With Great Power: Examining the Representation and Empowerment of Women in DC and Marvel Comics

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Abstract
Throughout history, comic books and the media they inspire have reflected modern society as it changes and grows. But women’s roles in comics have often been diminished as they become victims, damsels in distress, and sidekicks. This thesis explores the problems that female characters often face in comic books, but it also shows the positive representation that new creators have introduced over the years. This project is a genealogy, in which the development of the empowered superwoman is traced in modern age comic books. This discussion includes the characters of Kamala Khan, Harley Quinn, Gwen Stacy, and Barbara Gordon and charts how these four women have been empowered and disempowered throughout their comic canon. It rejects the lens of postfeminism and suggests that an intersectional feminism is still needed in today’s ever-evolving and diversifying world. Popular culture must be representative of everyone, and today’s women authors will be the driving force of diversity in comic books.

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that bypassed the adolescent power fantasies of the comics of our youth, by artfully welding the typically extraordinary with the exceedingly mundane. *Top 10* presented a refreshing and original spin on established conventions full of ingenuity and craft. 1 *ASTRO CITY.*