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### Comic Books and Graphic Novels

I am a film buff, and anyone who knows me knows movies are my life. Some of my favorite films are coming-of-age films. Coming-of-age films draw audiences not only into young-adult issues, but the emotions young adults feel as they solve problems that shape their identity. Some issues coming-of-age films explore are bullying, death, drugs, gender, love, race, and sexuality. Today, coming-of-age films have evolved into superhero films, which are usually based on either comic books or graphic novels.

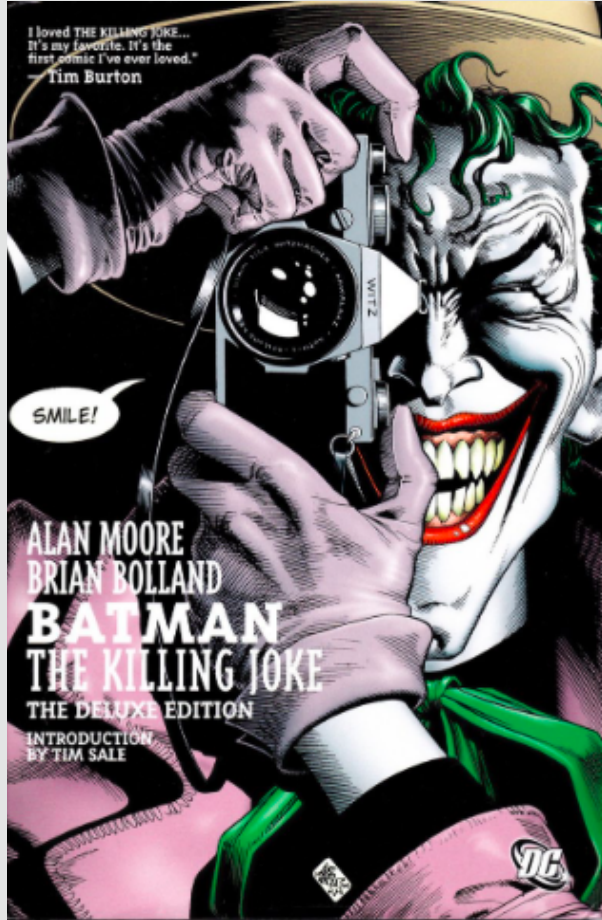
I have chosen to study comic books, graphic novels, and movies based on comic books and graphic novels because they have become so influential in today's youth culture that they are a force to reckon with. Comic books, graphic novels, and movies based on comic books and graphic novels provide young adults with positive role models; they also provide them with complex ideas about the world and their surroundings through scenarios that, on the surface, may seem fantastical and impossible, but have real-life lessons in them.

Before I took this class, comic books and graphic novels did not interest me. However, a friend I grew up with put comic books and graphic novels into perspective for me. In high school, my friend was overweight, he was bullied, and he came from a broken home. To battle

his insecurities and troubled home life, he turned to comic books and graphic novels. My friend says he is and always will be a nerd, but he is proud of that. Comic books and graphic novels helped him become confident and stable. Listening to my friend explain how comic books and graphic novels helped him taught me comic books and graphic novels are just as powerful as coming-of-age films and literature.

For my annotated bibliography, I compiled a short list of some of today's most popular and celebrated comic books, graphic novels, and movies based on comic books and graphic novels. Through my annotated bibliography, I attempt to explain why these comic books, graphic novels, and movies based on comic books and graphic novels are helpful and important for/to young adults. I also attempt to explain why they are good alternative materials to study in relation to young-adult literature.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Alan Moore. The Killing Joke. DC Comics, 1988, Print.*

**Exeter Qualities: 2, 4\*, 6\***

After the Joker kidnaps Commissioner Gordon's Daughter Barbara, Batman plays a game of cat and mouse him, only to realize he and the Joker are the same person. In *The Killing Joke*, Alan Moore explores the Joker's origin story while also examining the question "Who are we?"

This graphic novel based on DC's Batman is valuable because it focuses on issues more complex than just what is right and wrong. Batman's character is not a hero; he is possibly a psychopath just like the Joker. This graphic novel is helpful to young adults because they will benefit from seeing Batman's character questioned. Superheroes are not perfect, and, at some point, young adults need to become their own superheroes.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Alan Moore. Watchmen. DC Comics, 1995, Print.*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 5, 6\*, 7, 8**

The Comedian, Doctor Manhattan, Nite Owl, Ozymandias, the Silk Spectre, and Rorschach make up the Watchmen, but “Who watches the Watchmen?” That is the question this graphic novel revolves around. Set between the 30s and 80s, Alan Moore tells the story of how the Watchmen form, fall apart, and form again.

This graphic novel is valuable because it borders being a novel. Half of *Watchmen* is your typical graphic novel, but the other half is made up of stories, rich with young adult issues (e.g., death, bullying, coming from a broken home, rape). This graphic novel is helpful to young adults because it is not only an entertaining read, but also a challenging read.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Black Panther. Dir. Ryan Coogler. Perf. Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Martin Freeman, Forest Whitaker, Andy Serkis. Marvel Studios, 2017.*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\*, 7**

Following the events of *Captain America: Civil War*, T'Challa returns to Wakanda to assume the throne. However, a man whose father was killed by T'Challa's father T'Chaka long ago has different plans: to avenge his father while also taking the throne from T'Challa.

This movie based on the Marvel's Black Panther is valuable because it addresses issues about racial equality and inner race relations. The movie is also the first Marvel movie to feature a predominately black cast. This movie is helpful to young adult audiences because it argues for equality and promotes peace between different races and cultures.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Bendis, Brian Michael and Pichelli, Sara.*

*Ultimate Comics Spider-Man. Marvel Comics, 2011, Print. (Have not read.)*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\***

After the death of Spider-Man, Miles Morales becomes the new Spider-Man (or Spider-Man II). In this issue, Brian Michael Bendis tells a new origin story for one of Marvel's most beloved superheroes, this time, focusing on a character with a more diverse, ethnic background.

This comic is valuable because it attempts to reach more diverse audiences. Peter Parker is no longer Spider-Man; Miles Morales is. Morales is half African American and half Hispanic. This comic book series is helpful to young adults because it promotes the idea of other races assuming major roles as superheroes.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Captain America: Civil War. Dir. Anthony/Joe Russo. Perf. Chris Evans, Robert Downey, Jr., Scarlet Johansson, Anthony Mackie, Don Cheadle, Jeremy Renner. Marvel Studios, 2016.*

**Exeter Qualities: 2, 4\*, 6\*, 7**

After Captain America, Falcon, and the Scarlet Witch cause a political catastrophe in Lagos, the US Government decides the Avengers need to be monitored. Captain America believes the Avengers should be allowed to act above the law while Iron Man believes they should in accordance with it. Tensions between Captain America and Iron Man grow, causing the Avengers to divide.

This movie based on Marvel's Captain America is valuable because depicts the flaws of Captain America and Iron Man. In the film, the Avengers fall apart because of Captain America and Iron Man's ego. This movie is helpful to young adults because it teaches them lessons about ego and what it means to be a true friend.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Captain America: The First Avenger. Dir. Joe Johnston. Perf. Chris Evans, Hugo Weaving, Sebastian Stan. Marvel Studios, 2011.*

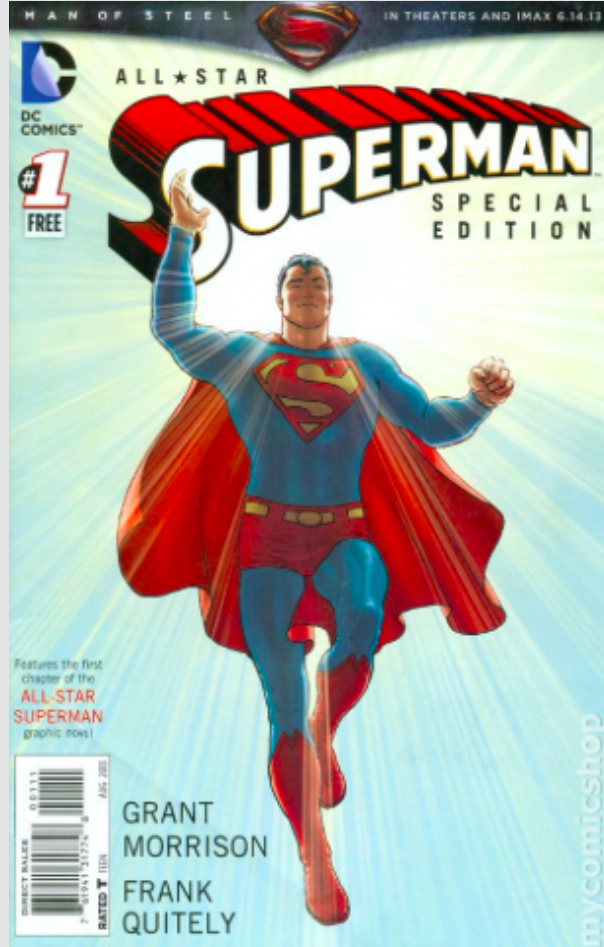
**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\***

Set during World War II, Steve Rogers and his best friend James “Bucky” Barnes decide to server country by enlisting in the United State Army. However, because of his size, Rogers cannot enlist. Determined to become a soldier, Rogers proves a hero does not have to be strong to fight. Rogers proving this allows him to undergo a procedure resulting in him becoming Captain America, the first Avenger.

This movie based on Marvel’s Captain America is valuable because it teaches young adults lessons about bullying and what it means to be a hero. Steve Rogers is a hero, not because he is strong, but because he cares for his fellow man. Rogers is a positive role model for young adults because he gives them the courage and confidence to stand up for themselves, and that is why this movie is helpful to young adults.



## Annotated Bibliography



*Grant Morrison. All Star Superman. DC Comics, 2011, Print. (Have not read.)*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\***

Set up by Lex Luthor, the source of Superman's power is also killing him. In this graphic novel, Superman prepares for his impending death by saving the world one last time and by confessing his love for Lois Lane.

This graphic novel is valuable because it teaches young adults lessons about life and death. Superman's strength comes from the sun, but, when the sun's power is threatened by Lex Luthor, so is Superman's power.

Questions about what do with one's life are asked once Superman is doomed to die. These questions transcend to young adults as they read the graphic novel. We are all going to die, so what are we going to do with our time on earth before it is over?

## Annotated Bibliography



*The Avengers. Dir. Joss Whedon. Perf. Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Hemsworth, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner. Marvel Studios, 2012.*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\***

After Loki steals one of the infinity stones, Captain America, the Incredible Hulk, Iron Man, and Thor are called to stop him from enslaving the human race. However, in order for these heroes to stop Loki, they must become the Avengers by overcoming their differences.

This movie based on Marvel's superheroes is valuable because it teaches young adults about diversity. The villain in this movie is not Loki. The villain is the fear the Avengers have toward work with each other. This movie is helpful to young adults because it promotes ideas about acceptance and trust regarding other cultures and races.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Spider-Man: Homecoming. Dir. Jon Watts.  
Perf. Tom Holland, Robert Downey Jr.,  
Michael Keaton, Marissa Tomei, Jon Favreau.  
Marvel Studios, 2017.*

**Exeter Qualities: 4\*, 6\*, 7**

Following the events of *The Avengers* and *Captain America: Civil War*, Peter Parker struggles to balance his personal life and being Spider-Man. To make matters worse, Adrian Toomes (A.K.A. the Vulture), steals weapons made from Chitauri technology and uses them to make weapons to sell on the black market. Peter Parker must stop the Toomes, but he also must maintain his relationships with his friends and family.

This movie based on Marvel's Spider-Man is valuable because it addresses issues about identity. Peter Parker believes becoming an Avenger is all that matters. However, by the end of the film, he realizes being confident in himself is what matters. This movie is helpful to young adults because it promotes ideas about self-acceptance and -confidence.

## Annotated Bibliography



*Wonder Woman*. Dir. Patty Jenkins. Perf. Gal Gadot, Chris Pine, Robin Wright, Danny Huston, David Thewlis. Marvel Studios, 2017.

**Exeter Qualities: 3, 4\*, 6\***

After a battle between Zeus and Ares, Zeus forms an island where a race of women known as the Amazons can exist in peace. Zeus also provides the Amazons with a gift known as “the God Killer”(A.K.A. Wonder Woman) in case Ares ever returns. Forward to World War 1, when an American pilot named Steve Trevor crash lands near the island, Wonder Woman rescues him and then helps him defeat Ares, who returns as a peace speaker during the war.

This movie based on DC’s Wonder Woman is valuable to young adults because it addresses issues about equality and women’s rights. Until now, women in comic books and graphic novels have not been put at the forefront. This movie is helpful to both female and male young adult audiences, but extremely helpful to female young adult audiences because, hopefully, it marks the first of many strong female role models.

