

## **The Modern Age Must End Abstract**

**THESIS:** THE MODERN AGE MUST END

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In the over 80 years of comic books, fans and scholars have divided comic books into four different ages: the Golden Age (1938-1955), the Silver Age (1955-1970), the Bronze Age (1970-1985), and the Modern Age (1985-present). Scholars have used the Comic Book Ages to better understand comics' place in American culture; however, they have failed to define the parameters that define an Age. There are three factors that define the beginning of a new age. Firstly, industry change typically coincides with revisions in the Comics Code Authority. Industry changes also include changes in creative teams behind popular characters or changes in editorial staff. Secondly, tonal change is a change in the overall tone or theme of an Age. This often cannot be determined until well after an Age has ended, however, by examining the changes in storytelling and looking for trends within comic books, a tonal change can be determined. Lastly, character change happens either as an influx of new comic book characters or an updating of legacy characters. Typically, industrial change will happen first, which will then influence the changes in tone and character. Tonal and character change will coincide with one another after the industrial change. Character change is tied to the tonal change of a new Age, as the changes in character will assist in setting the tone and vice versa. The time has come for the ending of the Modern Age of Comics to be recognized. September 11, 2001, created a new age of comic books that will help historians and fans realize the importance of comic books to American culture. The influence comics have had in American history is only just starting to be fully appreciated by historians. By creating these Ages, comic books can be studied more easily, and their place as historical sources can be better analyzed.