

Marvel's not-so-secret superpower: diversity in comics

You stand on the corner of a busy street. Suddenly, a stolen armored truck hurtles by, police cars in pursuit. What is this? The city's guardian is flying above the chaos. With tights of neon and muscles of metal, the hero rockets towards the criminals.



BY AUBREY KING
STAFF WRITER

What does this person of power look like? Do you picture a man or a woman? What ethnicity are they?

Diversity of characters is important, even to superheroes. In the past couple of years, the two major comic book producers, Marvel and DC, have sought to cleanse their cinematic universes of whitecentric attitudes to varying degrees of success.

As it stands, both are making positive strides toward a more inclusive environment. Though DC has made promising plans, developments in Marvel Universe place it one step ahead.

"Both Marvel and DC have been making steps towards diversifying their casts of characters," said Early College junior Harris Billings. "It would seem like Marvel, with plans for a female Thor, a black Captain America, and a massive list of queer characters, has done a better job than DC."

Recently, DC formally announced the release dates for all of their feature films for the next six years. The films cover a wide variety of franchises and characters.

In the announcement, we discovered that Wonder Woman will finally get her own movie, and that is fantastic. Even better, she has been given a suit that does not make her look like a doll.

"The new costume looks much more functional," said senior Patrick Withrow in an email interview. "It's a definite improvement over the classic costume."

The new costume, shown off in a few promotional images, clads our fearless heroine in a suit of bronze. The armor still shows skin, actress Gal Gadot's legs are still plainly visible, but the character looks more battle-ready than ever.



Marvel Comics characters vs. DC Comics characters

The promise of a new Wonder Woman movie, with a strong, capable protagonist, bodes well for DC Comics and their rapidly expanding universe, but is it enough to top Marvel?

"(In Marvel Universe) we have a female Thor and a black Spiderman in the comics," said Early College graduate Jordan Smith '14 in an email interview. "DC has a Wonder Woman movie on the way, but Marvel seems to be doing the best overall."

The rise of the Avengers franchise saw Black Widow, played by strongwilled Scarlett Johansson, rise to prominence on the screen.

"I'd say Marvel is definitely making more of an effort," said Smith. "Captain America 2 handled diversity really well, with Falcon

and Black Widow written beautifully."

Though Marvel has confirmed there are no plans for a solo Black Widow movie, her powerful role, along with new announcements for a female-led Captain Marvel movie, make the future of the Marvel cinematic universe look uniquely diverse.

It seems both production companies have finally recognized the importance of heroes of color. DC recently announced that a Cyborg movie is scheduled for 2020.

The idea of Cyborg, an African American hero, getting his own movie is great, but again Marvel has beaten DC to the superpowered punch.

On Oct. 28, Marvel revealed that Chadwick Boseman had been cast as the Black Panther in a film scheduled for 2017,

becoming the first person of color to lead a Marvel hero movie.

"The idea of a Black Panther movie is certainly good," said Withrow. "Any progress is good progress. I just wish it had come sooner."

Both of these comic producers have made great strides toward more diverse casts, one more than the other. Looking into the future, even further than currently announced schedules allow, we can still hope for more change.

"As for the future, I would like to see more bold decisions being made," said Billings. "Representation is extremely important, especially in media targeted towards such a universal audience as superhero movies and comics."

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

Supporting the SJP walk-out

Students have walked out. A community member wrote a letter to The Guilfordian, and spaces for healing have been created. It is safe to say that author and reporter Edwin Black's visit to our campus on Nov. 4 and 5 has stirred up a lot of emotions.

Discussions about who is worthy of our time and who we want to invite to speak still linger. When college administrators invited Black back to campus after a 2011 lecture that proved controversial, they believed having a "different perspective" would benefit the school, without consulting the people who would be attending the event: our student population.

It is no surprise that when concerned students heard of Black's new visit to Guilford, and in a format that would not allow for true discussion, they followed the core values that drew them to this community and what we are taught to do here. They stood up against what they perceived to be injustice and intolerance.

The walk-out from Black's lecture on Nov. 4, organized by Students for Justice in Palestine, was an example of Guilford students attempting to exercise their beliefs in justice and community. They sought to show that as a community we should not tolerate attacks on a specific people based on aspects of their identity.

At Black's lecture, SJP handed out a statement expressing why they walked out of his talk. The handout reads, in part, "We refuse to listen to Edwin Black for the following reasons: Black is famous for writing a text called 'IBM and the Holocaust' which

discussed clandestine relationships between corporate entities and the Nazis."

His later work, the handout continues, is rooted in a "revisionist history about 'Arab' participation in the Holocaust — which is not only untrue, but works to buttress violence from the state of Israel against Palestinian communities in the present era."

Black's views on Arab and Muslim people are ones we are taught to examine, discuss, and, where appropriate, unlearn in our classes. Our professors challenge us to transcend our learned biases and by doing so enrich our interpersonal relationships and understanding of the world we live in. At a liberal arts institution, we are taught to challenge and think critically about what mainstream media have already told us and perceptions we may already have.

While valuing people's rights to freedom of speech, our commitment to upholding Quaker values has also taught us the difference between an active dialogue of different opinions and a one-sided presentation that, in this case, struck Palestinian students and their supporters as akin to hate speech.

We cannot say what we learned from Black in 2011, but over these past two weeks, we have certainly grown as a community as a result of his recent visit and listening to reactions across campus. At a college committed to creating a dynamic and safe place for learning for all community members, it should be no surprise that if Guilford students feel left out of decision-making processes, they will find a creative way to engage.

Letter to the editor: A response to discussion of K. Renato Lings' 'Love Lost in Translation'

In the Hut on Nov. 10, students sat down with the author of "Love Lost in Translation," K. Renato Lings. I very much enjoyed hearing that what I was told when I was younger were lies. God does love you, even if you are gay. Apparently, when the Bible gets translated, it goes through changes each time but gets further away from the truth. I was astonished at how a linguist like Lings views the Bible and its original texts. I was at first skeptical of God, who was the terror of my life for so many years. As a gay male growing up in Tennessee, I was always told how full of sin I was. I was instructed to go with my parents to a church at 15 so the spirit of homosexuality could be cast out of me. Needless to say, this was a traumatic experience.

Lings explained how in Genesis II the direct translation from Greek to English means side, not rib, so God made woman equal. God created Adam in his own image and then cut Adam in half to create Eve, which was in fact both sexes. That the King James' Bible was written to control an unruly England is a revelation to me. The king took liberties with translation, since the word pleyrá means "side," just like the sides on King Solomon's Temple. I asked Lings to reiterate this to me. I felt ecstatic with joy as an incredible feeling swept through my soul. God loves LGBT people the same

as everyone else. It is possible that the antihomosexual God of Israel loves me. Wow. Then, the author goes on to tell me of more mistakes in translation. Is it possible, at this late date, that we truly are just finding out how the right wing driven Church has set in motion events that would kill my fellow homosexuals, for a lie? How could such a lie be allowed to continue and do so much damage? I am insulted and frustrated that a few simple white lies in the translation of the Bible have caused such a wave of destruction.

So much hate and destruction done in the name of a God, who never intended such actions. I could not be healed of an affliction that was not evil or of negative repercussions. I had been misled for so many years. My life has not been God making a mistake, as I was led to believe. I prayed to die thinking that was the only way to be cured, but God did not allow that to happen. I begged for salvation by failure of my genitals, but that also did not occur.

I am tired of hearing how God hates fags, dykes and trannies. My eyes have read the truth, my ears have heard it and my soul has felt it. Time for God's true message of who is loved to come out.

Jeffrey R. Ray
Guilford College C.C.E. Student