gives meaning to those virtues. The key to understanding their character is that often they save strangers, and they do so in the public sphere. The superhero's moral framework, therefore, must encompass both the motivation to act to benefit others rather than themselves (especially people to whom they have no relational obligation) and to preserve the public sphere against those who would disrupt it. Given such a framework, Nathan Miczo argues that superheroes are not, and could not, be loners. They constantly form team-ups, super teams, alliances, partnerships, take on mentorship roles, and create sidekicks. Social constructionist approaches in the communication field argue that communication, in part, works to shape and create our social reality. Through this lens, Miczo proposes that superheroes maintain themselves as a community through the communicative practices they engage in.

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## How Superheroes Model Community: Philosophically, Communicatively, Relationally By Nathan Miczo Bibliography

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

*How Superheroes Model Community* is an interesting read that bridges topics in philosophy and communication, while centering on popular culture items of enormous appeal: superheroes and their character, their relationships, and their dilemmas. (Claudia Bucciferro, Gonzaga University)

In *How Superheroes Model Community: Philosophically, Communicatively, Relationally*, Nathan Miczo extends the reading of superheroes by linking them with the broad discipline of communication studies. He provides a clear argument that superheroes are not only protectors of communities but should also be read as communities themselves. They also offer critical insight into how relationships are created and maintained through that notion of community. This book is a must-read for media, popular culture, and communication scholars. (Norma Jones, Kent State University)

Nathan Miczo presents unique observations about the superhero genre through the application of communication studies. Comic book events and blockbuster films are analyzed alongside philosophers and theorists to yield one of the most thought-provoking texts on the superhero genre. Miczo provides a deeper understanding of both complex concepts and popular entertainment in *How Superheroes Model Community*. (Joseph J. Darowski, Brigham Young University)

#### **About the Author**

Nathan Miczo is professor of communication at Western Illinois University.

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