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[Literature](#), [Books](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Origin](#) \n \t
2. [Powers](#) \n \t
3. [Personality](#) \n \t
4. [Girlfriends](#) \n \t
5. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Peter Parker, also known as the Amazing or Spectacular Spider-Man is one of the most celebrated super heroes of all time. This is not only illustrated by his world-wide appeal but also by the numerous media that have been dedicating to telling his story. This media includes over 15 comic book titles, a Broadway musical and two movie franchises. With so many Spider-Man stories being and have been told, one of the fundamental question of Spider-man fans and followers alike is how is continuity achieved across so many platforms. This question is especially pertinent when considering the comic book Spider-Man and the big screen Spider-Man. Following Spider-Man’s story on paper takes weeks, months and years to gain an understanding of the story while, one weekend on Netflix is all you need to “ get current” on the Spider-Man of the films. Even then a question lingers: is the 2007 Sam Raimi version of Spider-Man the same as the 2012 Marc Webb version of the Amazing Spider-Man. This short paper will endeavor to supply reads with a “ nuts and bolts” comparison of the longest running comic book Spider-Man title, Marvel’s “ the Amazing Spider-Man,” with the two movie franchises in the hopes of offering a hint of the diversity of the character over the years

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from his first appearance in the early 1960s. Based on its age, for this analysis, the comic book will serve at

One of the most endearing characteristics of Peter Parker has always been his relationship with his family. In either media it kept him grounded and, indeed, according to Spider-Man mythology, the death of his Uncle Ben was the catalyst for Parker to become Spider-Man. Accordingly, the way that each media portrays the story of Parker's family is essential to understanding the similarity or differences in storytelling. In the comic book, Parker was orphaned at an early age and raised by his Aunt May and Uncle Ben. From the time we first meet them, they are clearly a lower-middle class elderly couple (with white hair) who care deeply about Peter (Lee, Ditko & Kirby, 1998). Both movies stay within the general confines of the comic by keeping Aunt May and Uncle Ben as elderly people though from appearances, in each movie, they seem slightly younger than the comic book version. In the comics, we never learn much about Peter's parents Richard and Mary Parker and the presumption is that they are dead (Lee, Ditko & Kirby, 1998). In Raimi's version there is a similar silence about Peter's parents. In Webb's version, however, they actually appear in the movie and are tied to a backstory which suggest that they were secret government agents who died in a plane crash. Furthermore, in Webb's version we learn that Richard Parker not only had a connection to Curt Connor (who would later become the Lizard) but also that he once worked for Oscorp, had fled Oscorp to avoid having his research used for evil purposes and that he was the creator of the radioactive spiders that would eventually give Peter his powers.

Origin

The iconic origin is a fundamental ingredient for the most interesting superheroes and Spider-Man's beginning is no different. According to the comic book, Spider-Man came about when young Peter, who was always interested in science, attended a science exhibition demonstrating a new radiation laser technology. During the demonstration a spider hanging from a web was hit by the laser thereby irradiating it. The spider then dropped onto Peter, who was standing nearby, and bit him and the hand. The combination of the radiation, the spider and the bite imbued Peter with the "proportionate powers of a spider" (Lee, Ditko & Kirby, 1998). Upon learning of his newfound abilities, Peter sets out to make a name for himself as a wrestler name Spider-Man. He even creates a costume and web-shooters as part of his brand. However, as he is leaving the building where he just finished a match he bumps into a burglar fleeing capture by police. Peter had the chance to stop the burglar but he refused to assist and the burglar escapes. Later the burglar breaks into the home of May and Ben Parker. In a struggle with Ben, the burglar kills him and escapes. Peter eventually learns that it was the same man he could have stopped earlier. Realizing his inaction led to his uncle's death, Peter decided to use his powers to fight crime. Spider-man's origin in Raimi's version remains mostly true to the comic book canon in that Peter is bitten by an irradiated spider while attending a science exhibition. The similarities end there however, as in Raimi's movie; Peter went to the exhibition with his friends Harry Osborn and Mary Jane Watson. Moreover, the spider bite not only immediately improves Peter's physical abilities but also gives him the ability to spin webs naturally

from his wrist. Lastly, in Raimi's version, Peter's confrontation with the burglar is not accidental but intentional in that he allows the burglar, or rather thief, to escape as revenge for being cheated by the wrestling promoter. In contrast to the comic book, the thief goes on to carjack his Uncle Ben and kill him. Similar to the comic, Peter's discovery that he could have prevented his Uncle's death leads to his becoming a crime-fighter.

As mentioned above, Webb's version of the Spider-Man origin departs broadly from the comic book canon. Not only do we see Peter's parents but they are the ones who deliver him to his Aunt May and Uncle Ben before disappearing. Later while searching through his father's old papers he discovers that his father worked at the science and technology firm Oscorp. While sneaking into an Oscorp facility, Peter is bitten by a genetically modified spider which gives him the powers of a spider. Furthermore, in contrast to the comic book version, in Webb's movie, Uncle Ben is accidentally killed in a struggle with a robber he bumps into while looking Peter after an argument they just had. The robber had just robbed the café the store that Peter had entered. Peter wanted to buy candy but was a few cents short, when the cashier refused to give him a break, Peter refused to assist when the robber entered. Again, as in the comic book and the Raimi version, Peter's discovery that his actions ultimately led to his Uncle's death push him into becoming a superhero.

Powers

A superhero without a power or skill is not much of a superhero at all. For Spider-Man, however, a lack of power was not his problem. As mentioned above, getting bit by a radioactive spider transferred the power of a spider to

Peter. These powers included including, speed, strength, the ability to climb walls and stick to surfaces and a mysterious extra-sensory perception (spidey-sense) which warned him of danger just before it would occur (Lee, 1974). Those unnatural powers combined with his own intelligence and gift for science make Spider-Man “pound-for-pound” one of the more powerful heroes in the Marvel universe (Lee, 1974). Spider-Man’s powers in both the Raimi and Webb movie versions mirror those set out in the comic book with a few exceptions. As stated, in Raimi’s version, Peter can naturally produce his webbing; and in the Webb version, Peter stealing the webbing technology from Oscorp and invests the hardware to allow him to shoot it from his wrist.

Personality

Over the course of the comic book, Peter’s personality matures. He starts off as shy and sensitive boy with few friends but a deep interest in science and technology. He was, in essence, the classic example of a “nerd” (Lee, 1974). Later as he enters college and beyond, Peter’s personality changes to take on a more confident, wise-cracking but friendly persona (Lee, Ditko, Kirby, 1998). The movies are consistent with the comic book but in different ways. In Raimi’s version, Peter is much closer to the younger, nerdy comic book Peter; while in Webb’s version Peter is closer to the older, confident and cocky comic book Peter.

Girlfriends

Over the course of the comic book run, Peter has a number of love interests but none were as close as that of Gwen Stacy and Mary Jane Parker. Peter meets Gwen first, while attending Empire State College. Later he eventually

meets Mary Jane but he is already interested in Gwen. It is only after Gwen's death that Peter eventually becomes interested in Mary Jane and eventually marries her. The movies take a somewhat different tack on the story of Peter's girlfriends. In Raimi's version, Peter already knows Mary Jane in high school, eventually dates her and she remains the love interest throughout all three films. Gwen Stacy plays a small role and only as a way for Peter to make Mary Jane jealous. In Webb's version, Peter meets and is attracted to Gwen Stacy in high school and they eventually date. Unfortunately Gwen dies at the hands of childhood friend Harry Osborn. Mary Jane Watson is not mentioned in either of Webb's movies.

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