

## Why We Need Superheroes

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*5A (1)*

Superheroes were first popularized during World War II, a time when people needed a figure to look up to for comfort, and one of these characters was Superman. The Superman comics were created at the height of the war and were often cantered around anti-Soviet propaganda, depicting racist stereotypes. Superman would maintain relevancy well into the 21<sup>st</sup>- century with films, TV shows, and merchandise.

Fans of these franchises are often timid, shy, and socially outcast; the complete opposite of the well-loved, successful, charming heroes in their comics. They feel inadequate and project themselves into their beloved characters, giving them a sense of belonging and fulfillment. Not to mention the communities these comics and films create, a dedicated fandom of people from all walks of life on earth.

Superheroes have become more inclusive, with characters of color and better representation. Movies like 'Shang-Chi' allow western audiences to admire East Asian actors while also displaying representation for young Asian fans to look up to, and creating the cult following of superheroes.

However, superhero tropes are often lined with sexist undertones, the damsel in distress was popularized by superhero comics and films. Creating female characters just to add to the male hero's story, they are often one-directional characters only to serve as the romantic interest to the hero. Being so relevant in popular culture, it reinforces stereotypes of women, while also promoting violence. Impressionable fans may subconsciously excuse this behavior as it has become the norm.

I believe that superhero movies and comics could have a positive impact on youths. Creating entertainment that is inclusive can allow consumers to be more open-minded, making up stories about being powerful and brave instead of the villain's pawn can allow young girls to feel empowered. Superhero movies and comics can create role models for young people to look up to.

To conclude, superheroes have been popular cultural icons for decades, creating communities of dedicated fans from all over the world. Spanning all forms of media, superheroes have allowed us to feel brave when facing war. These characters are and

will continue to be relevant in popular culture.