Analysis of the Female Presence in the Male-Dominated Comic Book Industry

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Comments
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Comic Book Industry and Consumer Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1930s</th>
<th>1940s</th>
<th>1950s</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s - Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Evolved from newspaper comic strips</td>
<td>• Widespread read &amp; consumed by adults &amp; young children</td>
<td>• Surged in popularity after WWII</td>
<td>• Survey featured in Justice Society of America (1944): 277 boys &amp; 253 girls</td>
<td>• Another 1944 study: primary consumers were children &amp; adolescents</td>
<td>• Surveys revealed that men were the primary consumers of comic books.</td>
<td>• Females remained an insignificant demographic to publishers</td>
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<td>• Ramsonage of female readers continues into 1990s.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Polls revealed more women read comics than men</td>
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<td>• Female consumers became more vocal about their role within comic book culture</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Visibility = Validation

- Companies focused on most profitable demographic: adolescent boys
- Focused unwelcoming environment for women to break into comic book culture
- Blogging & social media increased accessibility for female creators & consumers

Cultural Influence & Comics

- Function as a medium of popular culture & are influenced by changing social & cultural trends, like other forms of art, literature, & media
- Academics can study comic books for unique perspectives of history & culture

Toxic Masculinity and Destructive Stereotypes

- Popularity of action comics with boys enabled publishers to produce content to continue to pique their interest, highlighting violence, action, & displays of masculinity
- Young boys can project themselves into the lives of overfit masculine characters, empowering them with a learned masculinity that can become toxic

The Adult Female Role

- Characteristic to post-war America
- Represented women as spoiled, willful, & expecting to get what they wanted

Women in Refrigerator

“The inclusion of females in stories is specifically discouraged. Women when used in plot structure should be secondary in importance.” – DC Comics (1950s)

Representation of Women

- Like picture books, comics tell stories through image & text and are used in early childhood development to teach children about social norms
- Studies reveal that children begin to define masculinity/femininity based on storylines featured in picture books
- Representations of women in comics present readers with a template of gender roles for young girls in society
- Through the 1980s-90s, more female characters were introduced & existing ones earned solo titles, becoming household names
- These comics empower readers through diverse representations & by featuring strong female characters & feminist themes

Visions of Feminist Ideologies in Modern Comic Book Titles

Examples of Feminist Ideologies in Modern Comic Book Titles

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References

64. Eric Segal, Women in Refrigerator, 2017.