Rhet 1030

Ms. Marvel Lesson Plans Week 1 (might be Week 5 of the semester):

**Lesson Plan Credit: Zachary King** **(ZK)** (<https://uiowagel.wordpress.com/teaching-the-graphic-novel/ms-marvel/>)

**Day 1**: (Paper 1 due?)

**Read:**

* *Ms. Marvel*, Volume 1: No Normal
* Watch: IGN, “Who is Captain Marvel”—Comics History 101: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGLzmnmkq5g&feature=youtu.be>

**General Information (ZK):**

Ms. Marvel (the first five issues of which are collected in trade paperback as Ms. Marvel, Vol. 1: No Normal) is a delightful superhero origin story that introduces Kamala Khan, a Muslim-American girl who feels herself torn between Jersey City and Karachi, between her stern family and her liberating involvement in superhero fandom. Ms. Marvel is written by G. Willow Wilson and illustrated by Adrian Alphona.

After sneaking out for a late-night party, Kamala encounters a mysterious mist and a vision of The Avengers. She awakens from this vision with superpowers, and this devout fangirl knows exactly what to do with those powers – fight crime, protect her neighborhood, and in the process discover her true identity.

Since her debut in February 2014 Ms. Marvel has found tremendous popularity with readers and critics alike. Her infectiously vivacious personality makes her one of the most interesting new superheroes in a genre sometimes regarded as stale and uninviting, and her creation at the hands of two Muslim-American women (writer G. Willow Wilson and editor Sana Amanat) makes her an important aspect of the ongoing project of inclusivity in the realm of superhero comics. Ms. Marvel is also the first Muslim-American superhero to have her own monthly comic book series under her name, and rumors persist that she will be making her television and/or movie debut in the very near future as part of the ongoing Marvel Cinematic Universe. (ZK)

**The Rhetoric of Origin Stories: Superheroes (10 minutes to watch, 10 to brainstorm, 10-15 to present) (Sonja Mayrhofer)**

* Every superhero has an origin story 🡪 some people spoof the genre
* E.g Conan O’Brien: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGWdQ5BtyVU> (5 minutes)
* Group Work: 5 groups 🡪 Examine one superhero closely
  + What rhetorical elements do you find in this origin story?
  + What elements do these stories have in common?
  + Superheroes usually respond to a crisis/need in our earthly world
    - 🡪 make up a superhero who responds to a specific “need” you think our world has (could be outlandish/silly)
    - Flesh out your superhero’s origin story
    - Share it with the class

**The Rhetoric of Origin Stories: Fictional Origin stories (Superheroes) (10 minutes to watch)**

* + Superman: Possible trailers -- 1978 version (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWHyvubVdPA>); Man of Steel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6DJcgm3wNY>)
  + Batman: Possible trailers -- 1989 version (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgC9Q0uhX70>); Nolan Trilogy trailers (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T__uN5xmC0> )
  + Spiderman: Possible trailers -- a mash-up of different Spiderman movie trailers (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_2gYTC34Qw>)
  + Supergirl: new CBS show <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49RZx5tUKM4>
  + Wonder Woman: mash-up trailer for 1970s show (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo1Kr_FB7hA)>, Wonder Woman 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Q8fG0TtVAY>

**Freewrite/Homework**: Ask your students to watch the IGN video and think about why Kamala singles out Captain Marvel and, by extension, why and how Wilson and Alphona draw on the contentious history of Carol Danvers (ZK).

**Class Discussion Points:**

**Artwork**

It’s easy to get swept up in the story of Kamala Khan, but take a few moments to study Adrian Alphona’s artwork. How does Alphona’s style differ from what you expect of a superhero comic book? How does the imagery control/guide your reaction to the narrative? Additionally, pay attention to the backgrounds of the panels; note the elaborate newspaper headlines, cereal boxes, and Q-Circle signage. (And keep an eye out for the girl with the butterfly net!) Why pack the images with so much detail? (ZK)

**Super-Religion**

Kamala’s vision of Captain Marvel in Chapter 1 is a page that demands close reading. Linger over it with your students, and think about the competing religious iconographies in the image. How do you reconcile this moment, which collapses Christianity, Hinduism, superheroes, and stuffed animals? Listen to [this version](https://youtu.be/FBAy9kJrMxc) of the song Captain Marvel is singing, and consider what mood Wilson is invoking. (You could provide students with the translation or ask them to research it in advance.) NOTE: I have collected a few possible reference images in the PowerPoint below, but the page is so rich that the PowerPoint is only intended as a start. (ZK)

**Day 2:**

Read:

* *Ms. Marvel*, Volume 1: No Normal, cont.
* Noelene Clark*, “*New Ms. Marvel isn’t the first Muslim — or religious — superhero:” <http://herocomplex.latimes.com/comics/new-ms-marvel-isnt-the-first-muslim-or-religious-superhero/#/6>
* Laura Hudson, “First Look at the New Ms. Marvel, a 16-year-old Muslim Superhero:” <https://www.wired.com/2014/01/ms-marvel-muslim-superheroine/>

Discussion Points about articles:

* [Hero Complex: “New Ms. Marvel…”](http://herocomplex.latimes.com/comics/new-ms-marvel-isnt-the-first-muslim-or-religious-superhero/#/6) – This article contextualizes Kamala in relation to previous Muslim superheroes. (ZK)
* [Wired: “First Look”](http://www.wired.com/2014/01/ms-marvel-muslim-superheroine/) – This interview with G. Willow Wilson was the first announcement of the character, suggesting some of what Wilson intended to do with Kamala Khan. You might also think about Kamala in relation to marketing, why Wilson and Marvel Comics would have marketed her before introducing her in comics. (ZK)

Further in-class discussion points:

* [“Myths, misfits, & masks”](https://youtu.be/o9lev9739zQ) – This TED Talk by co-creator and editor Sana Amanat is a useful entry point into the book, drawing out themes of stereotypes and inclusive representation. Amanat’s presence also allows you to discuss Kamala as a corporate co-creation of multiple voices.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9lev9739zQ&feature=youtu.be> (ca. 17 mins)

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