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## Cannons to Cannon

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# Cannons to Cannon

## **Abstract**

I'll never forget the first moment, I truly realized who Batman was. No, I'm not talking about (SARCASTIC SPOILER ALERT) his alternate identity as Bruce Wayne, but instead his depth as a character, his uncompromising morals and never-ending cycle of battles with the Joker. Batman, his mythology, and his backstory encompass so much more than the movies; he is alive for me in a way he will never be on screen. From an early age, comics provided my escape; Batman was there to drop kick depression and side-swipe thoughts of suicide. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Diversity, Feminism, Rascism, Marvel Comics

## **Disciplines**

Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication | Graphic Communications | Other Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Women's Studies

## **Comments**

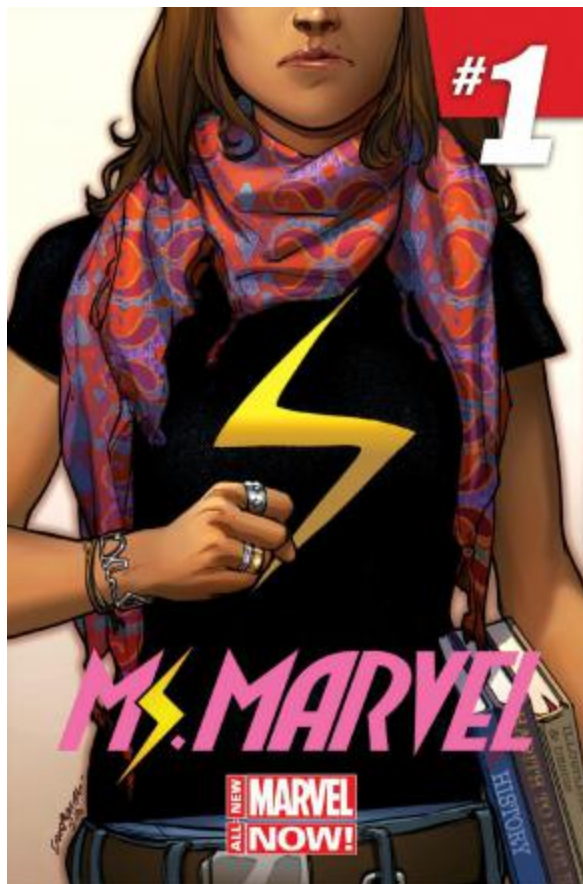
Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://cupola.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](https://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## CANNONS TO CANON

November 12, 2014



I'll never forget the first moment, I truly realized who Batman was. No, I'm not talking about (SARCASTIC SPOILER ALERT) his alternate identity as Bruce Wayne, but instead his depth as a character, his uncompromising morals and never-ending cycle of battles with the Joker. Batman, his mythology, and his backstory encompass so much more than the movies; he is alive for me in a way he will never be on screen. From an early age, comics provided my escape; Batman was there to drop kick depression and side-swipe thoughts of suicide.

But he was not alone.

Head first I dove into the worlds of Marvel and DC: flying with Wonder Woman in her invisible plane; secretly admiring Poison Ivy's curves and a sensuality only she controlled; begging Harley Quinn to leave the Joker for me; becoming awestruck by Galactus and the Cosmic Beings; cheering underneath my covers when (ACTUAL SPOILER ALERT) Phylla-vel and Moondragon became lovers; and always wishing for more.

Where are the Persons of Color who are more than tokens, but instead well-realized and developed characters? The proud Black Trans\* Women? Where are the fierce Chicanas? Where are the characters who remind the world that not everyone is white? As a white person, I am privileged to see my skin color perceived as well- and favorably represented everywhere, but is it not time to change that? When I sit down and read comics through my feminist glasses, I cannot help but see the majority of white characters as a poor reflection on myself and others with my skin color.

Comics, which until recently only flirted at being mainstream, have quickly made the transition from being thought of as glossy pages eagerly devoured by the stereotypical nerdboy, to heavy-hitting, multi-star blockbusters leaving moviegoers of all genders, races, and ages asking where they can find more.

Recalling to mind the uproar accompanying the announcement that Michael B. Jordan would take on the role of Johnny Storm in Fox's 2015 *Fantastic Four* reboot, it is obvious that a racist contingent of comic book fans still exists. I'd like to remind you that there are those of us who thought the controversy surrounding the introduction of Khmala Khan as Marvel's Ms. Marvel was ridiculous. Yes, she is the Muslim, shape-shifting daughter of Pakistani immigrants currently taking up the Marvel mantle, but so what? She is also down to earth, sweet, and capable of making people think. Her first shape-change involved shifting into Carol Danvers, her blonde predecessor. What does it say about America when a perfectly capable character of color elects, for a short time, to become white?

Although Khan's introduction marks the beginning of what may become a progressive streak in the Marvel comic books, the companies still seem to fear significant change to the canon; both new phases of the Marvel and DC cinematic universes include only one film whose titular character is female: Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman respectively. If they are worried about moviegoers not showing up, why not test the waters with a Gamora movie? Zoe Saldana has most assuredly proven her acting chops and generated enough name recognition that people will go. As an added bonus, it would be a suitable apology to hard-core fans like myself for her less-than-fantastic portrayal in *Guardians of the Galaxy* and Marvel's failure to include her on official GotG merchandise! Who does that? Who just forgets to add one of the group's main members to the shirt? Marvel just gave us a talking racoon, how about some REAL inclusion!?!

Comics, once relegated to the lower rungs of literary hierarchy are quickly becoming a powerhouse; they are creating a new canon. With its transition into the mainstream, it becomes all the more important to change comic canon and to end harmful perpetuations of the white, cisgender, heterosexual superheroine with a vaguely feminist ability to kick butt. Anyone –trans\*, man, woman, human, inhuman, racoon, Flora Colossi, Black, White, Latin@, Asian– can kick butt. Aura Bogado in her recent *Colorlines* article addressed the need for positive representation of all groups, adding, “[it might be] better to think about de-centering whiteness...” Her article is a call to inclusivity, to moving away from white hegemony and a prevalence of white characters who do nothing to change the status quo. Well, I am answering the call and adding some questions and a thought. What if Captain Marvel wasn't white. Why don't we find a great Latina actress, or African actress for the part! Why can't she be Asian or Middle Eastern? How about Trans\*? What if she was not Trans\* herself, but played by a Trans\* actress? It is time to take a cannon to the canon! Who's with me?

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