Hidden Heroines: The Portrayal of Women in American Superhero Comics
By: Esmé Smith
Junior Research Project Seminar

Introduction

The first comic books came out in the 1930s. Superhero comics quickly became one of the most popular genres. Today, they remain incredibly popular and influential. I have been interested in superhero comics for several years now, but one thing I often noticed was that women generally had much smaller roles than men and were also usually not as powerful. Female characters got significantly less time in the story devoted to them than men, and most superhero teams only had one woman, if they had any at all. Because there were so few female characters it was harder for me to find a way to relate to these stories and characters. If I wanted to read a comic that centered around a female hero I had to spend a lot more time looking for it than if I wanted to read about a male hero. Another thing that I noticed was that when people talk about the history of superhero comics, and the most important and influential superheroes, they almost only talk about male heroes. Wonder Woman was the only exception to this. This made me curious about other influential women in comics and their stories. Whenever I read about the history of comics I got plenty of information on how the portrayal of superheroes changed over time, but it always focused on male heroes, so I was interested in learning how women were portrayed in comics and how that has changed. For my research, I only focused on superhero comics, not other genres of comic books. I also did not look at movies and TV shows about superheroes. I chose to focus on a few distinct eras of comics and the differences in how women were portrayed between these different time periods. The time periods I focused on were the 1930s and 1940s, the 1950s and 1960s, the 1970s and 1980s, and 1990s to present day. The question I chose to research was "How has portrayal of women in American superhero comics changed since the 1940s and what caused these shifts?"

Section I: 1930s and 1940s

Famous Funnies, the first comic book, was published in 1933, and throughout the 1930s many different types of comics were published. Paul Lopes, author of *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book* writes that the first superhero comic published was *Superman* in 1938 (Lopes 2). When this comic was first released it provided a large boost in popularity to comics. Throughout the 1940s many other superhero comics were published because of *Superman*'s popularity. This era is often referred to as the golden age of comics.

While there were many different superhero comics that came out during this time, there weren't a lot of female superheroes. They would often only get a few one-off issues instead of getting their own comic series like male superheroes would. Female superheroes were also often over sexualised because this was thought to be the only way to get male comic book readers to read stories centered around a female hero. In these comics women were often portrayed as relying on men in their lives. They were also shown as being much less serious about being superheroes than men in comics and being their much weaker sidekicks. Mike Madrid, author of *The Supergirls: Fashion, Feminism, Fantasy and the History of Comic Book Heroines* writes: "Bulletman made an antigravity helmet for his fiancée and named her Bulletgirl. The Flame had Flame Girl, Rocketman had Rocketgirl, and even the diminutive Doll Man had Doll Girl. These ladies were all inducted into the world of crime fighting by the men in their lives, who played a fatherly role by sanctioning a secret life for their girlfriends" (12). Another major aspect of how women were portrayed in comics was that in many comic book storylines during the 1940s female superheroes would end up getting captured by the villain, needing their male counterparts to rescue them.

One superhero that is considered to be an outlier to this is Wonder Woman. The first *Wonder Woman* comic came out in 1941. Trina Robbins, author of *The Great Women Superheroes* writes that she is also particularly notable because while many superheroines from early comics only had a few comics and were then forgotten, Wonder Woman remains one of the most well known superheroes today. One of the reasons for her success is that many of her stories focused on empowering women and had many female characters in them such as sidekicks and villains, while other comics with female heroes from this time had mostly men as supporting characters (6). This made her extremely popular among female comic readers. During this time most comic writers didn't think they had a female audience and solely focused on appealing to male readers. The main reason for Wonder Woman's success is that its creator, William Moulton Marston, specifically thought about attracting female comic book readers when he created her because he noticed that almost all comics only targeted a male audience. This approach to writing superheroes was very different from other comic book writers of this time because they almost exclusively considered the male audience when writing comics (Robbins 5). "Women are always the strongest characters in the stories. The handsome but befuddled Steve Trevor exists because of an unwritten law of superhero comics: the hero must have a love interest so there will always be someone to rescue. He is the Lois Lane to Wonder Woman's Superman." (Robbins 10). This demonstrates how different *Wonder Woman* comics were to other female-led superhero comics of the time, which is what caused Wonder Woman's popularity and memorability according to Robbins.

There was a significant decrease in female heroes starting in the 1950s. During World War II women were encouraged to join the workforce and comics often reflected

that by having female superheroes, even if they were generally weaker than male heroes. Once World War II ended and women were encouraged to return to their roles as housewives comics began to reflect that as well.

> "With the end of World War II and the return of the male workforce, women were relegated back into the home. There was a backlash and return to conservative family values in which men were the breadwinners and women the homemakers. Comic books reflected the swinging of society's conservative pendulum with regard to female gender roles" (3)

Writes Katherine J. Murphy in *Analyzing Female Gender Roles in Marvel Comics from the Silver Age (1960) to the Present*. Many superheroes in comics from the 1940s were depicted helping with the war effort. One of the most well known examples of this is the early *Captain America* comics (Madrid 17). Another instance of this was the *Victory Girls*. "In comic books, women had a chance to help out as well. A group of patriotic, red blooded American ladies put on costumes to fight the good fight. They were the Victory Girls. Part patriot, part pinup, these ladies proved that everyone had a part to play in this war" (Madrid 17). The *Victory Girls* are not well known superheroes today, because like many other female superheroes from this time, their comic series was cancelled after the 1940s. There were other factors that also contributed to a decrease in female superheroes in the 50s.

Section II: 1950s and 1960s

In 1954 the Comics Code of Authority was introduced. This was a set of guidelines for comics that dictated what could and couldn't be shown in them (Lopes 31). Comics

needed to follow these guidelines in order to receive the seal of the Comics Code. If a comic did not have this seal it would be much harder to distribute. Stores wouldn't want to sell it because if it didn't have the seal it meant something in the comics had been deemed inappropriate. If comics without the seal were sold, they were usually in a "restricted" section of the store (Lopes 33). This code was introduced because in 1954 a psychiatrist named Fredric Wertham published a book called *Seduction of the Innocent* which described how he believed that depictions of violence and other inappropriate subject matter in comics lead to an increase in delinquency (Lopes 33). Because of this book people became increasingly concerned about the effects of comics on children. This led to the establishment of the Comics Code of Authority and a group created by publishers to review comics and make sure they followed the code. They had an official set of restrictions on what couldn't be shown in comics (Lopes 34). In *Women in Refrigerators: The Objectification of Women in Comics* Kyra Nelson writes that some of the rules in the comics code that were the most impactful included: "Policemen, judges, government officials, and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority." "Scenes of excessive violence shall be prohibited. Scenes of brutal torture, excessive and unnecessary knife and gun play, physical agony, gory and gruesome crime shall be eliminated." "All characters shall be depicted in dress reasonably acceptable to society." Lastly, "Females shall be drawn realistically without exaggeration of any physical qualities" (Nelson 4). Because of these rules most of the subject matter in comics became much less serious.

The Comics Code also heavily impacted women in comics. Before the introduction of the Comics Code most female superheroes were heavily sexualised, with unrealistic

proportions and revealing costumes, so when the Comics Code was put in place many comics with female superheroes were taken off the shelves (Nelson 4). Comic writers of the time almost only considered the male audience for comics and they thought that with these new restrictions men wouldn't want to buy comics with female main characters. According to Nelson this was the reason why most of the popular female superheroes of the 1940s are not known today (5). Another reason that shows how the Comics Code affected how women were shown was that depicting them doing things that didn't conform to traditional gender roles was often considered to be challenging "respected institutions". This meant that female superheroes were often sidelined. They often had much weaker superpowers than male heroes which made them less able to fight. Hannah R. Costelle, author of *Suffering Sappho! Female Friendships in Superhero Comics, 1940s to 1960s and Today* writes that in some cases during this time the inclusion of women in comics was actively discouraged by publishing companies. "In the '50s, DC Comics' Official Editorial Policy Code was that 'The inclusion of females in stories is specifically discouraged. Women, when used in plot structure, should be secondary in importance' " (14). After the introduction of the Comics Code in 1954 their story arcs also started to focus a lot more on finding a husband or boyfriend to settle down with.

Female characters in comics who were not superheroes were also affected by the Comics Code. Many female side characters during the 1940s still had their own goals and ambitions separate from male main characters. This changed in the 1950s and they were almost always just love interests. One example of this shift is how the character of Lois Lane changed from the 40s to the 50s. "In the 1940s, Lois was a career woman who would go to any lengths to investigate a story, and she was always after the biggest scoop of all:

Superman's secret identity" (Madrid 65). In 1958 Lois got her own title, *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane*, "She was no longer obsessed with winning a Pulitzer, but with becoming Mrs. Superman (15)'' writes Costelle. Another example of this is Batwoman, who was solely introduced as a love interest for Batman. She becomes a superhero because she wants to be with Batman and most, if not all, of her early story arcs revolve around her trying to date him. In *Batman* comics from this time, because Batwoman's only motivation for being a superhero is that she wants to date Batman, she is shown to be unskilled and careless in crime fighting. "A young male reader in the late 50's would also come away with the impression that women were completely inept creatures. The staunchly sexist Batman constantly bullies Batwoman with his insistence that women are not cut out to fight crime" (Madrid 63).

The *Fantastic Four* and *The Avengers* are extremely well known comics that were first published in the 1960s. Each of the two teams only had one woman on them and in both cases her main motive was finding love and was generally shown being more inconvenient than helpful to her male teammates. These two characters were Wasp and Invisible Woman. "Wasp seems to join Ant-Man in his crime fighting exploits in the Avengers more as a way to bag him as a husband than to rid the world of evil. The Wasp's contribution to the Avengers' epic battle is generally of the annoyance factor. She is like the Tinkerbell of the team" (Madrid 115). The Invisible Woman was portrayed in a very similar way to Wasp. She is often talked down to and is seen as much less useful to the team than the other members. "Paternal Reed often gets impatient with Sue's apparent immaturity, …'Just like a woman! Everything I do is for your own good but you're too scatter-brained and emotional to realize it!'"(Madrid 111). In *Invisible Girl* Lillian Robinson writes about

how during the 60s she is often portrayed as shallow and unhelpful to the team during fights. She also gets a lot less character development than other members of the team. (Robinson 5)

During the 50s and 60s women in comics were almost never shown as having positive relationships with each other. One of the most common ways women were portrayed interacting with each other was fighting over a man. This is another example of how women in comics from this time mainly had storylines that centered around men. In the comic *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane*, Lois regularly fights with fellow reporter Lana Lang over Superman. Their rivalry is the central conflict of the comic series, according to Hannah R. Costelle. "While Superman fights his nemesis to stop him from destroying the planet, Lois fights her supposed best friend to stop her from stealing her boyfriend. This not only shows how petty women were expected to be, but also how two faced they were supposed to behave toward one another '' (16). Rivalry wasn't the only type of relationship women were shown having, but other portrayals of relationships between women were similarly negative. Almost anytime women were shown working together they were teaming up to conspire against male superheroes. This is shown in an issue of *The Legion of Superheroes* where all of the female members work together against male members of the team. "In a Legion story called, 'The Revolt of the Girl Legionnaires,' the girls are hypnotized by the queen of matriarchal planet and made to seduce the boys and destroy them. In one panel the girls are laughing and dancing cruelly after defeating the boys... The girls are cured of their man-hate by the end of the story and repent." (Costelle 19) In other instances of women working together they are usually captured or otherwise incapacited by villains.

"In one *Justice Society* story, the girls try to team up without their boyfriends'

permission, led by Wonder Woman, who also has no decision-making power.

Wonder Woman receives a letter that tells her exactly where to find a criminal

mastermind, and she rounds up the girlfriends to help her capture him. But when

the women pursue the lead, they fall into a trap and are taken hostage to be used as

bait when the boys arrive." (Costelle 16).

Section III: 1970s and 1980s

In the 1970s the Comics Code began to lose power and female superheroes started

to have more agency again. This was because more and more comics were being published

that aimed to push the boundaries of what the Comics Code allowed (Madrid 146). One

example of a comic like this was *Vampirella*, which was first published in 1969. Comics

featuring her showed extremely oversexualised female characters and often had more

violence than typical comics books from this time (Madrid 148). Comics like *Vampirella*

were usually published by independent publishers outside of Marvel and D.C., the two

biggest comic publishers. This is another reason why they were harder for the Comics Code

to regulate. Eventually these themes would spread to bigger comic book publishers like

Marvel and D.C.

In 1970 an *Avengers* comic was published where the villain Enchantress disguises

herself as the hero Valkyrie and convinces female Avengers: Wasp, Scarlet Witch, Black

Widow and Medusa to form their own team and fight against the male heroes. At the end of

the comic, Enchantress is defeated and they return to the Avengers. This comic was meant

to mock feminst movements but in some ways it ended up leading the way for more complex and powerful comic book heroines in the 1970s (Madrid 150).

 "After the women learn the truth and vanquish Enchantress, the boorish Avenger Goliath chides his female teammates '. . . you birds finally learned your lesson about that women's lib bull!' The Scarlet Witch and Wasp, however, did not seem so convinced... Valkyrie's message, sham as it might have been, would resonate throughout the coming decade" (Madrid 150).

One major change in the way women were portrayed in comics during this time is that their stories didn't revolve around men as much as they did in previous eras. Women started to get into crime fighting on their own, as opposed to being introduced to it by men in their lives. Two examples of this are Black Widow and Black Canary. In Black Widow comics from the 1970s she decides to become a superhero on her own and is much more independent than in previous comics (Madrid 156). In the *Black Canary* comics this also happens. In older comics about her many of her storylines focus on her romantic relationships. Having a woman decide on her own to become a superhero was an extremely uncommon occurrence in comics from previous eras. In *Black Canary* comics from the 1970s she turns down the superhero Green Arrow when he asks her out. It would have been very unlikely for something like this to happen in comics from the 50s or 60s because settling down and getting married was seen as the ultimate goal for most female characters.

"The hot headed bowman Green Arrow quickly falls for the dazzling blond heroine. But for a change it is the female Black Canary who keeps the male Green Arrow's advances at bay, rather than leaping at the prospect of finding a man. Black Canary

says she needs space to figure out who she is and doesn't need a boyfriend around to complicate things." (Madrid 158)

In *Fantastic Four* comics the relationship between Invisible Woman and Mr. Fantastic becomes more complex as well. In *Fantastic Four* comics from the 1970s she has disagreements with him; they address how in the past Mr. Fantastic often looked down on Invisible Woman. "Tired of being overlooked as a heroine she lashes out at her husband '. . .in the heat of battle you don't think of me as a member of the team... only as the mother of your child'"(Madrid 158). While there were a lot of improvements with the way women were represented in comics during the 1970s there were still many aspects of their portrayal that were problematic.

Another major way that the depiction of female superheroes changed was that they were often extremely oversexualised. This was common in early comics from the 1940s but mostly stopped with the introduction of the Comics Code. When the Comics Code lost power their oversexualization returned (Madrid 146). One reason for this was that many comic writers still thought that male readers would only want to read stories that had women as their main characters if the women were sexualised. "Sex appeal was the 'spoonful of sugar' that helped the 'medicine' of feminism go down. A liberated heroine who still looked sexy would be less threatening to the male readers of comic books" (Madrid 155). The oversexualization of female superheroes was often contreversial because while some saw it as liberating, others saw it as demeaning (Madrid 156).

Another theme in the portrayal of women in comics that started in the 1970s was that the more powerful superheroines were often portrayed as mentally unstable (Madrid 173). One famous example of this was the X-men storyline *Dark Phoenix*, which started in

1976 and ran until 1980. In it Jean Grey bonds with a powerful energy known as the "phoenix force". This makes her powers much stronger which is initially very helpful to the X-men but the power eventually drives Jean insane and she causes mass destruction. At the end of the story she briefly regains her sanity and decides that the power will always be too much for her to handle so she uses it to kill herself (Madrid 175). Another notable example of this is Scarlet Witch. She is considered to be one of Marvel's most powerful female superheroes. She is often depicted as being extremely unstable and unable to control her powers. In many comic storylines she loses control of her powers and harms her fellow heroes (Madrid 174). One other example of this was early *Captain Marvel* comics (at the time she was known as Ms. Marvel, she wouldn't be known as Captain Marvel until 2012). She is also considered to be one of the most powerful female Marvel superheroes. In *Punching Holes in the Sky: Carol Danvers and the Potential of Superheroines* Nathan Miczo describes how when she first gains superpowers, Carol Danvers blacks out and never remembers anything she does as Captain Marvel. She only realizes she is a superhero several issues of her comic later. "Although Carol shortly thereafter recovered her memories of her alter ego, the message had already been sent: rather than her superpowers being an extension and reflection of Carol's inner self, this "bold new superheroine's" powers were literally alien to her and entailed a loss of self for their manifestation." (215). Raven from *Teen Titans* is another example of this. She is very powerful but is shown constantly struggling to control her powers and ultimately fails (Madrid 229).

Another event in the comic book world that had a large impact on the way women were portrayed was the death of Gwen Stacy. Gwen Stacy was introduced in 1965 as

Spider-Man's girlfriend before she was killed off in 1970. In comic books characters often die and are later brought back to life but for Gwen this was not the case. Gabriel Gianola, author of *The Gwenaissance: Gwen Stacy and the Progression of Women in Comics* talks about how when Gwen Stacy was killed off this was a shock to comic book readers because at the time many comics still adhered to the guidelines of the Comics Code where extreme violence and darker themes were not allowed (476). Gwen Stacy's death is considered to have partially led the way for more serious storylines in comics that had lasting effects on the characters. While this was a good thing for comics, it also brought about some more negative effects. One common trope in comics is killing or otherwise incapacitating female characters to further the stories of male characters (Nelson 2). Killing off Gwen Stacy is thought to have largely inspired this. When Gwen Stacy was first killed off it came as a shock to many comic readers. "The significance of the story in the wider history of the medium cannot be denied, but what of the woman herself? Decades after this "shake-up," Gwen became defined solely by her death." (Gianola 476).

This trope would later be named "fridging" or "women in refrigerators". This is because comic writer Gail Simone noticed this common theme in comic books in 1999 when in a *Green Lantern* comic a villain kills Green Lantern's girlfriend and puts her body in a refrigerator (Nelson 3). Simone then started a list called the "Women in Refrigerators List" which has all of the female comic book characters who have been killed or otherwise written out of the story in order to provide character development for men. Many prominent female superheroes of the late 70s and throughout the 80s were killed off, though unlike Gwen Stacy, most of them were later brought back. Some well known examples of this were Jean Grey, Batwoman, and Super-Girl.

While not all well known female heroes were killed off, there was still a very large increase in violence against women in comics in the 80s. One well known example of this was Batgirl. One of the most well known *Batman* storylines is *The Killing Joke* in which the Joker captures Batgirl and shoots her in the waist, paralyzing her (Madrid 239). The Joker then continues to torture Batgirl until Batman rescues her. Even though this story depicts very graphic violence against Batgirl and uses this violence as a main plot point *The Killing Joke* remains one of the most famous *Batman* comics (Madrid 239). Another well known female superhero who was killed off during the 80s was Elektra. She was an assassin who was introduced as a love interest for the superhero Daredevil. She was introduced in 1981 and quickly became a very popular character with comic readers. A large part of her story was how Daredevil tries to convince her to change and no longer be an assassin. At the end of the story she is killed off -she was eventually brought back but not until much later- and her plotline is seen as little more than a tragic love story for Daredevil.

Section IV: 1990s to present

In the late 90s, and in more recent times, female representation in comics has improved significantly. Many of the sexist tropes that were extremely common throughout the history of comics have slowly started to become less common. One of the reasons for this is that now, there are a lot more women writing comics than there have been in the past (Nelson 8). Comic writer Jackie Ball talks about her experiences and how the world of comics has become more diverse. "The people who I was meeting at conventions and things were a much more diverse creator pool than what I had seen prior." She also talks about how some comic publishers have started making an effort to hire more diverse creators. "I

do think there's been like a really like cognitive, like an intentional shift in looking to creators with more diverse stories."

One notable example of these changes is Captain Marvel. For most of her time as a superhero she was known as Ms. Marvel but in 2012 she became Captain Marvel. Along with this name change she became a much stronger character. In one of her storylines she is sent back in time and has a chance to stop the accident that gave her powers, allowing her to live a normal life. She chooses to let it happen, showing how she enjoys being a superhero and how it is a positive part of her life. "Thus, with the first story arc, Carol was given the opportunity to finally own her own superpowers" (Miczo 217). In newer comics Captain Marvel's costume also became much less oversexualised than it had been in the past (Miczo 216). Another way that *Captain Marvel* comics improved was that she became friends with Rogue, a heroine who she had previously been enemies with because Rogue had been the reason she temporarily lost her memories. This revised the trope that women in comics almost never had positive relationships with each other.

Another important example of this trope becoming less common is *Birds of Prey*. This was an all female team that was first introduced in 1996. "Birds of Prey is a DC Comics publication which portrays an all-female team featuring Oracle, Black Canary, Huntress, and Lady Blackhawk. . .Birds of Prey presents strong women overcoming difficult personal challenges while defending their city." (Nelson 9) This was very significant because in most comics there was almost no representation of women having positive relationships with each other. This comic became especially popular when Gail Simone started writing it in 2003. This is an example of how when more women started writing comics, representation improved. *Birds of Prey* was also particularly significant because when it first came out,

having an all female superhero team was almost unheard of. Having this team of all women who work together and support each other was extremely important. It led the way for more comics like *Birds of Prey* where women have more varied representation. Today there are several more all female superhero teams, partially because of *Birds of Prey* (Madrid 301).

Gwen Stacy, who was known almost solely for her death, also made a return in recent comics. The first *Spider-Gwen* comic came out in 2014. *Spider-Gwen* is a version of Gwen Stacy from a different universe who has the same powers as Spider-Man. *Spider-Gwen* was originally meant to be a one-off comic for the comic book event *Edge of the Spider-verse* where many alternate reality versions of Spider-Man team up. *Spider-Gwen* was extremely popular with readers which led to her getting her own comic book. In this comic Gwen becomes a much more developed character and is no longer defined by being Spider-Man's girlfriend as she was in comics from the 60s and 70s. "The series portrays Gwen struggling with guilt in a way that is similar to the classic Peter Parker story but is also unique to her situation. Gwen is also shown having trouble juggling her superhero life with her family life and social responsibilities." (Gianola 510) This is a very stark contrast to the previous version of Gwen Stacy whose only purpose was to be "the perfect girlfriend" (Gianola 477). Gwen Stacy's return was especially important in the world of comics because it showed how comics were starting to move away from the damaging trope of using female characters only as a way to provide character development for male characters and allowing them to become interesting and complex characters (Gianola 511).

Conclusion

  During my research I had a harder time finding sources on portrayals of women in modern comic books because they came out recently and there has been less time for people to study and write about them. If I were to continue my research I would try to read more about more recent comics. Even though representation of women in comics has improved significantly there are still a lot less female led comic book titles than male led comic book titles. It would be interesting to see how the portrayal of female superheroes continues to change and develop. I would also want to learn more about the history of women writing comics and how that has changed over time. I was only able to read a little about this topic. I think it would be interesting to explore because when comics first started out women were usually excluded from working on them and it would be fascinating to research and see how they became included in comic book creation. I researched this when I was looking at more modern comics and how more women are writing comics now.

  Overall, I was able to answer my original research question of "How has portrayal of women in American superhero comics changed since the 1940s and what caused these shifts?". Before I started this research project, I had read a little bit about the history of comics in general. I knew about some of the major events in the history of comics and how they affected comics as a whole, but these sources almost never talked about how the portrayal of women in comics was affected by these events. It was interesting to see a new aspect of how they changed the world of comics. One example of this is the Comics Code. When I had previously heard about it, I had only known about how it affected the general subject matter of comics, not about how it affected the portrayal of women in comics. During my research, I was surprised to learn that its effect on the portrayal of female

superheroes was almost as big as its effect on the general subject matter of comics. Writing

this definitely changed how I view comics. I feel like I learned about a part of comics history

that I had previously had almost no knowledge of, despite the fact that I often spent time

reading and looking for superhero comics that centered around female main characters.

Works Cited

Ball, Jackie. Personal Interview. 9 February 2021.

Costelle, Hannah. *Suffering Sappho! Female Friendships in Superhero Comics, 1940s to 1960s and Today*. Eastern Kentucky University, 2016. Print.

Gianola, Gabriel and Coleman, Janine. *The Gwenaissance: Gwen Stacy and the progression of women in comics*. University of Mississippi Press. 2018. Print.

Lopes, Paul. *Demanding respect: the evolution of the American comic book*. Philadelphia: Temple University press, 2009. Print.

Madrid, Mike. *The Supergirls: Fashion, Feminism, Fantasy and the History of Comic Book Heroines*. Exterminating Angel Press, 2009. Print.

Miczo, Nathan. *Punching Holes in the Sky: Carol Danvers and the Potential of Superheroinism*. Rowman & Littlefield. 2014. Print.

Murphy, Katherine. *Analyzing Female Gender Roles in Marvel Comics from the Silver Age (1960) to the Present*. Case Western Reserve University, 2016. Web.

Nelson, Kyra. *Women in Refrigerators: The Objectification of Women in Comics*. Brigham Young University, 2015. Print.

Robbins, Trina. *The Great Women Superheroes*. Kitchen Sink Press, 1996. Print

Robinson, Lillian. *Generations of Super-Girls*. Taylor & Francis Group. 2004. Print.

--- . *Invisible Girl*. Taylor & Francis Group. 2004. Print.