



If you have been to the cinema or watched the news, you have probably seen or heard something about the movie, *Watchmen*. It is the first potential blockbuster of 2009 and is based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore. It may not have registered as noteworthy to you.

It should.

It may look like just another super-hero movie, but it is a very significant one and for several reasons.

According to [The Hollywood Reporter](#), *Watchmen* opened on a record number of screens for a R-rated film (restricted

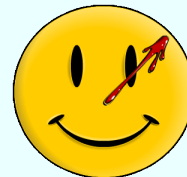
to people 17 and older). Its opening weekend income makes it the **sixth ranked** R-movie of all time.

Its moral theme is: the ends, even very evil ends, justify the means. *Watchmen*'s six, post-modern super-heroes are morally confused. Super-heroes have been outlawed, so they have lost their role in society. Then one of them gets killed, which rallies the others to find out why. In the end, it is one of their own who did it. Why? To execute his plan of sacrificing millions of people to prevent a possible nuclear war. Three of the remaining four cave in and agree to his plan. It is at this point *Watchmen* deviates from the standard hero movie. The one remaining, who opposes the evil plan, loses. He gets murdered by one of the other super-heroes. What is the result of all this moral anarchy?

Why, happiness, of course. War stops. Rape, murder and drug use all end. A Hollywood ending.

Watchmen is rated R for strong, graphic violence, sexuality, nudity and language.

Who will see it? Those interested in super-hero movies. If they are looking for a good-guys vs. bad-guys film, they will be grossly disappointed. Others likely to see it are young fans of graphic novels. Read on. This is not a small number of youth.



NOVEL NOVELS



Watchmen, the book, made *Time Magazine*'s list of the 100 greatest novels written in English in the 20th century. It is a *graphic novel*, i.e. a novel-length story, that uses comic book panels and is sold in hard-cover. These are comic-book books rather than just comic-book magazines. Few are comical in character and fewer now than ever are in the super-hero vein.

On March 5, 2009 the *New York Times* added a graphic novels section to its list of best-selling books. Why? Since 2001 graphic novel sales have increased five-fold to nearly \$400 million. It is the fastest growing book genre.

Have you checked your library lately? According to Robin Brenner, writing for the [School Library Journal](#), graphic novels make up **one-half** of the books checked out of the library among teenagers today. Her list of the top 30 books is one-half western and one-half manga. (Manga is the Japanese style of comic book art. *Naruto* and *Yu-Gi-Oh* are the big sellers among the Japanese-style novels.)

Watchmen held the top spot in the Nielsen graphic novels chart for the eighth month in a row in February. Unlike the movie, the book is thoroughly post-modern in its morality. It asks, "Why bother being moral?" Nor does it end happily; all the super-heroes are disillusioned and go off to live in isolation.

MORE ALAN MOORE

[Alan Moore](#) is the author of *Watchmen*. He was born in 1953 in Northampton, England. He was expelled from school in 1970 for dealing LSD. He and his first wife, Phyllis, had a mutual lover Deborah. His second wife, Melinda Gibbons, draws pornography for a living. He is a vegetarian, a practicing magician, an anarchist, an occultist and worships a Roman snake-deity named Glycon.

His graphic novels *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and *V for Vendetta* have already been made into films. *V for Vendetta* is also in the current top 20 in the graphic novels' charts. The success of *Watchmen*, the movie, likely means his other graphic novels will also sell better.

His latest graphic novel is called *Lost Girls*. It contrives what happens to three fictional characters as they grew up: Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, Alice from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and Peter Pan's

Graphic Novel Sales

- 2001 = \$75 million
- 2002 = \$130 million
- 2003 = \$195 million
- 2004 = \$245 million
- 2005 = \$295 million
- 2006 = \$330 million
- 2007 = \$375 million
- 2008 = \$395 million



Wendy. In the book, they meet as adults in 1913 to describe their sexual awakening

Moore [describes the work](#) as pornography. He says he wants to raise the genre's literary and artistic quality. The lack of standards in the porn industry bothers him. "The only genre in which sex can be discussed is a disreputable, seamy, under-the-counter genre with absolutely no standards." *Lost Girls* is about rape, pedophilia and lesbianism.

He also has another graphic novel, *The Mirror of Love*, which depicts and promotes homosexuality.

His raising of the standard of quality in the pornography industry is about as useful as Al Capone raising the standard of quality in murder or Jesse James raising the standard of quality in bank robbery.



The Amazing Spiderman #583, a \$3.99 comic book, sold 352,000 copies in January 2009.

MORE HEROES

Standard Dictionary Definitions

Hero: one regarded as a model; a person of outstanding moral character or one who has performed an act of great courage.

Courage: the mental or moral strength to face and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.

A *Dallas Morning News* [article](#) tells of teachers who no longer ask their students, "Who are your heroes?" since too many students can't come up with any. When they ask a boy who his heroes are, all he can think of is someone who has fame and money. Add good looks and you have the girl's list. Kids don't want to imitate them – they just want the fame, money and good looks. We live in an age with few great heroes for kids to imitate.

Fortunately, the world doesn't run on great heroes; it runs on little heroes: men and women who do what is noble, just, courageous and true – every day of their lives. It is today's parents, the little (family) heroes that will raise tomorrow's heroes, both small and great.

Raise a little hero. Some day he may be a big one. The world is going to need them.

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