

Marvel comics research paper

Literature



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In October 1939, the world required heroes. Hitler had recently attacked Poland. Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand had proclaimed war. The US remained unbiased - but it was already taking the first steps towards the Manhattan Project and the making of the nuclear bomb. As Nazi Germany's shadow fell over Europe, it appeared the planet was on the edge of demolition. Who might save us? The response hit the newsstands when Timely Publications gave us Marvel Comics #1. Emerging between the usual romance, western and crime magazines that lined the racks, Marvel Comics was an alternate breed.

Its cover demonstrated a gigantic orange figure, The Human Torch, melting bullets on his blazing chest. Inside, The Torch was joined by Namor the Sub-Mariner, an oceanic superhero from the Antarctic. The cover price was just ten cents. Over the past 70-odd years, Marvel Entertainment has evolved from that first issue of Marvel Comics into one of the industry's leaders. Marvel Comics weathered World War 2 (previous Editor-In-Chief Stan Lee took leave to do military service). It survived the opposition to comics in the '50s. It was restored throughout the '60s Silver Age.

Troops in Vietnam carried X-Men comics in their rucksacks. Marvel watched the Berlin Wall fall, survived 9/11 and even commended Obama's election by letting the president make an appearance in The Amazing Spider-Man #583. So, is it an exaggeration to say that Marvel is an institution that's impacted on American popculture with a force heavier than Thor's hammer? Probably not. Marvel's creations are instantly recognisable icons. Without Marvel and their long-time rivals Detective Comics (DC) - the publishers of Superman and Batman - the superhero as we know it wouldn't exist.

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And if superhero comics didn't exist you could kiss goodbye to the last 10+ years of super-powered summer tentpole movies. " It's been proven now in the world of mass media that Marvel characters mean money," former Editor-In-Chief Joe Quesada commented. " People are attracted to these characters. They love these characters. They're becoming more and more relevant every day. They are now basically modern myths. " Consistent with Marvel Comics legend, the story starts on a golf course in 1961. Timely Publications head Martin Goodman was playing nine holes with one of the executives from comic merchant Independent News.

This person specified that opponent DC Comics was creating sales from its Justice League Of America superhero title. It was a surprising bit of information to Goodman. Last he'd realized, superhero comics were taking a loss, their introductory prominence throughout WW2 having dissipated in the '50s as romances, westerns and horror comics took over the market. Back in the workplace, Goodman requested his Editor-In-Chief Stan Lee to arrange an opponent comic. Working with craftsman Jack Kirby, Lee made The Fantastic Four. It was the beginning of an unfathomably fruitful couple of years.

Between 1961 and 1963 Lee also made The X-Men, The Incredible Hulk, Thor, The Avengers, Iron Man and - maybe their most popular of all - Spider-Man. All of a sudden superheroes were back in vogue and Lee's remarkable brand of narrating revolutionised the comics business. The " Marvel Age of Comics" had begun. What separated Marvel's superheroes from their peers was their humanity. Lee's characters may have been able to turn invisible or set themselves on fire but they were real people first and foremost. They had

foibles, they had weaknesses - and if they were Peter Parker they struggled to get a date.

" I tried to give them authenticity by making them more realistic," Lee says of his original pdex-clad heroes. " Who do you know who has a really perfect life? I mean, I don't care how rich the guy is, how sexy his wife is. There's nobody who doesn't have a hard time. I mean, when we were doing those books, Kennedy seemed to have a perfect life, and he got shot... Everybody has problems and everybody has secret sorrows. " Since those early days, Marvel has gone from strength to strength - actually surviving filing for bankruptcy in the '90s.

In any case there was, up to this point, one thing that evaded it: Hollywood success. The point when superhero movies first started to overwhelm the box office, from Superman (1978) to Batman (1989), they were all DC titles. Marvel never appeared to have the capacity to keep up, regardless of being purchased by film organization New World Pictures in 1986. Film rights were lashed to studios yet all we got was super-crap as The Punisher (1989) and direct-to-VHS Captain America (1990). At that point came sleeper hit Blade in 1998.

" The character was basically obscure, didn't even have his own particular comic book, and had been part of Tombs Of Dracula," reviews Arad. However the establishment went ahead to make \$1 billion in income and prepared for X-Men (2000). X-men was a massive hit that put the Marvel Cinematic Universe where it is today. Suddenly Marvel Comics were contenders at the movies and the organization even set up its own film division - Marvel

Studios - in the in the '90s. With such a rich back list to work with, it was a No-Brainer.

Its multi-billion dollar deal with The Walt Disney Company demonstrates exactly how lucrative its characters are to Hollywood. Mouse House CEO Bob Iger depicts Marvel as a " Treasure trove" that " transcends sex, age and geographical barriers". Disney, an organization that based fortunes on making franchises around notable characters, was a great partner. Previous Marvel studios CEO Avi Arad said: " I think this will look like a smart deal," he says, " because Disney is a company that knows how to exploit a brand. " Since being aquired by Disney, Marvel has grown to be the dominating factor in theaters.

With it's release of Ironman in 2008, Marvel took a big risk. Ironman set Marvel on a path, a 6-movie, 4-year path that led them straight to one of the most ambitious movies ever: The Avengers. Combining 5 franchises, 8 characters, preserving original cast members, keeping continuity in tact, and servicing fans of each character has to be one of the greatest feats ever hurdeled in movie history. Marvel has been a major influence on pop culture for 74 years and continues to grow. I personally cannot wait to see what the future holds for Marvel Comics and Marvel Studios.