

EXPLORING CLASSIC SUPERHEROES

The goals of this assignment are:

- to **demonstrate your understanding** of the codes and conventions of graphic novels (particularly storytelling techniques and graphic novel elements) by applying it to an actual text (in this case, early/traditional superhero comics)
- to **apply your knowledge of literary criticism** (i.e. the study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature) to graphic novels (in this case, early/traditional superhero comics)

Given that these titles - **Superman, Captain America, Batman, and Wonder Woman** - were the first of their kind, both as a **genre** (the superhero story) and as a **medium** (the comic book), we can be a little less harsh than we would be critiquing modern stories (and the modern versions of these characters). Nonetheless, we can discuss the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of each one, in terms of **graphic novel elements** (flow, moment, frame, word, and image), use of **storytelling techniques** (moment-to-moment, action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect, and non-sequitur), a comparison to another similar text (e.g. Wonder Woman) and your **overall engagement** with the **character** and **the story** (and does this superhero fulfill the role of a literary superhero?). Choosing from the comics read this week, write a review of the comic using the following template:

Graphic Novel Elements (one paragraph)

How well constructed was the comic in terms of the *flow of the story*, the *moments that were chosen to illustrate*, the *framing of those moments*, the *words that were used to communicate the story*, and the *clarity of the images drawn*? (include examples - I will show you how in class)

Storytelling Techniques (one paragraph)

Was the story easy to follow? Was the story too simple, or was it complex yet well-explained? What storytelling techniques were used (e.g. moment-to-moment)? Was the story mostly told through text, or was the mixture of image and text used effectively together to get the story across?

Comparison to Another Text (Comic) (one paragraph)

- **Option 1: Captain America vs. Captain Canuck**
- **Option 2: Wonder Woman vs. Nelvana**
- **Option 3: One U.S. superhero vs. one Canadian superhero**

How does this comic compare to one of the others you read? Provide three examples of how it is similar or different.

Overall Reaction (one paragraph)

Did you like the character? Why or why not? Did you like the story? Why or why not? Would you recommend it? Why or why not? Does this character inspire the way a superhero should?

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Success Criteria:

- graphic novel elements/storytelling techniques:

- text comparison/literary criticism: