READING *THE UNCANNY X-MEN*: GENDER, RACE, AND THE MUTANT METAPHOR
IN A POPULAR NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT

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The first superhero comic book was published in 1938 and since that time the genre has become a staple of American popular culture. While superhero stories have been adapted into every popular storytelling medium, the genre is most closely associated with the comic book industry. This dissertation examines the first 500 issues of *The Uncanny X-Men*, one of the most popular series to be published in America. In particular, the portrayals of race and gender will be analyzed by performing a close reading of the stories published as well as a numerical analysis of the ethnicity, nationality, and gender of the heroes, villains, and guest stars who appear in the series. The X-Men comic book franchise has a reputation among fans, creators, and scholars as one of the most diverse and progressive superhero comic book titles. The core conceit of the series, that there are people called mutants who are born with powers and abilities that separate them from normal humans, has allowed the themes of societal prejudice and hatred to be explored in a metaphorical fashion, though looking closely at the race and gender of the characters in the series reveals a different reality than the common perception of the series.

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Chapter 1: Popular Culture, the Comic Book Industry, and Comic Book Studies

When I was kid in a grocery store I asked my mom if I could read a comic book while she shopped. I had little exposure to comic book superheroes, and based on the cover as much as anything else I picked up *The Uncanny X-Men #280* (Sep. 1991). Soon I was reading the adventures of Spider-Man, Superman, Batman, and others. While my interest in comic books has sometimes waned since then, I always came back to superhero comic books, first as a fan looking for entertainment and subsequently with a more academic purpose. That first introduction to comic books started me on the path that resulted in this dissertation.

This project will provide a close reading of the *Uncanny X-Men* comic book series with a particular focus on the portrayals of race and gender. In the course of the study, significant stories within the first 500 issues of the series will be examined to ascertain what themes and messages concerning race and gender can be found. The X-Men series was chosen because it is one of the most prominent franchises in the comic book industry and it has, at its core, what many identify as a "minority metaphor." The X-Men are mutants, people who develop special powers because they were born different from normal humans. Besides supervillains, the X-Men battle prejudice and are hated and feared by normal humans in the Marvel comic book universe. The X-Men are considered one of the most socially relevant and diverse superhero comic book titles (Schedeen). An analysis of how this series actually employs that metaphor will be enlightening, especially because of the decades long run the series has had. The series has adapted through the years to

remain relevant to the constantly changing social context of the producers and consumers of the series.

A discussion of the field of popular culture studies will provide a foundation for this study. After discussing the theories of popular culture studies, an explanation of how the entertainment industry influences perceptions, attitudes, and expectations towards race and gender will establish the significance of the topics chosen for analysis in this work. Having established the broad theoretical context in which this study operates, a closer analysis of comic book studies will position this work in that field of study.

The close readings of the X-Men series will be divided into five chronological periods. As the close reading of the series begins there will be significant applications of theoretical works from popular culture theory, comic book theory, and race and gender theory. After that foundation has been established and the close readings progress there will be fewer allusions to the already discussed theories. After the theoretical context has been established for the reader the close readings will focus on the interpretation of the stories found in the X-Men comic books. Additionally, a statistical analysis of the representation of gender and ethnicities in the series will be provided at the conclusion of each close reading. These statistics will provide the actual numbers in terms of representation that is occurring in the series. While raw data does not tell the story of how the characters are being used in the series, these numbers do tell a part of the story of gender and minority representation in one of the most popular superhero comic book series of all time. The close reading of the stories in conjunction with the raw numbers will

provide a more complete picture of the portrayals of race and gender in *Uncanny X-Men* than would otherwise be possible.

There is a popular perception among creators, fans, and academics that the X-Men is one of the most diverse franchises in the industry. This study does not look at the many other titles Marvel Comics has published in the X-Men franchise, but in looking at the number of characters that appear in *The Uncanny X-Men* it reveals that the series is dominated by white male characters on the heroic team, and that the most diverse group of characters are the villains the X-Men battle. While the themes that are explored in the series attack prejudice and discrimination, the actual characters used often portray the heroism of white characters with the threat coming from minority characters. On the one hand this is not surprising in an industry whose foundation rests on the enormous popularity of white male characters such as Superman, Batman, and Captain America. But it is surprising in light of the general perception of the X-Men franchise, which will be addressed before a close reading of the series begins. A discussion of popular culture studies, comic book studies, and the comic book industry will provide the foundation to better understand the position the X-Men franchise holds in our society and in the industry.

Popular Culture Studies

In relation to many areas of studies in the humanities popular culture studies are relatively young field but increasingly becoming commonplace at universities across the nation. Popular culture is now recognized not only as a compelling tool to

pique student interest in analytical thought about subjects they're already invested in, but as a valid and fertile field of study in and of itself.

Critically thinking about popular culture is a vital skill for a number of reasons, one of which was identified by The Washington Post when it reported, "America's biggest export is no longer the fruit of its fields or the output of its factories, but the mass-produced products of its popular culture – movies, TV programs, music, books and computer software. Entertainment around the world is dominated by American-made products" (Farhi). Understanding the means of production and also being capable of analyzing the content of entertainment is an important skill as entertainment becomes more pervasive, even invasive, in everyday life. Scholars such as Russell Nye, Ray Browne, John Cawelti, and Henry Jenkins have had to work long and hard to alter the prevailing academic opinions about popular culture. These scholars have largely shaped the trends and theories which have driven the study of popular culture. Understanding the broad foundations of popular culture theory is key to understanding the narrower field of comic book studies.

For many years elitism and artistic standards of "high quality" had precluded academic study of what was generally considered low, common, or mass culture. Until Russel Nye's 1970 groundbreaking book, *The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America,* popular culture was disregarded as not worth analytical consideration. At the time Nye wrote his book, his plea was for universities and academics stop ignoring popular art in preference of long-established studies of high art. Nye did not wish to have the traditional literature or artistic studies done

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away with, he simply wanted other areas of study to be introduced. In fact, Nye establishes a disparity between high and popular culture, and that the popular was not to be considered of equal value with high or elite culture. Nye explains that "although rather clear boundaries lie between popular and folk art on the one hand, and elite art on the other, the line between the [popular and folk] is vague and easily crossed" (3). Nye's assertion that popular art has more in common with folk art, and far less in common with elite art, implicitly assigns a lesser value to both popular and folk art than academics of the time afforded high art. While later scholars such as Browne or Jenkins eschew the quality and value assessments Nye makes, they are perhaps indicative of biases Nye carried out of the historical/biographical tradition he was schooled in. Furthermore, those value boundaries may have been necessary to make the introduction of popular culture studies more palatable to his audience: established academics who would traditionally hold the "high arts" of canonical literature, theater, and art in higher esteem.

While some of Nye's assertions, such as different values inherent to popular and high culture, are not endorsed by popular culture theorists today, credit still must be given to Nye for the sheer breadth of topics he raises. *The Unembarrassed Muse* is the groundbreaking text in the and provides a roadmap for the subjects which academia had failed to study up to the time of it's publishing, including subjects such as popular fiction, dime novels, comics, popular music, radio shows, film, and television.

The most in-depth theoretical work in the book concerns the origins of popular culture, which Nye argues did not exist before the industrial revolution. The

industrial revolution arose out of technological advances which led to changes in transportation, production, and distribution. The effects of the industrial revolution radically altered the socioeconomic and cultural climate of society initially in England and Europe, then European colonies and the rest of the world.

Prior to the industrial revolution, the concept of entertainment as an economically viable product for the masses was uncommon. Without the technological and cultural changes which came about in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the ability to mass produce and mass consume entertainment would not exist. Nye explains that "popular culture was also a product of modern technology and its new techniques for duplicating and multiplying materials (high speed presses, cheaper paper, new ways of graphic representation) along with much more efficient methods of distribution" (2). The technology that fundamentally changed society by increasing the means of production of traditional materials simultaneously made possible a new kind of product: mass produced entertainment. While the means of creating this product was developing, the ideal audience was also being created.

Among the many changes wrought by the industrial revolution was the gathering together of large populations in urban centers which resulted from the increase of factory labor in lieu of an agrarian society. Nye argues:

> The primary condition for the emergence of popular culture was a great leap in population growth in Europe and the Americas, and the subsequent concentration of people into cohesive urban or near-urban units with common social, economic and cultural characteristics. The result was the

creation of a huge market for entertainment, with identifiable desires and

responses. (2)

Combining the means to mass produce a product with the creation of geographically

dense markets which eased distribution allowed entertainment to become one of

the most profitable products in the world.

Additionally, Nye argues that while society has been divided into "high" and

"low" classes and cultures, with the emergence of a middle class there came to exist

a culture of the popular class. The creation of a middle class was a necessary step in

the evolution of a popular culture. Disposable income and leisure time, two dual

developments that came along with the middle class, were prerequisites to the

creation of popular culture. In Nye's analysis, before the industrial revolution, which

allowed for mass production and inadvertently contributed to the rise of urban

centers and the creation of a middle class with extra income and free time, there

was no such thing as popular culture.

Ray B. Browne is another pioneer in popular culture studies, one whose

perspective varies from Nye's. Whereas Nye sought to position popular culture

studies within the established traditions of academic study Browne, the founder of

the Popular Culture Association and the American Culture Association, resisted the

standardization of popular culture theory. Browne feared that any standardization

would result in a tradition that prohibited new areas and methodologies of study.

Browne explains that too often institutionalized studies become "content to study

the fields that had been established as important and therefore in need of further

investigation rather than being modified into new areas of investigation" (11). This

criticism, in Browne's eyes, can be applied not only to the old "high" arts of academia, but to popular culture theorists who attempt to define what popular culture is or to derive a precise methodology for studying it.

Browne opposes attempts to pinpoint an origin to the development of popular culture, defining popular culture as "the system of attitudes, behavior patterns, beliefs, customs, and tastes that define the people of any society" (3) while at the same time offering the caveat that "the nature of popular culture makes it particularly difficult to define" (5). Browne, like Nye, recognizes the existence of the old split of "high" and "low" culture, though unlike Nye he would contend that it was always a false dichotomy. Browne argues that "the distinctions between popular culture and elitist culture have blurred almost into invisibility" not because cultural evolution is blurring the lines between them, but because the lines never should have existed (4). For example, Browne views elitists, such as academics, seeing the value in folk music, such as the blues, as evidence that elite/folk distinctions no longer function as they once did. To Browne this is simultaneously evidence that the old distinctions no longer function and that those distinctions never should have functioned at all. For Browne there is no high or low culture, it is all simply the popular culture of different groups.

Many efforts to analyze popular culture seek to contextualize the entertainment of a culture within the society that both produces and consumes the entertainment. This method of analysis leans towards a new historicist interpretation of our cultural entertainment. New historicism attempts to situate texts within the existing culture at the time of their creation. Louis Montrose, in the

essay "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," explains that new historicism "reorients the axis of inter-textuality, substituting for the diachronic text of an autonomous literary history the synchronic text of a cultural system […] implicit in [this…] is a conviction that formal and historical concerns are not opposed, but rather inseparable" (779). Montrose asserts that the culture of a time period is integral, even intrinsic, to understanding artistic works. The historical cultural setting is inherently linked to the products of the culture. However, understanding the cultural context does not only aid in interpreting the art, the reverse is also true. Stephen Greenblatt states "if an exploration of a particular culture will lead to a heightened understanding of a work of literature produced within that culture, so too a careful reading of a work of literature will lead to a heightened understanding of the culture within which it was produced" (227). Thus contextualizing a work within its contemporary culture increases our understanding of both the work and culture. This is as true for our popular entertainment as for the literature Greenblatt and Montrose analyze.

It is important to note that in performing any interpretation of a cultural artifact the conclusions drawn are not necessarily reflective of how the consumers received it. Consumers are individuals with multi-faceted lives, and their individual socio-economic status, values, education, and perceptions may alter how they would interpret the product. Additionally, there may be layers of meaning in the product which are perceived differently by different groups. No product has only one fixed meaning which will be received by all who consume it. But, interpreting our cultural products can still be illuminating in identifying aspects of our society, even if it does

not provide a monolithic and all-applicable analysis. Analysis may yield *an* interpretation of a work, not *the* interpretation of a work.

This reflective interpretation of art and culture is applicable to popular entertainment as well. Film, television, comic books, and video games, for example, are not produced in a vacuum devoid of societal hopes, prejudices, or concerns. The entertainment a society produces will be indicative of some aspects of that society. Having a narrower focus while examining a work of popular entertainment, such as the portrayals of race and gender, allows for a greater enlightenment on those particular subjects, but does not invalidate other areas of analysis.

The relationship between popular culture and society's attitudes towards race and gender is complex, because our entertainment simultaneously reflects and informs attitudes and prejudices. In "Why Study Popular Culture" Michael Petracca and Madeleine Sorapure explain:

> We see reflected in pop culture certain standards and commonly held beliefs about beauty, success, love, or justice. We also see reflected there important social contradictions and conflicts—the tension between races, genders, or generations, for example. To find out about ourselves, then, we can turn to our own popular products and pastimes. (5)

Even though popular culture is often considered escapists fare, popular culture often mirrors the mindset of a culture, it does not ignore it.

There is also a complex interplay between a society and its entertainment in that it is not always possible to know which is the reflection and which is the source. Do many Hollywood films from the 1940s have elements of racism because of the

attitudes of the producers and consumers of the films, or were those attitudes shaped by the entertainment they watched every day? The answer is, of course, both. A society's entertainment reflects and influences that society. What is "normal" in a society is, at least to some degree, found in and learned from entertainment.

Because media instructs in societal norms, ideas, attitudes, and perceptions about race and gender can be influenced by the media. These two subjects, race and gender, overlap in several ways. In both instances, for generations there have been assumptions that biology was playing a dominant role in determining the manner in which people of different genders and different races acted, interacted, and developed culturally. However, while biology may play role, many traits that were historically believed to be biologically dictated are now accepted to have been socially conditioned. Much of the current work in the fields of race and gender studies is devoted to how society shapes the perceptions of race and gender, assigning roles which are in no way biologically determined. The social conditioning of race and gender roles has many elements, but the manner in which racial roles and gender roles are demonstrated in popular culture is a fascinating one. Of particular interest is the fact that because so much of our popular culture has been preserved we can analyze an old film or comic book as an artifact that reveals societal attitudes at the time of its production.

In Race, Gender, and Ethnicity Joseph F. Healey and Eileen O'Brien explain that race is an idea that has both biological and social meanings. However, despite

some obvious physical distinctions between races, they argue the far more significant differences lie in socially constructed perceptions of race.

Today, extensive and long-term scientific research has resulted in the nearly unanimous conclusion that, biologically, race is a triviality. Racial typologies (black, white, yellow, and so on) are hopelessly arbitrary, and even the most ambitious attempts have failed to find unambiguous dividing lines between so-called races. […] Race is a social construction: a matter of importance because of our perceptions of it, not because of its independent reality. (4)

There is no biological predisposition for members of one race to act in a certain way while members of another race will naturally act in a contrary manner. Social conventions, traditions, and prejudices influence our attitudes towards, and expectations of, an individual based on their race. Healey and O'Brien further explain that "Racial identity is part of the self-image that is constructed during socialization, not a simple or direct function of one's genetic heritage" (4).

To a larger degree there are biological difference between men and women, differences which can dictate some different roles for men and women in certain situations. However, there are many long-held beliefs about the roles of men and women in society which are more based in socially constructed gender roles than in biologically mandated sexual roles. Women's bodies allow them to bear children, a biological role, but there is no biological requirement that a woman rear the child at home while a man earns an income. These latter roles were traditional gender roles developed by society, rather than biology.

One's concept of gender develops through socialization, the same way one's understanding of race comes about. There are myriad factors which contribute to the socialization of an individual. The manner in which an individual is raised by his or her parents, the socio-economic climate he or she matures in, the opinions of peers, and the media an individual reads and watches all contribute to his or her understanding of societal norms and expectations. In addition to economic, social, and political factors, our popular entertainment plays a significant role.

Myra Jehlen argues that the popular narratives describe the gender roles a society assigns at the time period the popular entertainment is produced:

If gender is a matter of nurture and not nature, the character conventionally assigned men and women in novels reflects history and culture rather than nature, and novels, poems, and plays are neither timeless nor transcendent. [...] If literature speaks gender, along with class and race, the critic has to read culture and ideology. It turns out that all the time writers and critics thought they were just creating and explicating transcendingly in a separate artistic language, willy nilly they were speaking the contemporary cultural wisdom." (264)

Jehlen contends that works of literature reflect the contemporary ideas about gender roles that the writer encountered in their lifetime. Conversely, Judith Lorber argues that rather than reflecting gender roles found in society, media teaches gender roles to its audience, "Individuals are born sexed but not gendered, and they have to be taught to be masculine or feminine. [...] Schools, parents, peers, and the mass media guide young people into gendered work and family roles." (57)

While these two points of view may seem to be contradictory, it is not necessary to discount one in order to accept the other. Both are valid. Popular entertainment, including comic books, is simultaneously descriptive of societal attitudes at the time it is produced and prescriptive of how society should be. Thus, when analyzing the portrayal of a superheroine in an issue of *The X-Men* from the 1960s, we can find reflections of how society perceives women's roles as well as a guide for young readers that influenced how they perceived gender roles. Popular entertainment and society reflect one another, but it is not always clear which is the source and which is the mirror image, and in fact both roles are fulfilled at the same time.

The Comic Book Industry

Comic books offer a unique opportunity to consider the shifts and trends in America's attitudes towards race and gender. Because many comic book series are published monthly and contain ongoing seemingly never-ending narratives it is possible to see how portrayals of race and gender have shifted across years and even decades. The same characters have appeared in stories for decades, but the way those characters act, interact, and react has varied greatly. To have a continuing narrative that stretches across such a long period of time allows for an interpretation of societal attitudes which are reflected in that entertainment and which are at the same time molding current societal attitudes.

The X-Men comic book is a particularly apt series to use for an analysis of race and gender because of the themes which are often explored in the series. Understanding the superhero genre and also some of the market forces of the

industry will aid in understanding why the X-Men comic book series is a fertile field for analysis. Thus, I will give a brief history of the comic book industry in order to provide a context for the series, followed by a discussion of prominent works in the field of comic book studies. This history will emphasize the historical background of the superhero genre in particular. While there have always been other comic books published in other genres, for much of the history of the industry the superhero genre has dominated the sales charts of mainstream comic book publishers. There have been exceptions, such as in the late 1940s and early 1950s when horror and crime comics were extremely popular. But the popularity of the industry was carried on the shoulders of superheroes in its early years and is today dominated by "the big two" publishers, DC Comics and Marvel Comics.

The first comic book that matches today's style was *Funnies on Parade*, which was published in 1933Although there is some debate, most often this publication is identified as the first American comic book. However, *Funnies on Parade* was not an original production. Maxwell Gaines was a publisher who recognized that the comic strips in newspapers were popular, and collected and repackaged comic strips into a new format. *Funnies on Parade* reprinted newspaper comic strips into a flimsy book form. This format made the comic strips the focus of the product rather than an ancillary portion of a larger newspaperAlthough many observers thought that nobody would pay for material that they had already read in the newspapers, this experiment in repackaging already-produced entertainment proved successful. As is almost always the case in the entertainment industry, success led to imitation. Soon

companies were publishing imitation titles, such as *Famous Funnies,* which also reprinted newspaper comic strips.

The first comic book to contain all original material was *New Fun*, first published in 1935. *New Fun* was the first comic book published by National Allied Publications, the company which would eventually be renamed DC Comics, one of today's "big two" comic book publishers. Based on the success of *New Fun* National Allied began publishing other titles, including *New Comics* in 1935 and *Detective Comics* in 1937. *New Fun* and *New Comics* featured comedic comic strips, and occasionally westerns or adventures, while *Detective Comics* featured mystery adventure stories. Following a change in ownership, the publisher launched a title that would change comic books forever: *Action Comics* featuring Superman.

One of the most significant publications in the history of popular culture is *Action Comics #1*, though most people probably are not familiar with itAlthough there had been earlier forms of comic books published, and though there had been earlier characters with superheroic traits, *Action Comics #1* simultaneously altered the focus of the comic book industry and introduced the world to the first comic book superhero. It can be argued that both the modern comic book industry and the superhero genre became established with Superman's first appearance in 1938's *Action Comics #1*. While the adventures of the Scarlet Pimpernel using a dual identity or The Shadow wearing a version of a costume were published in dime novels and pulp magazines and heard on radio shows, Superman was the character to put all the generic elements together and give birth to the superhero genre.

It is difficult to understate the impact Superman has had on popular culture. Superman has influenced all the subsequent comic book superheroes from Batman to Wonder Woman to Spider-Man to HellboyAlthough superheroes are generally associated with comic books and comic books are associated with superheroes, the genre of superhero fiction has influenced and even thrived in every other medium of entertainment. Superman had a popular and long-running radio show. Live action television adaptations of superhero comic books have succeeded in primetime while cartoon adaptations have proved popular on Saturday mornings for multiple generations. Hundreds of pop songs reference superheroes, with some even being sung from superheroes' points of view. Prose novels can be found telling the adventures of superheroes. Superman had a Broadway musical, and efforts our underway to bring seemingly ill-fated Spider-Man musical to Broadway. And for the last decade every summer has brought blockbuster films with multi-million dollar budgets adapting characters from comic books. Superheroes started in comic books, but they now permeate all of popular culture.

Superman's creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster could not have imagined the impact Superman was to have. Siegel and Schuster first used a character named Superman in a short story they printed in an amateur science fiction magazine they self-published while high school studentsAlthough it never reached a large readership, this magazine is notable for containing the story "Reign of the Superman" which told the tale of a mad scientist who attempted to control the world. This "Superman" had little in common with the hero they later created, though the bald villain may have been a predecessor to Superman's arch-nemesis

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Lex Luthor. After high school, trying to find work at the tail end of the Great Depression, Siegel and Schuster turned to Siegel's writing and Schuster's art skills in order to produce comics. When they tried to break into the field, newspaper comic strips were the prestigious side of comics, while the new comic books were generally seen as inferior. There was prestige in publishing newspaper comics, while artists and writers felt there was a stigma associated with comic books.

Siegel and Schuster thought their new hero Superman was a good enough idea to be published in newspaper comic strips. They sent the character to every newspaper they could. In the meantime, they created a character named Slam Bradley who appeared in *Detective Comics*. Noted comic book historian and artist Jim Steranko records in *The Steranko History of Comics* that "Siegel and Schuster had, over the years, sent versions of [Superman] to every comic syndicate editor in the country. The Bell syndicate rejected them with, '*We are in the market only for strips likely to have the most extraordinary appeal, and we do not feel Superman gets into that category*'" (39). What would one day become one of the most recognizable figures in the world could not find a publisher. In frustration Joe Schuster tore up the first Superman art and had to redraw those panels when Siegel convinced him it was worth their time to continue submitting. For six years Siegel and Schuster worked to get Superman published in the newspaper comics. Eventually they gave up on newspapers, and when Harry Donenfeld offered to publish the character in *Action Comics* #1, Siegel and Schuster sold the rights to their creation along with the strip itself.

When National Publications planned to launch *Action Comics* they needed a lead character befitting that title. *Action Comics* was planned to be a serialized comic with different stories in each issue, but with recurring characters if any proved popular. In order to find cheap material, National looked through the comic submissions newspapers had rejected. Several people have claimed responsibility for identifying Superman's potential, but however approval occurred, a now-iconic image of Superman lifting a car over his head was used on the cover of *Action Comics #1* and sales were far better than expected. Children snapped up the issue to discover who this tights-clad, cape-wearing figure was. *Action Comics #1* began what is now called the Golden Age of comics. The publisher took some time to discover caused the popularity of the title. As Ryan Dunlavy and Fred Van Lente explain in *Comic Book Comics #1*:

> Even though *Action Comics #1* promptly sold out, the Man of Steel did not
> return to the cover until *#7*. By that time, *Action* was selling more than
> double the average comic book title. National finally figured out that kids
> weren't going to the newsstand asking for *Action Comics*. They were
> demanding…Superman!"

Once publishers realized the consumers wanted superheroes, that's what they decided to give them.

National Publications wanted a hero that could be associated with another of their titles, *Detective Comics*. Less than a year after Superman's first appearance, at the request of their editor, Bill Finger and Bob Kane created a character named Batman, who first appeared in 1939's *Detective Comics #27*. Batman also proved to

be a hit, and soon the comic book market was flooded with superheroes. National

Publications soon introduced many other heroes, including Wonder Woman, The

Flash, and The Green Lantern. Other publishers introduced characters such as

Captain America, Captain Marvel, the Black Terror, and many other masked

characters.

The popularity of comic books and superheroes increased when the country

found itself facing a clear threat: the Axis Powers. World War II, with the patriotic

fervor at home and conflicts raging overseas, helped increase interest in the stories

of super-powered individuals who protected America and always caught the bad

guy. Because comic books were such cheap entertainment each issue sold very well.

And because a comic could easily be passed along, the number of kids reading

comics was much higher than the number of comic books being sold. Unlike movies,

where each ticket represented one viewer, each comic book sold may have

represented two or three or even five or six readers, by some estimates.

Throughout World War II the popularity of comics rose. Often the comics

were openly propagandistic, with the American characters being shown as bastions

of virtue and Japanese or German characters being demonized in the narrative.

Sometimes, the demonization was portrayed in the art, with Japanese characters

being shown with fangs and demonic eyes. After the war interest in superheroes

began to wane, though the popularity of comic books did not. Readers began to

peruse other genres of stories being told in the comic book medium, and publishers

responded by no longer introducing new superheroes and cutting back on the

number of superhero titles they published. The most popular genres became crime

comic books, which often adapted real life crime stories, and horror comic books, such as *Tales of the Crypt*. The popularity of these kinds of comic books soon led to controversy for the industry, as many adults became concerned about whether the stories told in crime and horror comic books corrupted the children who read them.

The publisher which produced the most notorious of the horror comics was EC Comics. Ironically, the EC originally stood for Educational Comics. Founded by Maxwell Gaines, the man behind *Funnies on Parade*, Educational Comics produced comic books based on Bible stories, history, and science. When Maxwell Gaines died in a boating accident in 1947, his son William began to manage the company. William Gaines changed the company name from Educational Comics to Entertaining Comics and began to publish horror and crime anthologies, which proved much more successful than the Bible stories the company used to publish. As the popularity of superhero comics was diminishing following World War II, other publishers began to copy the popular titles EC Comics was publishing, and soon many horror and crime titles began to flood the market. The emphasis on these genres soon caught the attention of an advocate of adolescent mental health named Fredric Wertham, as well as parent and community groups and, eventually, the U.S. government.

Dr. Fredric Wertham was a successful and respected psychiatrist who intended to help the youth of America. Wertham, like many others in the early 1950s, was concerned about the rise of postwar juvenile delinquency. His search for a cause for delinquency led him to conclude that reading comic books was a contributing factor. In *Comic Book Nation* Bradford C. Wright provides a substantial

analysis of Wertham's methodology and the studies which led to his conclusion, allowing some of the flaws in Wertham's logic to become clear:

> Wertham's experience treating African American and juvenile patients led him to develop theories about how sociocultural factors acted on personality development. Unlike most of his Freudian-trained colleagues, Wertham emphasized exterior social conditions to explain the psychological disorders affecting the human psyche […] This led him to investigate [juvenile delinquents'] cultural backgrounds, their patterns of play, and their choice of reading material. Consistently, he found that the common cultural influence shared by virtually all juvenile cases before him was comic books. (93)

Comic books were damned by their own popularity and a flawed deduction by Wertham. The early 1950s was one of comic books' most popular periods. It is estimated that ninety percent of adolescents read comic books at the time (Wright 96). Had Wertham performed a study of youth who had never been in any sort of trouble he may have also found that comic books were a "common cultural influence" shared by well-adjusted adolescents. Stan Lee, the creator of Spider-Man, complains of Wertham's conclusions, "he said things like, 'Ninety percent of all the kids in reform school read comics!' Of course, ninety percent of them also drank milk, but that didn't matter to him" (*Legends*). There were many common denominators which were shared by these youths, but Wertham latched onto comic books as the corrupting influence in their lives and made a crusade of his cause.

The main focus of Wertham's attack was crime and horror comic books, though he did also attack some aspects of superhero comic books. For instance,

Wertham accused Batman and Robin of inspiring homosexual activity in youth. Wertham explains in his book with the inflammatory title *Seduction of the Innocent: The Influence of Comic Books on Today's Youth*, "We have inquired about Batman from overt homosexuals treated at the Readjustment Center [...] A number of them knew these stories very well and spoke of them as their favorite reading" (191–3). This was part of the evidence Wertham used to conclude that reading Batman comics increased the likelihood of an adolescent becoming homosexual.

Mostly as a result of Wertham's published findings and his vocal public campaign against comic books, the U.S. Senate's Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency convened on April 21, 1954, with the special purpose of considering comic books and their influence on youth. Many comic book publishers were present, as was Wertham. The conclusion drawn by the subcommittee included the threat of government censorship if comic books did not begin policing themselves. The record of the hearings includes committee chairman Senator Robert Hendrickson's statement that, "A competent job of self-policing within the industry will achieve much," with the implication that the government would begin censoring them if they did not do a "competent job" (U.S. Senate, 310).

In 1954 the comic book publishers came together to form the Comics Code Authority which would provide a seal of approval that could be published on the covers of all comic books which met their standard. The code, though self-inflicted to avoid outside censorship, greatly limited the stories which could be told. It included such inhibitions as "In every instance good shall triumph over evil," "Scenes dealing with [...] walking dead, torture, vampires and vampirism, ghouls,

cannibalism and werewolfism are prohibited," and "Policemen, judges, government officials and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority" (Nyberg, 166–7).

Following the public outcry against comic books and the creation of the Comics Code Authority, most publishers became very conservative in the types of material they published. The restrictions on content meant that most crime and horror comics could not receive the seal of approval required to be sold on newsstands. Many smaller publishers went out of business. Those companies that did stay in business began to tell stories that were "safe" for children. For example, Batman stopped facing street level crime and began to have sci-fi adventures in outer space with aliens, because aliens were not outlawed by the Comics Code and children could not learn anything about real crime in a sci-fi comic. Many of the comics published at this time became simplistic and juvenile.

By the mid-1950s publishers were searching for new material that could work within the constraints of the Comics Code. Although publishers had shifted away from the superhero genre after World War II (the only superhero characters to have been published continually during this period were Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman), they now turned back to this genre for ideas and characters that would reignite interest in comics. Julius Schwartz was the managing editor of DC Comics (National Allied Publications had gone through several name changes, and eventually settled on DC Comics, which stands for the rather redundant Detective Comics Comics, named after one of the company's oldest and best-selling titles at the time). In 1956 Schwartz reimagined the Golden Age superhero The Flash.

Schwartz had writers and artists create a new secret identity, new costume, and new origin for the character, but kept the same powers. Schwartz had writers and artists create a new secret identity, new costume, and new origin for the character, but kept the same powers. The Flash proved popular, and soon DC Comics was updating other Golden Age heroes such as The Green Lantern, Hawkman, and the Atom. Eventually DC Comics brought their most popular heroes together into a superhero team called The Justice League of America. This resurgence of popularity in superhero comics, which began with the revival of The Flash in 1954, is considered the start of the Silver Age of comics.

As in the Golden Age of comics, success with superhero stories bred imitation. In 1961 the owner of Atlas Comics, which would soon change its name to Marvel Comics, asked his managing editor Stan Lee to create a new superhero comic book. Stan Lee collaborated with artist Jack Kirby to create the Fantastic Four and the Marvel Comics superhero universe was born. When the Fantastic Four proved successful, Marvel Comics began producing other superhero comics. In 1962 Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created The Incredible Hulk and Stan Lee collaborated with Steve Ditko to create Spider-Man. In 1963 Stan Lee worked with Don Heck and Jack Kirby to create Iron Man. In 1963 Lee also worked with Kirby to create the X-Men and the Avengers, and in 1964 he collaborated with Bill Everett to create Daredevil. Several other characters were introduced in these early years of Marvel Comics, including Dr. Strange, Thor, Ant-Man, and the Wasp.

Stan Lee is an extremely important figure in the history of comic books. He was a prolific collaborator in the creation of many of the most recognizable

superheroes in the world, but he also used his personality and position to create a sense of community amongst fans. He wrote editorials which allowed fans to get to know the talent making the comic books, he created a fan club, and the comic's letter pages were filled with discussions about the content of the magazines. By the mid-1960s Marvel Comics and DC Comics were established as the two dominant comic book publishers in the industry, a situation that has not changed significantly in the intervening years. The Silver Age of comics, beginning with the relaunch of the Flash, was noteworthy for the reemergence of superheroes as the highest selling genre of comic books and innovative storytelling of Marvel Comics.

There is much debate about the period in comic book history following the Silver Age. Undoubtedly more time and distance is needed to be able to properly analyze the trends and shifts in the industry. Most comic book historians agree that the Silver Age ended in the early 1970s. While the Silver Age comics were more complex than their Golden Age counterparts, they were largely optimistic and unambiguous about moral issues. The 1970s saw comic books tackle controversial social issues such as racism, drug culture, war protests, and the counter culture movement.

The 1970s also saw an important change in the distribution of comic books. Prior to the 1970s comic books could only be bought on newsstands or spinner racks inside of drug or grocery stores. Stores dedicated solely to comic books appeared for the first time in the 1970s. There were positives and negatives for the industry associated with the creation of comic book shops. The selection of comic books was larger in comic shops than it had ever been before, but fans had to seek

out comic book stores to find the product. Fans had a greater variety to choose from, and could look through "back issues" for comic books from earlier years. However, while any shopper in a drug store might stop and look at a rack of comic books, very few casual shoppers entered comic shops. Due to this limited exposure, fewer new readers were introduced to comic books. Comic book fans might spend more money in a comic shop because of the greater selection, but there were fewer customers spending money.

In the 1980s comics became even more morally ambiguous. Seminal works such as *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Watchmen* questioned the moral center which had motivated superheroes in the earlier ages. Anti-heroes such as The Punisher became extremely popular, and comic books in general became darker and grittier in tone and artistic style.

The 1990s were a problematic decade for the comic book industry. The decade began with extreme prosperity within the industry. Because comic books from the 1930s and 1940s had become so valuable (some of the earliest comic books now sell for over a million dollars), mainstream news outlets began to report that comic books were great investments. This brought "investors" into comic book stores who would buy comic books that they thought would become valuable, but who did not care about the stories within the comics. Comic book publishers began to publish more special event comics to capitalize on this new kind of customer, and soon many actual fans were caught up in the idea of investing in comics. Many customers would buy multiple copies of comic books, in the hopes that they would be able to sell them in the future at a much higher price than they paid for them.

This was a reversal of the 1940s, when one issue was bought and multiple readers enjoyed it. Now, one reader would buy multiple issues, but be careful not to open them so they remained in mint condition. Publishers began to print more comics to meet this higher demand, flooding the market with new #1 issues, variant covers with holograms or special foil, and high profile event stories, such as "The Death of Superman."

However, the reason the comic books from the 1930s and 1940s are worth so much is because they are so extremely rare. Very few of those early comic book readers kept those comics, and even fewer protected them from damage. The paper recycling drives during the war caused the majority of comic books from that period to be destroyed. So, in the 1990s, when comic book publishers were ordering massive print runs, sometimes millions of copies of a single issue, in order to sell multiple copies to customers who were going to protect those comics as investments, there was none of the rarity that is necessary to create a demand and an inflated price. While this speculatory bubble lasted, it was incredibly profitable for the industry. But by the mid-1990s the "investors" and the fans stopped buying multiple copies, because they learned there was none of the anticipated demand for the products they were buying. The publishers, in their rush to put out enough product to meet demand, had sacrificed quality in the interest of quantity, and thereby alienated many of the actual comic book fans who had been buying comic books before the speculator's market began. Thus, in short order, both the investors and many of the actual fans stopped buying comic books while the publishers were still ordering large print runs and producing as much product as possible. So when

the speculatory bubble burst, publishers and comic book stores were spending

money to produce and stock products that were no longer in demand.

Large numbers of comic book stores were forced to close. The publishers

were not immune either. Marvel Comics declared bankruptcy in 1996, though it was

never forced to cease publishing comics and it has since emerged from bankruptcy.

Unlike the problems the industry suffered in the 1950s at the hands of Wertham and

the U.S. government, the woes the industry faced in the 1990s were entirely self-

inflicted.

Since the 1990s the industry has attempted to place a greater emphasis on

the quality of storytelling and to establish sounder long-term business plans. With

the success of movie adaptations such as *Spider-Man*, *X-Men*, and the new *Batman*

series of films new fans have discovered comic books, and old fans who abandoned

the industry in the 1990s have returned. Publishers are optimistic that they have

learned from the past and will not repeat the mistakes which almost ended the

industry in the 1990s. Some commentators fear that publishers are in fact repeating

some of these mistakes by issuing variant covers of comic books and regularly

promoting large events in their superhero universes, but there have been no signs of

a speculator bubble quite as large as occurred in the 1990s.

Comic Book Studies

In 1985 Will Eisner wrote, "the special nature of Sequential Art is deserving

of serious consideration by both critic and practitioner. The modern acceleration of

graphic technology and the emergence of an era greatly dependent on visual

communication makes this inevitable" (5). The "inevitable" consideration of

sequential art may have taken longer that Eisner would have liked, but more than twenty years after he predicted the emergence of comic book scholarship we are seeing a rapid growth in the field.

Comic book studies are a subset of popular culture studies. However, while popular culture studies have become much more accepted in academia, comic book studies are, to some degree, still seeking recognition and acceptance. This is perhaps due to the fact that the dominant genre told in the medium, superhero adventures, has been dismissed as juvenile fare for generations. In an effort to distance the medium from the superhero genre, some have used the term "graphic novel" to define the medium. In truth, comic books is something of a misnomer, as the majority of the works produced by the comic book industry are not comedic. The earliest comic book publishers reprinted popular comic strips from newspapers, and the term which was appropriate for those early publications has stuck ever since. Because of the ubiquity of the term, for clarity, I will use the term comic book throughout this paper, and generally ignore the use of graphic novels, graphic narratives, sequential art, visual storytelling, or any other synonymous term which has been proposed for the medium.

Comic books are capable of telling stories in any genre, and in fact do, but perhaps no other medium has ever been so closely linked to a single genre as comic books are to superheroes. Both the comic book medium and the superhero genre are worthy of academic study, and currently there has been an increase in the number of studies being done in these areas. Medium studies and narrative studies represent the two main threads in comic books studies.

Medium studies consider the nature of comic books as a medium. What distinguishes comics from prose and film? How do panel layouts work? In what ways is the reader involved in the creation of story in the gutter between the panels? Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* and Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* are the pioneering works in this field, but there remains much work to be done.

Narrative studies consider the stories being told in comic books. Currently, narrative studies have been dominated by considerations of superhero comics, but there are some forays being made into other genres. Also connected to narrative studies have been histories of the comic book industry, which often find connections between the narratives and the behind the scenes workings of publishers, editors, writers, and artists.

Both medium studies and narrative studies have been embraced by fans of the comic book medium. These fans, perhaps driven to prove that there is something deeper to the comic books they love, have even produced their own works in both areas. Fan studies, while lacking the theory and academic rigor of their more scholarly counterparts, can still offer significant insights and invite further research into the ideas they explore.

Medium studies

The study of the comic book medium basically begins with Will Eisner's 1985 work *Comics & Sequential Art*, and largely ends with Scott McCloud's 1993 book *Understanding Comics*. Unfortunately, there is not much in between or after. McCloud does expand on his theories in his later works, *Reinventing Comics* and

Making Comics, but these are less concerned with the theoretical understanding of the medium. While other mediums such as painting, prose, and film have had long histories of being studied and analyzed, comic books have largely been neglected.

Will Eisner was one of the first to attempt to fill the void in comic book theory. Eisner has long been considered a master of the comic book medium based on his work as an artist and writer in the field. *Comics and Sequential Art* demonstrated that his skill was the result of long deliberations on the medium he was working in. Eisner explains the complexity of the medium he worked in throughout his life:

> The format of the comic book presents a montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills. The regiments of art (eg. Perspective, symmetry, brush stroke) and the regiments of literature (eg. Grammar, plot, syntax) become superimposed upon each other. The reading of the comic book is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit. (8)

Eisner recognized, before comics had the burgeoning respect they receive today, that the medium was an art form that had unique requirements for both creators and readers. Eisner goes on to explore that complexity by providing commentary to some of his own work. The commentary highlights elements such as perspective, symbolism, lettering, lighting, and the combination of literary and visual narrative devices which are used in creating a story in the comic book medium.

Rather than provide a completely text-based analysis of a visual medium, Eisner's commentary appears at the side of his examples. A page from a comic book

is provided, and a small amount of commentary is to the side of the page. Scott McCloud would take the examination of the comic book medium to a different level by combining the commentary with the example.

In *Understanding Comics* McCloud presents his heavily theoretical discussion of comic books in comic book format. This method allows for the discussion of theoretical concepts such as the vocabulary of comics, the function of the gutter (the space between comic panels), or the passage of time in comic books to serve as an example of those very topics.

This duality, providing the reader with discussion and example at the same time, is undeniably a strength of the work. It requires the reader to be aware of multiple factors while considering what is being read. McCloud argues that this is true of all comic books, that as a medium comic books require more of a reader than either prose or film. The reader is required to complete the action in between panels, filling in both movement and the passage of time, creating context, and literally helping to write story in the space between images. This alone would seem to qualify comic books as a medium independent of any other, but in general comic books seem to be regulated to the status of bastard child of prose and film. Ironically, comic books seem to have a closer relation to traditional art due to the artistic production of images, but they are rarely considered in this light. The narrative tends to dominate discussion of comic books, and this more closely aligns them with film and prose.

Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* revolutionized the study of the distinctive elements of the comic book medium. McCloud begins discussing comic

books by addressing the misconception that comic books only contain superhero stories. As McCloud explains:

> If people failed to understand comics, it was because they defined what comics could be too narrowly! A proper definition, if we could find one, might give lie to the stereotypes—and show that the potential of comics is limitless and exciting." (3)

McCloud is not disparaging of superhero comic books, he uses multiple examples from Marvel and DC Comics in his book, but he wishes the reader to discover that comic books are not limited to that genre. McCloud seems to be primarily focused on elements of the comic book medium that set it apart and make it unique, rather than the kinds of stories that are told in the medium. His discussion of comic book art and its implications in reader reception addresses topics rarely touched on, even today, in comic book studies.

McCloud then goes on to explore some possible definitions for the comic book medium, settling on "Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (9). Somewhat surprisingly, it took until 1993 to have a working definition of what comics are, as previous definitions were generally inaccurate or too simplistic.

McCloud's work is justifiably considered ground-breakingAlthough it was published almost two decades ago, his voice remains one of the few discussing the theory of comic books as a medium, rather than discussing the narratives told within that medium. Douglas Wolk's recent book *Reading Comics: How Graphic*

Novels Work and What They Mean may fall into this realm as well. His study of artistic style and the in-depth analysis of image construction are more in-line with medium studies than narrative studies. However, Wolk's distinction between art comics and superhero comics is more of a narrative consideration. Wolk's study may be one of the first comic book studies to take the necessary step of combining medium and narrative studies to more fully understand the stories being told in the medium.

Narrative studies

Just as the comic book industry is dominated by superheroes, so is comic book criticism. The scholarship on superhero comic books is of varying quality. Knowing the source and intended audience of the works is useful in evaluating the value of a work. Some works are written by academics for academics, others by academics for fans, some by fans for fans, and some seem to be written by fans but for academics.

In the introduction to a 2002 reprinting of Jules Feiffer's *The Great Comic Book Heroes* from 1965, Gary Groth, a comic book historian in his own right, describes Feiffer's work as "the first sustained essay on comic books of the '40s and '50s" (vi). While Groth vastly overstates the case when claiming that "Nowadays, [comic books are] practically a de rigeur subject of University dissertations," he is correct when pointing out that "in 1965 no one wrote about comic books, much less superhero comics" (vi). Feiffer's work does not apply academic theories, instead it offers a more or less chronological history of the early superheroes, interspersed with some of Feiffer's personal insights.

Whereas Feiffer largely considered the narrative history of popular comic book characters, Jim Steranko's two-volume work *The History of Comics* ties the narratives to the history of the industry itself. The first volume was published in 1970, and the second in 1972. This history of comics includes everything from biographies of key publishers and artists to the publication history of individual titles, to panel-by-panel descriptions of what Steranko views to have been significant sequences. The panel-by-panel descriptions, as well as Steranko's analysis of the different artistic styles used by different artists and those style's effects on readers, makes this work one of the first to apply theoretical considerations to the comic book medium. Similarly, the simultaneous discussion of societal history, narrative histories of characters, and the history of the comic book industry in some ways makes this work a prototype of the more rigorous New Historical readings of comic books which Bradford Wright will employ in *Comic Book Nation*.

For some time after Steranko's history of the industry, readers could best hope for in-depth information about characters, with some cultural analysis interspersed, in volumes written largely for fan consumption. Many of these volumes were highly informative about the narrative history of characters, with some biographical information about creators and some industry history mixed in, but lacked any application of academic theory. Les Daniels produced several of these types of volumes. Between 1991 and 1999 Daniels wrote *Marvel: Five Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*, *DC Comics: Sixty Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes*, *Superman: The Complete History*, *Batman: The Complete History*, *Superman:*

The Golden Age, and *Wonder Woman: The Golden Age*. While these volumes lack

sophisticated analysis, the sheer amount of information in them makes them useful

as resources from which insights can be gleaned to inspire further research. Works

with similar strengths and weaknesses include Michael Mallory's recent *Marvel: The*

Characters and Their Universe and its companion *X-Men: The Characters and Their*

Universe. Again these books have a narrow focus and high factual content, but no

deep analysis. Another example of this kind of work is Ron Goulart's 2001 *Great*

American Comic Books.

Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs' *The Comic Book Heroes: The First History of*

Modern Comic Books from the Silver Age to the Present is interesting in that the book

went through two editions, more than a decade apart. Jones and Jacobs were

outsiders of the industry when they wrote the first edition, and then Jones became a

prolific comic book writer, and Jacobs a comic book editor before revising the book

for a second edition. The first edition contained loads of historical facts about

characters and creators, but they explain that the second edition became more

scholarly:

> Readers who wish to compare this edition to the first (and isn't that the sort
>
> of thing comic book fans do, after all?) will find it is essentially a whole new
>
> book, starting from page one. […] A better understanding of how comics
>
> connect with American culture has led us to deepen the social and
>
> biographical explorations of the book. This has meant cutting some of our
>
> historical criticism and bibliography, which may disappoint those readers
>
> who told us they valued the first edition as a "collectors' guide." (xi)

In short, they attempted to transform their book from the historical fact driven style of Daniels into something more analytical. Their work is obviously intended for fan consumption, but nonetheless they push their history of the industry into more analytical directions than Daniels, Goulart, or Mallory.

Gerard Jones would go on to write another academic text, *Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book. Men of Tomorrow* provides in-depth biographies of the early writers, artists, and publishers of comic books. Because Jones goes to great lengths to demonstrate the creators' lives influenced their work, the cultural analysis of the comic books rises to a higher level. Jones has researched the individuals, settings, relationships, economics, and politics which all played a role in creating the comic book industry, and therefore controlled which stories were published. Understanding how Siegel and Schuster's fears and concerns influenced Superman helps in understanding Superman's instant popularity, because Siegel and Schuster's concerns were not necessarily unique. They were indicative of many Americans' fears at the time as well.

Danny Fingeroth's *Superman on the Couch: What Superheroes Really Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society* analyzes comic book characters and seeks to understand why those characters have resonated with readers enough to sustain narratives that span decades. Fingeroth does not provide a deep analysis rife with secondary research, but rather is satisfied with identifying common tropes of the superhero genre and providing his own considerations on what those trends might mean. In no way is Fingeroth attempting to offer *the* definitive analysis, but rather his own analysis of these trends. Secret identities, orphans, sidekicks, and other

generic elements are considered. Fingeroth is not trying to write to an academic audience, nor is he writing for reader's uninformed of the superhero genre. He seems to be writing to the thinking fans of superhero comics, and asking them to think a little more.

Bradford Wright's *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* is one of the best histories of the comic book industry. Notably, Wright applies New Historicism to illuminate connections between societal fears, concerns, hopes, and trends and the narratives being told in comic books. Because of the nature of comic book narratives, which never end, the medium is perfectly suited to perform this type of analysis. Superman, whose adventures have been published non-stop since 1938, has had many different personalities, powers, foes, adventures, and threats throughout the years. Analyzing why those changes occurred from a New Historicist point of view inherently reveals changing aspects of American society.

Wright ably finds examples from comic books which mirror the social climate of various points in American history. It is convincing when Wright considers the early Superman stories as a product of the Great Depression and America's concerns with societal ills. It is also hard to argue with Wright's assertions that comic censorship was brought on by both E.C. Comics pushing the envelope and the paranoid mood of the country in the 1950s. And linking early Marvel heroes with the atomic age is a natural and revealing connection. However, the comic books Wright chooses to highlight one social movement are then dropped and not mentioned again as Wright finds other comic books which better match the next era

he addresses. By covering the entire mainstream comic book industry, Wright is able to cherry pick the comic books which best suit his needs from hundreds, if not thousands, of comic books that were published every year. If Superman's popularity reveals something about American culture in the 1930s, do the changes in his character by the 1970s reveal more about America? Yes, but Wright found that Green Lantern, Silver Surfer, Spider-Man, and Luke Cage better suited the arguments he wished to make, so no mention is made of Superman at all in his discussion of the 1970s.

Perhaps a broad history of comic books such as Wright's was needed for the scholarship to progress. Wright is setting up a chessboard, and showing off the pieces which have never been touched by most academics, and it is left to others to then study individual pieces or patterns and movements across the pieces. Now that Wright has highlighted some of the insights that can be gleaned by comic book studies, others may invest themselves into deeper analysis of individual characters, creators, storylines, or events in the comic book industry.

Comic Book Comics is a recent attempt to marry the medium and the message, much as McCloud did with his theoretical work in *Understanding Comics*. *Comic Book Comics* provides a history of the industry in comic book form. This allows Van Lente and Dunlavey, comic book professionals in their own right, to use the medium to communicate in an informative way rather than simply in a narrative way as it is so often used.

The increased volume of comic book scholarship in the last decade is impressive, but the study of the medium is still young. Whole areas of study remain

unexplored and no area has yet been exhausted. I believe that the next steps for comic book superhero studies are to begin having focused studies on individual characters and creators, and also to begin integrating medium studies with narrative studies. An analysis of how the panel layouts affect a theme being analyzed in a narrative, or how the perspective chosen by the artist develops symbolism in a narrative will only deepen the insights gained in comic book studies.

My research on the X-Men will move in that direction. Rather than focus on all superhero comic books from the late 1930s to today, I will look only at the X-Men. I will also look at more than just the narrative being told. My discussion of race and gender will include analysis of how minority and female characters are positioned within panels, looking at what characters are in dominant positions and which are in the background. I will also look at the racial and gender makeup of the X-Men team throughout their various incarnations. I will consider how these representations have evolved through the decades, comparing that evolution to the changes in American society. Additionally, my research will provide a statistical analysis of the characters that appear in *The Uncanny X-Men* comic book series. Works such as *Comic Book Nation* and *Men of Tomorrow* have provided analysis of how comic books in general have reflected broad changes in American culture; this close analysis of one superhero team and looking primarily at race and gender will provide the focused analytical reading that comic book studies need at this time.

Chapter 2: The Creators and Business World Origins of the X-Men

Before a close analysis of the series, an explanation of the time period within the comic book industry when the series was first published will provide context. *The X-Men* was first published in 1963, during the reinvigoration of the superhero genre that occurred in the Silver Age of comics. The superhero genre had been a popular staple of comic book publishers since Superman's first appearance in 1938's *Action Comics #1* until the 1950s. Along with the solo adventures of superpowered characters, the early Golden Age superhero comic books soon introduced the concept of the superhero team in the form of The Justice Society of America. This team, which first appeared in *All-Star Comics #3* from 1940, initially featured eight white male heroes: Doctor Fate, Hour-Man, the Spectre, the Sandman, Atom, the Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman. The membership of the Justice Society changed as new heroes were introduced. Also, readers were informed that if any character had their own comic book, they could only serve as honorary members of the Justice Society and no longer were regularly featured in *All-Star Comics*[1].

The superhero team was also key in launching the Silver Age, as DC Comics' *The Justice League* was one of the successful superhero comic books which is rumored to have inspired Marvel Comics to return to superhero publishing. Stan Lee was the editor in chief of Marvel Comics at the time, as well as a frequent writer of comics. He relates the following:

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[1] Superman and Batman were honorary members from the beginning, and Flash and Green Lantern would become honorary members when each proved popular enough to be spun off into their own title. An exception was made for Wonder Woman, after she was created and spun off into her own comic book she would still appear in Justice Society adventures, but only as the team secretary.

Sometime in the early sixties [Marvel publisher] Martin Goodman was

playing golf with the publisher of DC Comics. [...] The publisher said to

Martin, "You know we've got this new book, *The Justice League,* and it's really

selling well. It's a bunch of superheroes." Well, that's all Martin had to hear.

He came running back to me and said "Stan we've got to put out a bunch of

heroes, there's a market for it." It just happened that at that time I wanted to

quit. After all these years I had made up mind, [that comic books was] a

stupid business for a grown up to be in. I finally told my wife, "Honey, I just

want to quit and do something else." [...] The reason I wanted to quit: I felt

we were writing nonsense. Martin always felt that the books were only read

by young kids or adults that weren't that intelligent. So he didn't like me to

use words of more than two syllables in the dialogue, he didn't want

continued stories because the readers wouldn't have brains enough to

remember from month to month and things like that. I felt I was writing

trash. [My wife] Joanie said to me, "If you're gonna quit anyway, why don't

you do a book the way you'd like to do it and get it out of your system. The

worse that will happen is that he'll fire you, and you want to quit anyway."

So I did that one book, *The Fantastic Four*, a bunch of superheroes, but I tried

to make them different from the others. (*Stan Lee's Mutants*)

The Fantastic Four, which had art by Jack Kirby, featured a family of bickering

heroes and proved very successful for Marvel.

Stan Lee and his collaborators followed up on the success of *The Fantastic

Four* with several individual titles which were released throughout 1962 and 1963

featuring such notable characters as Thor, Ant-Man, Iron Man, and Doctor Strange. In September of 1963 two new series were released by Marvel which returned to the team concept, *The Avengers* and *The X-Men*[2].

Comic books are an extremely collaborative medium to work in. Any single issue of a comic book is likely to have a writer, artist (or penciler), inker, colorist, and editor. The significance of these roles may vary greatly from comic to comic. For example, the writer may provide a detailed script which tells the artist how many panels are on the page, what the writer envisions in each panel, and the dialogue that will be spoken. Or, in a method sometimes called "the Marvel method" the writer will provide a general outline of the plot, the artist will then draw the issue however they please, and the writer adds in dialogue after receiving the finished art pages. The inker will take the artist's penciled pages and use black ink to draw over the pencils every black line which is used by the printer in the final published product. The inker is sometimes referred to as the finisher or the embellisher, because they will sometimes take fairly rough pencils and create detailed images out of them. Particularly the faces of characters may change depending on the inker, even when the same artist is providing the pencils. The colorist adds all of the color to the images for publication. The role of the editor will vary greatly depending on if

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[2] Throughout this work the cover date on comic book issues will be used to refer to when they comic book was released, though the cover date does not exactly match the month a comic book was published. According to Brian Cronin, in the early 1960s there was usually a four month gap between the official cover date and the ship date. In the 1990s two months was made the official gap between cover date and ship date by Marvel an DC Comics. However, there have almost always been variations in the exact difference between the two dates, even within those general guidelines. Because of this difficulty the cover date will be cited as the date a comic was published throughout this entire dissertation.

the comic is a corporately owned product, such as the Marvel superheroes, in which case the editor is also a caretaker of the image of the characters and tone of the story.

Because of all the roles necessary in creating a comic and the somewhat elastic nature of each job it is at times problematic to assign credit for the various aspects of the final product.[3] This is especially true of Marvel comic books of the sixties and seventies, when the "Marvel method" of comic book writing was used extensively. This method was pioneered by Stan Lee and used most often with artists Steve Ditko and Jack Kirby. Comic book historian Mark Evanier explains that this "new means of collaboration … was born of necessity — Stan was overburdened with work — and to make use of Jack's great skill with storylines. […] Sometimes Stan would type up a written plot outline for the artist. Sometimes, not" (112). Lee, who wrote most of Marvel's superhero output in the early sixties, would provide a plot to the artist, but the plot may have been a detailed write up or it may have been a vague description given in a conversation. The artist would then draw the story, but sometimes the artist would add as much or more to the plot than Lee had, and Lee would add dialogue to the finished product. In the 1970s artists were sometimes given credit as "co-plotters" when the Marvel method was used. The question of credit over who is the creator of a character or the plotter of a story has lead to numerous professional feuds in the comic book industry.

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[3] Much as the cover title and cover date were used for simplicity and clarity, in this dissertation the credit will largely be given to the writers and artists for the comic book. Rarely will the inkers, colorists, or editors be mentioned, though their contribution is key to the final product.

Marvel began its superhero revolution in 1961 with the publication of *Fantastic Four #1*, written by Stan Lee with art by Jack Kirby. Lee and Kirby would collaborate on 102 consecutive issues of *The Fantastic Four*, which stood as an industry record for writer-artist collaboration until Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Bagley collaborated on 111 issues of *Ultimate Spider-Man* between 2000 and 2007. Lee and Kirby collaborated to create *The Incredible Hulk #1* six months later. Lee collaborated with Steve Ditko to create Spider-Man who first appeared in *Amazing Fantasy #15* in 1962. Lee and Kirby again collaborated to introduce The Mighty Thor into the Marvel universe in August of 1962. In September of 1962 Lee and Kirby published the adventures of Ant-Man. Lee and Kirby also spun-off a member of The Fantastic Four, the Human Torch, into his own solo adventure. Lee worked with artist Don Heck to create Iron Man in March of 1963, with Kirby to create the war comic *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* in May of 1963, and both *The Avengers* and *The X-Men* in September of 1963. It is understandable why Lee invented the Marvel method of writing to limit how much time he had to devote to writing out detailed scripts, the number of comics he wrote each month was incredible. But it is staggering how much art Kirby produced in this era. Today many artists struggle to consistently draw twelve 22-page issues in a year. Kirby was the primary artist on the majority of Marvel's superhero comic books in this era.

The X-Men had at its core a conceit that set it apart from other superhero comic books of the day. Many superheroes received their powers due to scientific experiments, radioactive accidents, mystical objects, or alien encounters. In the narrative universe of Marvel Comics, mutants are individuals who were been born

with a genetic variation that manifests in the form of a superpower. Because mutants are born different, they face prejudice from normal humans.

The themes of prejudice, social "others," and seeking to belong permeate the X-Men comic books. In comic books it is not uncommon for superheroes or teams to have a phrase that defines them. Superman fights for "truth, justice, and the American way." Spider-Man knows that "with great power comes great responsibility." The X-Men "fight to protect a world that hates and fears them."

Many comic book creators who have worked on the X-Men have acknowledged that they purposefully used the concept of "mutants" to explore how society treats "others," be they racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual. Mike Carey, who currently writes *X-Men: Legacy*, calls the idea of mutants an "informing metaphor" for the series. Carey positions the mutant metaphor as analogous to real-world issues:

> Readers coming to the series recognize the echoes of real-world prejudice - racism, homophobia and so on - and that in turn makes the series seem just that little bit more grounded in reality, despite the fact that it's essentially sci-fi. The difference between mutants and other heroes is that mutants are identifiably a human sub-species, marked by their possession of the X-gene. This provides a narrative rational both for their solidarity and for the attacks made on them by groups and individuals with an agenda based on the psychology and politics of race hatred. (Carey)

For Carey, the world of superhero comic books can become more relevant to readers by having issues which mirror the world the reader lives in. He specifically

cites racism and homophobia as two of the prejudices which are thematically relevant to X-Men stories. Many other writers, though not all, have also identified these elements and believe they are key to the success of the X-Men franchise.

Comic book writer Mark Millar believes much of the popularity the X-Men series has had is because it embraces the role of the minority:

The success [of the X-Men], I think, is for two reasons. The first is that, creatively, the book was close to perfect [in the '70s and '80s...]. But the other reason is that it was a book about being different in a culture where, for the first time in the West, being different wasn't just accepted, but was also fashionable. I don't think it's a coincidence that gay rights, black rights, the empowerment of women and political correctness all happened over those twenty years and a book about outsiders trying to be accepted was almost the poster-boy for this era in American culture. (DeFalco "Millar" 252)

However, being a minority is not the only reason one may gravitate to the X-Men. Feeling alienated by society is not the exclusive domain of any one group. While racism, sexism, or homophobia are forms or prejudice which alienate groups of people, there are many people who still feel alienated from society without being a target of those kinds of prejudice.

Fabian Nicieza, a writer of many X-Men comic books in the 1990s, does not subscribe to the idea that the mutant metaphor correlates to any specific group. The power of the metaphor is in the ability of any reader to find some way to relate to it:

"Mutants" does not equal one specific aspect of societal prejudices, mutants equal ALL prejudice. Be it race, creed, gender, culture, nationality, sexual

orientation, the notion of being feared or despised simply because you are "different" is not owned by any one segment of the population, but rather, ironically, owned by all of us at one time or another in our lives, and that is why the X-books always flourished after their relaunch, because nearly all readers could empathize with their plight. Even if the "tragedy" you empathized with was because during your teen years you ha d a lot of acne, it didn't diminish the fact that you still understood what it meant to feel "different." Of course, people see things through their own eyes, their own experiences, their own pains, and therefore subscribe their own specific interpretations on their entertainment, usually angling it towards a position that speaks to their own needs, but if you take an aerial view rather than a ground level view, you have to realize the concept is an umbrella that covers everything, not just one specific societal group. (Nicieza)

As Nicieza points out, it does not take much to make a teenager feel like an isolated outsider. That may be one reason the concept of mutants appealed to young comic book readers. Within the X-Men comic book mutant powers typically begin manifest with the onset of puberty. One of the largest target audiences of comic book publishers are teenagers, and they may have found some form of association with the concept of characters who began to feel they were different from everyone else as they entered their teenage years.

Ron Richards, a comic book commentator and co-founder of the website iFanboy.com, believes that:

...the basic premise that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby came up, the idea of being

like humans but slightly different as mutants was a direct allegory to the

isolation that a regular teenager often feels. Things like "am I normal? Do I fit

in? I feel different" etc., but manifested through developing super powers.

This concept was one that many of us comic readers, especially who started

reading in our teens (like I did) immediately connected with. (Richards)

Kurt Busiek, a prominent comic book writer, echoes these sentiments:

...adolescents feel like "the other," so that sense of being alienated, not being

understood, the fear that people won't like you if they know your true self --

and the sense of relief at finding others like yourself is also part of

adolescence. So just like Harry Potter resonates strongly with young readers,

with its sense of alienation relieved by access to a secret world where the fact

that you're "special" is a plus, not a minus, X-Men classically had the same

kind of thrill of recognition to nerdy kids. It says, "Those other people don't

like you because they don't understand you, but you're secretly a hero." It's a

very attractive message to an adolescent reader. [...] That teenage alienation

can be used as a way to show the inequities of prejudice against *anyone* is the

magic of the genre. Ideas become metaphors, symbols that can then be

shown to fit other ideas, and through that we learn to identify with people

who aren't obviously like ourselves, because we know that inside, they are.

(Busiek)

These interpretations of the concept of "mutant" remove some of the metaphor of

institutionalized racism or sexism that have been identified with the X-Men series,

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instead favoring a more universal appeal to the idea of being different. However, they do not negate those themes, indeed this broad inclusive interpretation of the mutant metaphor ensures that elements of racism, sexism, or homophobia can be read into the series.

At times, writers have discovered that the X-Men has attracted fans they never would have expected. Scott Lobdell, a writer of X-Men comics and creator of many mutant characters, shared the following experience.

One of the most astounding things that ever happened in my life was at a store signing in Florida at the height of the X-Mania (or my wild ride at the time). I was given an adorable eighteen-year-old handler to get me from the motel to the diner to the store and such. We were talking at one point and she was saying how much her brother and his friends love the X-Men and how might writing spoke to them as outsiders who stick together because of their outsider status. As [the writer] who outed Northstar [the first gay superhero in mainstream comics] years before, I assumed her brother and his friends were gay. I was surprised when she explained, no, they were skinheads -- specifically white supremacists. What?! My first inclination was to explain that her brother and his friends had completely not gotten the ideals of inclusion and tolerance that the X-Men stood for. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I couldn't really have my cake and eat it too. I couldn't say the X-Men is about finding strength in being the other and then get upset because the other didn't fit my definition of what I felt was acceptable otherness. Don't get me wrong, when you look at the flip side of

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Xavier's inclusionary viewpoint, you get Magneto's almost Nazi-esque Master

Race thesis. To the degree that this girl's brother was not running around and

gay bashing or involved in hate crimes, the notion that a sub-section of

society felt they needed to come together because what made them them was

threatened... or that they were looking to find strength in each other?   That

strikes me as valid as other others gravitating to the X-Men. (Lobdell)

This experience is evidence that there is no single interpretation for X-Men comic

books. Some writers may write with specific points of view, but readers will not are

under no obligation to share that point of view. This dissertation will look at the

portrayal of race and gender in the comic book series, but there are many other

potential readings of the series. Choosing to examine the roles of race and gender in

the X-Men series highlights some ways the mutant metaphor is functioning, but

there are many other valid interpretations possible.

Because of the powerful potential of the mutant metaphor, the forty-five year

span in which X-Men comics have been published, and the number of characters

who have been members of the X-Men team make this comic book series is ideal for

an analysis of the changing portrayal of race and gender in American popular

culture. This study will look at how characters who belong to ethnic minorities are

portrayed within the larger metaphor of mutants. It will also examine how female

characters are portrayed in the traditionally male-dominated world of superheroes.

The X-Men was not an instant success, but the concept of a team of outsiders

was one that would become common in the superhero genre. The minority

metaphor inherent in the comic book allows for exploration of issues not commonly

associated with what is often considered a juvenile genre. Michael Chabon says, "The X-Men are the most consciously, deliberately, successfully metaphorical of any comic book superhero" (*Comic Book Superheroes Unmasked*). Perhaps it is for the deliberate metaphor that the X-Men would eventually become one of the most successful comic book franchises in historyAlthough the comic book initially struggled to find an audience, Marvel has nurtured the adventures of mutants into one of the largest and highest selling areas of their publishing line.

When they first appeared the X-Men were not as popular as Marvel's other titles such as *The Amazing Spider-Man* or *The Fantastic Four*. After the first several issues were written by Stan Lee and drawn by Jack Kirby, with moderate sales success, different creative teams were rotated in to try to increase interest as sales began to wane. After 66 issues of original stories Marvel began to reprint the earlier issues and ceased production of new X-Men stories. Oddly, the decision was made to continue the issue numbering system with the reprints, so that while *X-Men #66* (Mar. 1970) was the last new story, the first reprint occurred in *X-Men #67* (Dec. 1970). Eventually, when Marvel again began to publish new X-Men comics, the series continued the numbering beginning with *X-Men #94* (Aug. 1975). *X-Men #67-93* are all reprints, while every other issue in the run is an original comic. This is not the standard practice in the industry, and *The X-Men* is unique as a long-running series with a significant number of issues consisting of reprinted issues.

In 1975 Marvel decided to relaunch the title and it did so to great critical acclaim and financial success. New writers, artists, and characters were key to the success of this relaunch. The X-Men were reintroduced to the public with a one-shot

comic book in 1975 entitled *Giant-Size X-Men* (the title referred to the extra number

of pages in the issue, not the stature of the X-Men themselves). When that title

proved successful the series was officially relaunched with Chris Claremont writing.

Claremont would continue to write the title for sixteen consecutive years, leaving in

1991, but he has occasionally revisited the title since 2000. Bradford W. Wright

explains some changes made in the relaunch:

> Between 1977 and 1981 Claremont and artist John Byrne transformed it
>
> from a second-tier monthly title to the best selling in the industry. [Much of
>
> this success was because] Claremont created strong female characters who
>
> played more than the token supporting role traditionally allotted to women
>
> in comic books. [These strong women] helped to expand the title's appeal
>
> across the gender barrier, and *The X-Men* became one of the very few
>
> superhero titles to win a significant female following. (263)

The series, newly christened *The Uncanny X-Men*, though continuing the

original numbering, would quickly rank among the most popular titles. The title was

so popular that Marvel would shortly publish spin-off series focusing on mutant

characters. These included *Dazzler*, about a mutant disco singer/superhero, and *The

New Mutants,* about the next generation of mutants being trained to protect the

world. *The New Mutants* also proved popular, and since that time the X-Men

universe of characters has inspired more than forty ongoing comic book titles and

hundreds of limited series and mini-series. The single highest selling issue in comic

book history was *X-Men #1*, published in 1991. This new series was created to allow

two teams of the core X-Men characters to have published adventures each month.

The first issue was written by Chris Claremont and drawn by Jim Lee and sold an unprecedented eight million copies. By comparison the top selling titles in 2010 are fortunate to sell 150,000 copies in the direct market.

Due to the popularity of the series since the 1975 relaunch Marvel Comics has published many other titles that are closely tied to the X-Men franchise. Other books featuring teams of mutants and solo titles featuring popular X-Men characters in their own adventures are prominent on the comic book shelves. At some periods there have been as almost twenty X-Men related comic books published per month. With so many publications the narrative continuity can become confusing, especially because so many titles are interconnected.

In some instances it is impossible to work out a logical connection between characters' appearances in the shared Marvel universe, which ostensibly is meant to be telling one grand narrative. For example, in a single month in 2010 the character of Wolverine may appear in the monthly comics *Wolverine*, *Wolverine: Weapon X*, *Dark Wolverine*, *The Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men: Legacy*, *Astonishing X-Men*, *X-Force, New Avengers* as well as appearing in limited series such as *Astonishing Spider-Man and Wolverine*. Additionally, Marvel publishes comic books which are not part of the core Marvel universe continuity. So they may publish a comic book aimed at younger readers featuring a version of Wolverine that is less savage, but the story and characters are not meant to connect to the character appearing in *Uncanny X-Men*. Or they may publish alternate reality versions of the character, such as *Wolverine Noir* which reimagines the character as a film noir private eye, again with this version of the character having no relation to the core Marvel universe.

The sheer volume of comic books published by Marvel relating to the mutant characters is too broad and vast to be exhaustively analyzed in this project. To understand the amount of material published relating to the X-Men a brief introduction to some of the terminology associated with comic book publishing is necessary. A single comic book today is likely to have twenty-two pages of content. There are one-shot stories which tell a complete story in one issue and are not part of a continuing series, mini-series which tell a story over 2-6 issues, maxi-series which usually tell a story across twelve-issues, and on-going series which generally produce an issue on a monthly basis and are launched with the goal of never ceasing publication. Also, companies may publish graphic novels which are longer self-contained stories, often with two hundred pages or more of content published in a single volume. While on-going series do have storylines which end, the series itself is meant to continue so long as it is profitable. Often there are subplots which continue while the main plot of the story wraps up after 4 to 6 issues. The beginning of the next plotline is often introduced in the same issue the previous storyline concludes. One-shots, mini-series, maxi-series, and graphic novels are likely to have the same creative team from beginning to end, whereas monthly on-going series may have the creative team change at any point.

As of 2010, Marvel has launched forty-six monthly on-going series which were closely tied to the X-Men, though many of these were canceled after a few years. In December of 2010, Marvel published eleven monthly comic book series featuring teams of mutants or the solo adventures of X-Men related characters. Table 1 on the following page provides a chronology of the publication history of

1963-present *The X-Men #1-49, X-Men #50-113, The Uncanny X-Men #114-393, Uncanny X-Men 394-529*	**2003-04** *New Mutants (Vol. 2) #1-13*
	2003-05 *Emma Frost #1-28*
	2003-05 *Mystique #1-24*
1981-85 *Dazzler #1-42*	**2004-07** *Cable and Deadpool #1-50*
1983-91 *The New Mutants (Vol. 1) #1-100*	**2004-07** *New Excalibur #1-24*
	2004-05 *Alpha Flight (Vol. 3) #1-12*
1983-94 *Alpha Flight (Vol. 1) #1-130*	**2004-08** *New X-Men: Academy X #1-46*
1986-98 *X-Factor (Vol. 1) #1-149*	**2004-10** *Astonishing X-Men #1-35*
1988-2003 *Wolverine (Vol. 1) #1-189*	**2004-05** *District X #1-14*
1988-98 *Excalibur (Vol. 1) #1-125*	**2004-05** *Gambit (Vol. 2) #1-12*
1991-present *X-Men (Vol. 2) #1-113, New X-Men #114-156, X-Men (Vol. 2) #157-207, X-Men: Legacy #208-241*	**2004-05** *Nightcrawler #1-12*
	2004-05 *Rogue #1-12*
	2006-10 *Wolverine: Origins #1-50*
1991-2002 *X-Force #1-129*	**2006-present** *X-Factor (Vol. 2) #1-50, #200-210* (renumbered to *Vol. 1* issues)
1993-2003 *X-Men Unlimited #1-50* (published quarterly)	**2008-08** *Young X-Men #1-12*
1993-2002 *Cable #1-107*	**2008-09** *New Exiles #1-18*
1994-2001 *Generation X #1-75*	**2008-09** *Captain Britain and MI:13 #1-15*
1995-2001 *X-Man #1-75*	**2008-present** *Deadpool (Vol. 2) #1-28*
1997-2002 *Deadpool #1-69*	**2008-10** *Cable #1-25*
1997-99 *Alpha Flight (Vol. 2) #1-20*	**2008-10** *X-Force (Vol. 2) #1-28*
1997-98 *Maverick #1-12*	**2009-present** *New Mutants (Vol. 3) #1-18*
1997-98 *Quicksilver #1-13*	**2009-10** *Deadpool: Merc with a Mouth #1-13*
1998-2001 *Mutant X #1-32*	**2009-present** *Deadpool Team-Up #899-888* (counting backwards)
1999-2001 *Gambit #1-25*	
1999-2001 *Bishop: The Last X-Man #1-16*	**2010-10** *S.W.O.R.D. #1-5*
2001-04 *X-Treme X-Men #1-46*	**2010-present** *Deadpool Corps #1-7*
2001-08 *Exiles*	**2010-present** *X-Men (Vol. 3) #1-4*
2002-03 *Agent X #1-15*	**2010-present** *Deadpool Max #1-2*
2002-04 *X-Statix #1-26*	**2010-present** *Daken: Dark Wolverine #1-2*
2002-03 *Soldier X #1-12*	**2010-present** *Uncanny X-Force #1-2*
2002-04 *Weapon X #1-28*	**2010-present** *Wolverine (Vol. 3) #1*
2003-10 *Wolverine (Vol. 2) #1-90*	

Table 1: A Chronology of Marvel Comic Books Related to the X-Men which were Solicited and Published as Monthly On-Going Series

monthly comic book series Marvel has published related to the X-Men. In addition to these monthly series, Marvel has published hundreds of one-shots and mini-series related to the X-Men. The amount of material that has been published by Marvel related to the X-Men is beyond the ability to closely analyze in this study.

My dissertation will focus on the original and longest running X-Men comic book, *The Uncanny X-Men.* Other ongoing titles, mini-series, or one-shots within the X-Universe of comics may also be referenced if they have significant bearing on the subjects being discussed, but in general the focus will be on this title. *Uncanny X-Men* is still in production today and is considered by Marvel to be part of the core of the X-Men franchise, with the other X-Men related series being appendages to this series.

Unfortunately, focusing on these this series will not eliminate confusion in discussing the comic books, as it has had several changes to its titles in the course of publication. In 1963 Marvel published the first issue of *The X-Men.* This was the series title on the cover as well as in the legal indicia within the comic book. With issue #50, the cover title switched to *X-Men*, though the legal indicia did not reflect the loss of the article until issue #94. Following the series relaunch the cover title was changed to *The Uncanny X-Men* with issue #114, though the legal indicia did not reflect this change until issue #142. And, the final title change (thus far) resulted in the cover title became simply *Uncanny X-Men* with issue #394, though the legal indicia did not change to *Uncanny X-Men* until issue #408. Throughout this study I will use the title found on the cover and the cover date of the comic book when citing an issue.

An additional aspect of comic books which has the potential to cause confusion is the somewhat fluid nature of comic book continuity. While the stories are published continually and can be read as one whole, there are plot points which are sometimes retroactively altered. Characters may be revealed to have been impersonated by shape shifters, deaths are undone, origins are reimagined, and entire storylines are retroactively inserted into previous issues by modern writers (sometimes altering a story that was published decades ago). When there is a change to the established continuity of a serialized story it is often referred to as a "retcon" which stands for retroactive continuity. Retcons have occurred in long running TV series, sprawling narrative universes such as Star Trek, and very often in comic book narratives. For example, in *The X-Men #42* (Mar. 1968) Professor Xavier suffers a fatal wound and dies. The writer, Roy Thomas has said that his "original intention was that he would remain dead" (DeFalco "Roy Thomas" 26). But two years later in *The X-Men #65* (Feb. 1970) a new writer, Dennis O'Neil, revealed that Professor X had not died, but that a shape-shifter who had taken his place for a time had died. This study will treat issues individually and take the stories contained therein at face value; any retcons that alter the events of the story will be addressed when the analysis reaches the time when the retcon was published.

This analysis of the X-Men will follow the comic book narrative in the chronological order it was published. Rather than following a structure that is subject to arbitrary external time periods, the chapters will be divided in a manner that reflects significant publishing eras of the X-Men comic book series. First, the period from 1963-1975 will be considered. This period represents the introduction

of the X-Men, seven years of stories, and a five-year span in which Marvel published

reprints of the first X-Men comic books. It includes the issues between *The X-Men #1*

(Sep. 1963) and *X-Men #66* (Mar. 1970). The period between 1970-1975 when

Marvel only published reprints will not be analyzed. The second period, 1975-1983

begins with Marvel telling new stories with the X-Men and introducing a new team

of mutants. This period made the X-Men one of the most successful comic book

franchises in history. This period includes the issues between *Giant-Size X-Men #1*

and *The Uncanny X-Men #166* (Feb. 1983). 1983-1991 saw the first early expansion

of the X-Men universe beyond a single X-Men title.[4] This broadening of the franchise

led to the introduction of many new mutant characters and more diversity in the

title. The comics in this period include all the issues between *The Uncanny X-Men*

#167 (Mar. 1983) and *The Uncanny X-Men #280* (Sep. 1991). 1991-2001 saw the

launch of the second core X-Men title and also the departure of Chris Claremont

from writing duties for the first time in sixteen years. The issues in this period range

from *The Uncanny X-Men #281* (Oct. 1991) through *The Uncanny X-Men #393* (Jun.

2001). 2001-2008 will be the final period, with *Uncanny X-Men #500* (Sep. 2008)

marking the last issue that will be considered in this study.

  In the following chapters I will provide a brief overview of the creators who

worked on the comics during the period, an overview of key stories and the general

narrative of the comics in this period, and then a close analysis of the portrayals of

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[4] The first spin-off of the X-men franchise was technically *Dazzler* which began
publishing in 1981 But it was part of a corporate tie-in with Casablanca Records.
The New Mutants, which began publishing in 1983 was the first natural narrative
spin-off of the series. *X-Factor*, another comic book in the X-Men family, began
publication in 1985.

race and gender. My analysis will consider the narratives, the language, and the art.

It will also include the statistical analysis of the gender, race, and nationalities of the

characters that appear in the series.

Chapter 3: 1963-1975: White Males as a Minority Metaphor

This chapter will analyze the first sixty-six issues of *The X-Men*, all of which were published in the 1960s. Following these issues Marvel published reprints of the X-Men's adventures until 1975. In this period there is obvious use of the mutants as a metaphor for minorities in the United States, though the team does not feature any minority characters. The few female characters who appear are often damsels in distress or defined by their romantic relationships, though Marvel Girl goes through an interesting pseudo-transformation throughout these issues.

The Creators

The X-Men #1 (Sep. 1963) was written by San Lee and with art by Jack Kirby. Lee and Kirby collaborated on the first 11 issues. Lee would continue to write the series through issue #19. Kirby would provide layouts through issue #17 with Werner Roth providing the finished pencils. Following Lee as writer in this period were Roy Thomas, Gary Friedrich, and Arnold Drake. On art, Werner Roth began to provide full pencils and was followed by Ross Andru, Don Heck, Jim Steranko, and Neal Adams. Kirby, Steranko, and Adams are considered masters of the comic book medium. Please see Table 3 for a guide to the specific

Writer	Issue #
Stan Lee	*#1-19*
Roy Thomas	*#20-43*
Gary Friedrich	*#44-47*
Arnold Drake	*#47-54*
Roy Thomas	*#55-64, #66*
Dennis O'Neal	*#65*
Table 2: The writers of *The X-Men* from 1963-70.	

Writer of Back-up Story	Back-up Story Issue #
Roy Thomas	*#38-42*
Gary Friedrich	*#44-46*
Arnold Drake	*#47-50, 52-54*
Roy Thomas	*#51, 55-56*
Linda Fite	*#57*
Table 3: The writers of *The X-Men* back-up stories from 1963-70.	

issues each writer worked on in this period and Table 4 for a guide to the writers of

back-up stories which were featured in some issues. In this period. Of particular note is Linda Fite, the first female writer to work on *The X-Men*, who wrote the back-up story in *The X-Men #57* (Jun. 1969). Table 5 and Table 6 list the issues the artists worked on in this period, and the artists for the back-up stories, respectively. From 1970-75 Marvel ceased production of new issues of *The X-Men* and reprinted

Artist	Issue #
Jack Kirby	*#1-11*
Jack Kirby & Alex Toth	*#12*
Jack Kirby & Werner Roth	*#13-17*
Werner Roth	*#18-29, 31-33, 35*
Jack Sparling	*#30*
Dan Atkins	*#34*
Ross Andru	*#36-37*
Don Heck	*#38-42, 54-55, 64*
George Tuska	*#43*
Don Heck & Werner Roth	*#44-49, 52*
Jim Steranko	*#50-51*
Barry Smith	*#53*
Neal Adams	*#56-63, 65*
Sal Buscema	*#66*
Table 4: Artists for main stories from 1963-70	

the earlier adventures, though Marvel chose to continue the numbering system for the issues.

While many of the Golden Age superheroes were inspired by the mystery men of pulp magazines, the X-

Artist for back-up stories	Issue # of back-up stories
Werner Roth	#38-42, 47-57
George Tuska	#44-46
Table 5: Artists for back up stories from 1963-70.	

Men owe more of their literary genesis to science fiction stories of the forties and fifties. Kurt Busiek argues that the X-Men owe a debt to several specific works of science fiction. While it is impossible to know if Lee and Kirby read any of these works, the similarities of content and theme are striking. Busiek believes that

...the three works that are probably most influential on [the X-Men's]

creation are *Mutant* by Henry Kuttner, *Children of the Atom* by Wilmar Shiras

and *Slan* by A.E. van Vogt, which between them feature atomic-created

mutants, kids with special powers being brought together to [be taught to

use them], bald telepaths, paranoid "evil" mutants seeking to subjugate

humanity and "good" mutants fight to save the world [while] knowing that

humanity might well just kill all mutants off out of fear. (Busiek)

All of these stories were published well before Marvel published *X-Men #1*. In 1945,

Henry Kuttner wrote a series of stories about a race of mutants who face

extermination at the hands of normal humans. Additionally, there are good and evil

mutants who fight amongst themselves in the story. The mutants are identified as

homo superior, as opposed to normal humans, or homo sapiens. Wilmar H. Shiras

wrote a series of stories later collected as *Children of the Atom* which involved a

group of special highly intelligent gifted children into a unique school where they

were hidden from the world. A.E. can Vogt's *Slan* told the story of a group of

individuals, called Slans, with telepathic powers. Some Slans have external markers

which clearly identify them as telepaths, while others can pass as normal humans.

Those that are identified as Slans are hunted to extinction. In *The X-Men* comic

books Lee would introduce mutants, identified as homo superior, who fear

prejudice from normal humans but fight among themselves because there are good

and evil mutants. The X-Men, who are only teenagers, are trained at Xavier's School

for Gifted Youngsters where they are largely kept secluded from the world. Some

mutants can pass as normal humans while others, who are more likely to face

prejudice, have external markers that make it clear they are mutants. Whether Lee and or Kirby had read these works is impossible to tell, but the similarities are significant.

However, there did seem to be a trend in science fiction writing towards these stories at this time. The X-Men may simply have been part of a simultaneous literary movement, not a group whose initial concept is thinly disguised plagiarism. In "American Dreams of Mutants" John Trushell identified Olaf Stapledon, Stanley Weinbaum, and Philip Wylie as science fiction writers who had all written stories about a gifted minority facing persecution from the normal majority prior to the publication of *The X-Men #1* (Sep. 1963).

In the first issue readers are introduced to the wheelchair bound Professor Xavier who runs a school for Gifted Students. As the issue begins the four current students are told a fifth student will be joining the school. The villain in this issue is Magneto, an "evil mutant" who the X-Men fight in their first public outing as superheroes (19). The X-Men battle different mutants in the following issues, including a team Magneto organizes after his initial defeat called The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. The X-Men also battle a mutant-hunting robots called Sentinels the government builds to control the "mutant menace."

Following Stan Lee's departure from writing the title the X-Men's foes become less mutant-centric and more like other superhero comic books, therefore lessening the mutant metaphor as they began to fight villains that were already established in other Marvel comics or who develop their powers unrelated to being a mutant. Eventually another villainous mutant group, Factor Three, became the

focus of the X-Men's adventures. Around the same time that the Factor Three

storyline occurs the comic books begin to have back-up stories which relate the

origins of the members of the X-Men. Of all the X-Men stories published in this

period, these back-up stories have some of the most overt themes about the evils of

prejudice and bigotry.

Following the Factor Three storyline, in a battle with a subterranean creature

Professor X apparently dies, and the X-Men lose some of their focus as a team.

Several issues alternately feature the adventures of individual members of the team,

often still dealing with mutant threats. A threat to a newly discovered mutant has

the team unite to face Magneto once again. The team decides to continue working

together and meet several more mutants, some as allies some as enemies. In the

final issues before the series switched over to reprints it is revealed that Professor X

faked his death in order to be able to focus all of his time and abilities to preparing

to repel an alien invasion. After defeating the alien threat, and having one final

adventure with the Hulk, the series began to reprint earlier issues. While proceeding

into a closer analysis of race and gender in these comic books more details about

these storylines will be provided when relevant to the discussion.

The Characters

The initial roster of X-Men included the founder and leader of the team,

Professor Xavier, and five students who were being trained in the use of their

mutant powers. Charles Xavier, sometimes called Professor X, is the world's most

powerful telepath and a champion of mutant rights in the Marvel narrative universe.

When introduced to readers he is bound to a wheel chair. Xavier is bald, and clearly

meant to be an older character, certainly much older than the teenagers he is training.

Scott Summers, codenamed Cyclops, can shoot energy beams from his eyes. His optic blasts cannot be controlled, if his eyes are open they are emitting a powerful and destructive wave of energy. The only substance that can control them is "ruby quartz" which absorbs the energy. He always wears either glasses or a visor to control his mutant power. Cyclops often feels his power is a burden because it is a constant threat to those around him. Cyclops is one of the more serious members of the team and is the team leader.

Hank McCoy is codenamed the Beast. He has larger hands and feet than a normal person and is extremely agileAlthough later the character would sprout blue fur all over his body, in this period he has white skin and can easily pass for a normal human. Beast is the most intellectual of the group. He has an interest in science and deliberately uses an advanced sounding vocabulary. If there is a word that has four syllables and means the same thing as a two syllable words, Beast will choose to use the four syllable word.

Bobby Drake is the youngest member of the team. He can turn his body into snow, later ice, and he can decrease the temperature around him. He can also produce ice and snow projectiles by sapping moisture from the air around him. He is the prankster of the team, and is often reprimanded for his immaturity.

Warren Worthington III has wings sprouting from his back and uses the codename Angel. He comes from a very wealthy family and has stereotypical upper-class tastes.

Jean Grey, originally codenamed Marvel Girl, has telekinesis. Grey's defining characteristic, at least initially, is that she is a female for the boys on the team to fight over. She longs for Cyclops, but in this period their mutual attraction is not acted on. After the team graduates from Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters, Jean is the only member that is shown going on to college.

Calvin Rankin, or Mimic, is the first addition to the team, though it is only short-lived. Originally a villain, Mimic has the mutant power to imitate the powers of other mutants around him. When near the X-Men he sprouts wings like Angel, has optic blasts, can control ice and snow, has telekinesis, and increased dexterity. But, when he is not near other mutants he has no powers at all. After battling the X-Men, Calvin decides to attempt to reform his life and joins the team, though it is always a contentious relationship and after a few issues he departs.

Two other additions to the team come near the end of this period. Alex Summers, Cyclops's brother, has the power to create powerful blasts of energy from his body. He adopts the codename Havok. Lorna Dane has the power to control magnetic waves. She adopts the codename Polaris. Havok and Polaris each guest-starred in several issues before becoming members of the team for two issues near the end of this period.

All of these characters were white, middle-to-upper-class Americans. In short, this was a very WASP-ish group to be struggling against prejudice in a minority metaphor. Further complicating the use this particular group as representative of a racial metaphor is the fact that none of these mutants were in any way distinguishable from white Americans. While later mutants would often

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have distinctive features which would set them apart from all of humanity, such as fur, horns, or different skin pigmentation, the original X-Men could "pass" as non-mutants whenever they wished. Even Angel, who had wings on his back, could use "restraining belts" to prevent "wings from bulging under [his] suit" which allowed him to pass as a non-mutant (*X-Men #1*, 18). Werner Sollors defines passing as "The crossing of any line that divides social groups" (247). Some examples of passing, originally identified by Everett Stonequist, include "Jews passing for Gentiles, Polish immigrants preferring to be German, Italians pretending to be Jewish, the Japanese Eta concealing their group identity to avoid discrimination, [or] the Anglo-Indians passing for British." Despite these many instances where the term is applicable, it "is used most frequently as though it were short for 'passing for white,' in the sense of 'crossing over' the colored line in the United States from the black to the white side"(247). In the Marvel universe there are those mutants who can pass as normal humans, and those who cannot because their mutation is too visible. In this period, almost all the mutants that are seen can pass as normal humans.

Race

From the beginning the X-Men featured an obvious metaphorical correlation between mutants and racial minorities. The issues of race relations and prejudice were worn on the proverbial sleeve of the series. Bryan Singer, director of *X-Men* and *X2* says of the comic book, "This was Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's way of commenting on prejudice […] This is the comic book version of *The Crucible*" (*Origin of the X-Men*). The X-Men were created at a time when race and prejudice were among the most pressing issues in America. The mutants who made up the X-Men

were literally a separate race in this narrative, and the issue of prejudice has long been the prevalent theme in the series.

Many have noted this correlation between the X-Men narrative and American historical events and some have even noted direct parallels between the leaders of the mutant race and civil rights leaders. Professor X, who preaches peace between the races, seeking equality above all else, is considered to have been inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. Conversely, Magneto who sees mutants as superior to all other races and has a supremacist point of view is often seen as reflective of Malcolm X and the black power movement. Ralph Winter, a producer of the first X-Men film, said Bryan Singer particularly emphasized this aspect of the X-Men mythology: "Bryan [Singer] embraces this Martin Luther King versus Malcolm X approach to the values that are being presented" (*Origin of the X-Men*). One of the final lines spoken by Magneto in the film features a quote lifted directly from Malcolm X. Malcolm X said "We declare our right on this earth [...] to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence *by any means necessary*." The words spoken by Magneto in the first film are, "The war is still coming, Charles, and I intend to fight it... by any means necessary." Singer, by lifting one of the most famous lines from Malcolm X's speech is clearly embracing the interpretation that Magneto is meant as a parallel for Malcolm X while Professor X is representative of Martin Luther King's more pacifistic point of view.

Many others have seen this similarity. Michael Fassbender who portrays Magneto in the film *X-Men: First Class*, says,

It's kind of like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X - Charles [Professor X]

being Martin Luther and Erik [Magneto] being Malcolm X - these two ideals,

two intelligent guys but with different methods of achieving what they want.

Erik doesn't trust humans and thinks they need to be wiped away and I can

kind of see his point. It's like Homo Sapiens, Neanderthals ... it's like it's the

next stage of evolution. ("X-Men: First Class")

John Trushell argues in "American Dreams of Mutants" that

Professor Xavier and his X-Men, who sought accommodation with homo

sapiens, recalled moderate elements of the civil rights movement of the

1960s as exemplified by Martin Luther King, Jr. King, head of the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference [...]. Militant mutants such as Magneto and

his Brotherhood of Evil Mutants [...] resembled increasingly radical elements.

These included the Nation of Islam (or "Black Muslims") whose best-known

spokesperson, Malcolm X, advocated black nationalism, and the Student Non-

violent Coordinating Committee, latterly headed by Stokeley Carmichael

who, in Canton, Mississippi, publicly proclaimed "Black Power" in 1966. Such

parallels are not far-fetched.

It has become almost second nature by many to identify and accept this

interpretation of the X-Men, though there are those who resist this reading.

In Adam Roberts' essay "Lee, Kirby, and Ovid's Metamorphoses: or How Not

to Read the X-Men, and then How to Read Them," Roberts is opposed to making one-

to-one correlations between the fictional narrative and the real world. He calls such

interpretations dumb, explaining:

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"Why is it dumb? Because (and excuse me for stating the obvious) Charles

Xavier is not Martin Luther King Jr. He's Charles Xavier. There is *one* way in

which he resembles Dr. King – he has dedicated his life to the peaceful

emancipation of his people. But there are myriad ways in which he does *not*

resemble King: he is a bald-headed white cripple with tremendous telepathic

powers who lives in an enormous mansion in New York state, is in charge of

a school for gifted mutant supermen and is an occasional traveler into outer

space. […]Concentrating on the one thing these two people have in common

to the exclusion of all these points of difference is plain myopic" (142).

I agree with Roberts assertion that arguing that X in the comic books equals Y in the

real world can often be reductive. Arguing that a character represents an actual

person becomes problematic when the character is written by many different

writers in hundreds of different situations and with varying motivations. Obviously

the parallels will not always work. However, identifying specific stories which are

clearly meant to reflect moments in world history is less problematic, and at times

unavoidable.

 For example, in *The Uncanny X-Men #199* (Nov. 1985) Magneto reveals that

he was a Jewish child kept in German concentration camps who saw his parents

murdered for being Jews. He explains this while he is standing in the National

Holocaust Museum and he expresses his hopes that a similar fate does not befall

mutantkind just before he is attacked by a group sponsored by the U.S. government

to hunt down mutants. The metaphor here is far from subtle and rather unavoidable

for the reader.

Chris Claremont, who wrote the adventures of the X-Men for 17 years, has said, "The X-Men are hated, feared and despised collectively by humanity for no other reason than that they are mutants. So what we have here, intended or not, is a book that is about racism, bigotry and prejudice" (Wright 117). While it can, and perhaps should be debated whether or not Professor X was meant to be a fictional stand-in for Martin Luther King Jr., it is clear that a dominant theme in X-Men comics is a condemnation of prejudice.

Because the series was created in the early 1960s, at one of the most intense periods of the Civil Rights movement, one might expect to encounter clear examples of this theme from the very first issue. However, for a series with such an obvious metaphor about prejudice in the United States, they seem to have forgotten to include race. While there are certainly other minorities in America besides racial ones, in the 1960s the prevalent public concerns about prejudice regarded race, specifically prejudice towards African Americans. Eventually, Marvel would introduce the first black superhero, but it would not be until 1966. In 1963, with the X-Men's initial roster, the team meant to represent minorities was entirely white and middleclass. The only exception was Angel, who was still white, but upper class.

Making the absence of race in *The X-Men* even more notable is that Stan Lee was not shying away from the issue of racial prejudice, including using racial minorities, in another series he was writing at the same time. Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs, in *The Comic Book Heroes* explain some of Lee and Kirby's treatment of minorities in a comic book called *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos*:

It was startling for its brazen acknowledgement of ethnicity: in the comic

book world of Clark Kents and Peter Parkers, Izzy Cohen was explicitly

fighting the Nazis because he was a Jew, Dino Manelli because the fascists

betrayed his ancestral land. More startling still was Gabe Jones. In those

years comics publishers forbad portraying black people, unless bongo-

beating "natives" were called for, fearing that Southern retailers would

return books unsold. The same year *Sgt. Fury* appeared–the year after the

Civil Rights Movement's march on Washington – DC reprinted an adaptation

of Ian Fleming's *Dr. No*, originally published in England, and had all the locals

colored *pink* […] even though the story was explicitly set in Jamaica. […] Jack

and Stan weren't just doing "realism" either; the US military had still been

segregated in World War II […] When the color separators made Gabe look

white, Stan wrote memos until they got it right. He and Kirby were doing

more than selling comics, they were making a statement. (71)

Lee and Kirby weren't only including an African American in the group, they

acknowledged the prejudice such a character may have encountered in the military

in *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos #6* (Mar. 1964).

Pierre Comtois argues that Lee decided to use his war comic as an

educational tool. At the same time that headlines were "dominated by the national

struggle over civil rights then being waged by men like Martin Luther King and

punctuated by such landmark court decisions as Brown vs Board of Education" Lee

would use *The X-Me*n to address prejudice metaphorically, and *Sgt. Fury* to address

it explicitly (68). In *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos #6* (Mar. 1964) Dino

Manelli is injured and is replaced by George Stonewell who refuses to sleep in the

same barrack with Jones, the African American member of the group. In Comtois'

words:

> Then Fury proclaims what the readers had probably been thinking all along:
>
> "You're a 14-carat, dyed in the wool, low down bigot!" "You so much as look
>
> cross-eyed at Izzy, or Gabe, or anyone because of his race or color, and I'll
>
> make ya wish you were never born!" [...] The Howlers are sent on a deadly
>
> mission to stop German Gen. Erwin Rommel as tensions continue to mount
>
> among the squad members. At one point a captured Nazi, sympathizing with
>
> Stonewell, tells him, "...We do not allow inferior races to mingle with us...to
>
> be part of our culture!" [...Lee] gives the character patches of gray as he
>
> performs his duty as heroically as any of the Howlers even as he continues to
>
> reject some of them for their ethnicity. At last, after saving Izzy's life, Izzy
>
> returns the favor by saving Stonewell, and in the story's dénouement
>
> Stonewell is kept alive due to a transfusion of blood from Jones. Unlike other
>
> writers who would've had Stonewell either be killed off for his sins or get
>
> over all of his earlier prejudices, Lee allows the character's feelings to remain
>
> ambiguous with Fury delivering the final lines: "The seeds of prejudice,
>
> which take a lifetime to grow, can't be stamped out overnight...but if we keep
>
> trying...keep fighting...perhaps a day will come when 'love thy brother' will
>
> be more than just an expression we hear in church!" (68).

Besides tackling Civil Rights issues so clearly in stories such as this one, Lee and

Kirby also introduced the first African superhero in mainstream comic books when

the Black Panther appeared in *Fantastic Four #52* (July 1966). The Black Panther later joined the Avengers and would be the first minority character to appear in an X-Men comic book when he was featured in a single panel of *X-Men #45*, in which the X-Men and the Avengers had a brief crossover story[5].

In 1971 Stan Lee gave an interview with *Rolling Stone* which touched on the themes he tried to present in his work. He comes off sounding a little exasperated in the piece:

> You know I'm very square and preachy sometimes, but the more I realize
> that people are to some degree affected by what we write, the more I'm
> aware of the influence we have, the more I worry about what I write. […] I
> think the only message I have tried to get across is for Christsake don't be
> bigoted. Don't be intolerant. If you're a radical, don't think that all of the
> conservatives have horns. Just like if you're a John Bircher, don't think that
> every radical wants to blow up the nation and rape your daughter. (Green
> 34)

Despite the lack of diversity in the roster of the X-Men, you can clearly see an anti-prejudice message in the series.

The idea of mutants being hated and feared is stated clearly in *The X-Men #1* (Sep. 1963). Professor Charles Xavier tells a new recruit to the X-men that,

> When I was young, normal people feared me, distrusted me! I realized the
> human race is not yet ready to accept those with extra powers! So I decided
> to build a haven…a school for X-Men! Here we stay, unsuspected by normal

---

[5] The two-part story began in *X-Men #44* and concluded in *The Avengers #53*. The Black Panther was featured much more prominently in *The Avengers #53*.

humans, as we learn to use our powers for the benefit of mankind…to help

those who would distrust us if they knew of our existence! (4)

However, despite this very clear distinction between normal humans and mutants

(Angel refers to humans as homo sapiens in this issue and in the following issue we

will find that mutants are called homo superior) and the statement that people

feared and distrusted Xavier, throughout the initial run of X-Men stories evidence of

prejudice towards mutants only appears sporadically.

In 1949 Robert Merton described offered one of the first analyses of

prejudice and discrimination. In "Discrimination and the American Creed," Merton

explains that "Prejudicial attitudes need not coincide with discriminatory behavior"

and further outlines the interrelationship of prejudice and discrimination by

identifying four types of individuals:

The unprejudiced nondiscriminatory – the all-weather liberal

The unprejudiced descriminator – the fair-weather liberal

The prejudiced nondiscriminatory – the fair-weather bigot

The prejudiced discriminator – the all-weather bigot

Using this schema, and based on Xavier's description of humans' attitudes towards

mutants, readers would expect to encounter either prejudiced nondiscriminators or

prejudiced discriminators in the X-Men comic. Surprisingly, in the first several

issues the normal humans are entirely unprejudiced nondescriminators.

At the conclusion of the first issue, a high ranking military officer says, "You

call yourselves the X-Men! I will not ask you to reveal your true identities, but I

promise that before this day is over, the name X-Men will be the most honored in my

command!" (31). This authority figure is behaving as one of Merton's all-weather liberals and plans to use his authority to ensure the X-Men are respected and honored. This is hardly the reaction the reader would expect after they have been warned that humans will not trust mutants. Oddly, this trend of characters describing prejudice but not encountering any discrimination continues for several more issues.

In the second issue we see several unexpected displays from normal humans, especially considering how often we were warned that normal humans will fear mutants. After a threat appears in the form of the villainous mutant The Vanisher, the X-Men are called by Professor X to gather for battle. The X-Men had been out in New York City, and Angel and Marvel Girl must fly to meet the rest of the team. The narration explains that Angel stopped briefly to rest his wings when he "suffers a temporary setback[6]" (34). The setback is in the form of a mob of adoring women who, apparently unable to control themselves, throw themselves at him to get autographs and kisses. This behavior is as far from discriminatory as it is possible to get. A mob has formed not for the purpose of lynching a mutant, but of loving him. A couple pages later Cyclops is also stopped by a pair of construction workers he has saved from danger. One wants to shake Cyclops's hand he exclaims "Say! You're Cyclops aren't you? One of the X-Men! I never thought you jokers were for real! Put it there, pal!" The other thanks Cyclops and asks how his powers work (36).

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[6] Comic books do not follow traditional formatting for the text in dialogue balloons and text boxes. Every letter is capitalized and different words are bolded, sometimes to add a semblance of voice inflected emphasis to the dialogue. When quoting directly from comic books I will use standard formatting for the ease of reading comprehension, though it does not exactly mirror the content of the page.

The most discriminatory behavior comes from The Vanisher towards normal humans. After publicity about his crime wave, perpetrated by using his ability to teleport from one location to another, has spread, "Every denizen of the underworld who isn't in jail flocks to the side of the seemingly invincible Vanisher" (43). The criminals beg for The Vanisher to let them serve him, and he replies that "It is only fitting that homo superior should be served by the inferior homo sapiens. Therefore I shall allow you to become my lackeys" which prompts jubiliants cheering from the just-insulted crowd (43).

The X-Men #5 (May 1964) features a fascinating moment, one that delves into many of the issues surrounding the perception of African American athletes from the thite perspective. This is the first instance in the series where we see a mutant facing the same type of prejudice an African American in the United States may have faced. In the story Magneto hopes to have the X-Men recruit Toad, a member of his recently formed Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. In order to draw the X-Men's attention, Toad enters into a track meet where he uses his mutant powers, leaping ability and greater agility, to perform feats no normal human could. His ploy works, and as the X-Men watch the track meet on television they conlude that he must be a mutant. However, the crowd also reacts to the feats of the Toad, and rather than cheering the great performance they've just witnessed, they begin to yell and boo. In the end the crowd is surrounding the Toad and threatening to attack him when the X-Men arrive to rescue him (114-15).

What is particularly interesting about this episode is the analysis of the crowd's reaction provided by one of the X-Men, "They're calling him "fake!" They

feel it must be a trick of some sort – they want to believe that – it makes them feel less inferior!" This argument reflects many interpretations of how white society has reacted to the rise and dominance of African American athletes in many professional sports.

When African Americans began to succeeed in sports, white commentators would often excuse a white athlete's loss by explaining that African Americans were born with more innate talent. Thus, if a white athlete won, it was an example of David beating Goliath, while if an African American athlete won it meant he was the benefit of a quirk of nature. One example of this concept is the persistant urban legend that African Americans have an extra muscle in their legs which allows them to run faster and jump higher than White athletes. A Google search of "Do African Americans have an extra muscle in their legs" returns tens of thousands of links to online forums and question-and-answer sites where this question has, in most cases, been posed seriously.

In "Consuming Blackness" Daniel Rosenweig analyzes a commercial that aired in 1990 which featured a white catcher watching tape of Rickey Henderson, an African American baseball player who was on the verge of setting the career record for stealing bases, repeatedly stealing bases. The catcher is alone in a darkened room, watching film of Henderson stealing bases over and over, sseemingly putting in extra hours after rest of the team has completed practice. As Rosenweig notes, "The catcher's dilemma links two standard white dystopic narratives: white men cannot compete physically with black men and whites must work harder to earn what they have" (113). Flying in the face of much of the history of the United States,

white men are the underdog in this interpretation of the racial dynamic. The analysis continues:

> ...the commercial generates a series of racially coded dyads underscoring the essentialism of American sports discourse. Its central set of antitheses, the catcher and the base-stealing outfielder, organizes a barely submerged belief system regarding the respective qualities of the races. The white catcher is cerebral, defensive, disciplined, protecting, fundamentally sound, and perhaps not very athletic by nature. Conversely the black outfielder is physical, offensive, reckless, stealing, flashy, and graced with an innate natural athleticism. (114)

It is interested that the first instance of the general public reacting negatively towards a mutant in an X-Men comic book occurs at a sporting event. And the script makes a point that the majority wants to believe there is some cause other than talent which would allow a member of a minority to surpass them. The superiority of the majority cannot be questioned. While in this instance there is in fact a distinct advantage, superpowers, which is possessed by Toad, the logic of the angry crowd is the same type of thinking which allows tales of extra muscles in African Americans to be perpetuated through decades in lockerrooms and now on online forums.

In *The X-Men #8* (Nov. 64) published more than a year after the X-Men first appeared[7], we see a crowd of normal humans reacting with fear and hatred to a mutant. The crowd which had threatened the Toad in *The X-Men #5* (May 1964) had

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[7] *The X-Men* has been published monthly for most of the title's existence, but until issue #18 it was published bi-monthly. Due to legal issues at the time Marvel could only publish eight comic books per month, so various titles alternated by month in the publication schedule.

no knowledge he was a mutant. The dialogue makes it clear that at the track meet

the group believed they are watching a fraud, not neccesarily a mutant.

The incident in *The X-Men #8* (Nov. 1964) begins when the Beast climbs the

side of a building to save a young boy. The crowd below identifies him as a mutant,

and immediately begins to react as Merton's "prejudiced descriminators." Not only

do the members of the crowd question the humanity of the Beast, pointing out that

he ran up the building "like a gorilla," but they begin to voice conspiracies about

mutantkind. Mutants are "waiting to take over the world," and Beast "just saved that

kid to throw us off guard…to make us think mutants aren't dangerous!" And then

there is a threat uttered, as the panel focuses on the clenched fist of a man a voice

bubble reads "Let's get 'im, before he loses himself in the crowd."

In the intervening issues between #2, when a crowd of women adore the

Angel, and #8 when a crowd threatens the Beast, there is no narrative explanation

given for the change in attitudes towards mutants. Despite his codename, the Beast

did not look terribly different from normal humans, only having larger hands and

feet. By contrast, the Angel had wings sprouting from his back, thus marking him

more clearly as a mutant. So why is there such a dramatic shift in tone?

It is entirely possible that the heightened debates and tensions in the country

surounding the Civil Rights movement influenced Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. The Civil

Rights Act of 1964 was proposed in June 1963. This is approximately the time when

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby may have begun design and production on the first issue of

X-Men, which had a cover date of September 1963. The public debate about

prejudice and discrimination may have lead to the inclusion of Professor X's

statements in the first issue of the X-Men. The Civil Rights Act was passed in July of 1964. In the time leading up to its passage and at the time of its passage news outlets covered horrific acts of discrimination and blatant hatred, such as a hotel manager pouring acid into a swimming pool because African Americans and whites were swimming in it together.

While the idea of using prejudice as a central theme was present in the dialogue of X-Men comics from the first issue, the representations of prejudice did not come until over a year later. The public debate, the news coverage concerning discrimination, and the political movement of the times likely galvanized what was an idea in the creators' minds into the central theme of the series. Or at least, it is the central theme while Lee is writing the series, as there is a distinct tonal shift when Roy Thomas comes on as writer. It may have taken a year to discover how to wed the ideas of mutants and prejudice together, but it was an idea Lee would continue to explore while writing the series, and one that would become the primary focus of the series after the 1975 relaunch. This is not surprising, as other aspects of the series, such as the Beast's scientific bent and pseudo-intellectual dialogue were not introduced for a few issues either. The X-Men evolved as the series progressed, in tone, characterization, and theme.

Lee and Kirby, who had Werner Roth finish the pencils on these issues, had one last tale with prejudice as the central theme before Kirby would move onto other projects. A three-part story would introduce one of the most iconic villains in X-Men comic books: The Sentinels. The Sentinels are giant robots built by Dr. Bolivar Trask with the purpose of protecting mankind from the threat of mutants.

The Sentinels, however, will not simply wait for mutants to become threatening, they will actively hunt mutants. The first part of the story, "Among Us Stalk...The Sentinels!" was published in *The X-Men #14* (Nov. 1965) and featured a televised debate between Professor Xavier and Dr. Trask. The arguments Professor Xavier argues that "Before giving way to groundless fears, we must first consider –What is a mutant? He is not a monster! He is not neccesarily a menace! He is merely a person who was born with different power or ability than the average human!" (328). Pierre Comtois argues that in this issue "Lee has spelled out the series' racist subtext, that the hatred and distrust of mutants is nothing bu a thinly veiled metaphor for the real world's prejudices" (107). But, the reactions from the crowd do not reflect racist bigotry, they express prejudices against intellectual elites ("What would an egg-headed old stuffed-shirt like him know?") and political ideologies ("I'll bet he's a Communist!" and "He looks more like one of them right-wingers to me!"), but not against mutants (107). The storyline itself features overt actions taken against mutants because they are born different from the majority of humanity, making the racial element a significant metaphorical theme.

The most interesting character arc in the Sentinels story belongs to Trask, the creator of the mutant-hunting robots. Trask begins the story as a clear bigot, claiming that mankind will be enslaved by mutants. His fear and hatred of mutants drove him to construct the Sentinels as "guardians of the human race" (329). To Trask's surprise, the Sentinels do not obey his order, instead revealing that because their decisions are logical and not influenced by human emotions and frailties, it is in the best interest of the humans to take orders from the Sentinels. In *The X-Men*

#15 (Dec. 1965) the Sentinels tell Trask "We can only guard the human race by becoming its master! Humans are too weak, too foolish to govern themselves. Henceforth, we shall rule!!" (351). Not only does Trask see his creations spin out of his control, he sees that the X-Men fight for themselves but are also willing to sacrifice themselves to protect a city of normal humans. In the following issue, just before sacrificing his own life to prevent an army of Sentinels from being created, Trask realizes "In my ignorance, in my fear, I created an evil far greater than the menace it was built to destroy!" (383). The finale reveals that the true evil was fear and ignorance, and that, just as significantly, fear and ignorance can be overcome. Lee and Kirby had toyed with reluctant villains before in The X-Men, Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver only served Magneto because he had previously saved their lives, but Trask is the first villain to fully reform in the series.

Following Stan Lee as writer was Roy Thomas. While Lee and Kirby had launched many very successful superhero comics for Marvel, *The X-Men* was not one of the company's top-sellers. Perhaps it was for this reason that Thomas introduced a different tone to the series. The first set of Thomas issues have the X-Men fighting past villains, such as The Blob. These issues had been plotted before he became the writer, with Thomas only adding dialogue. As Thomas explains of his first issue, *The X-Men #20* (May 1966), "The book had already been plotted and even drawn by Werner Roth when I was given it to script. Stan didn't take any plotting credit in the printed book. For all I know Werner may have plotted the book himself." (DeFalco "Thomas" 21). When Thomas began giving the series his own twists he made the book more similar to the other titles Marvel was publishing. The X-Men ceased to

fight other mutants or threats such as the Sentinels and began to fight supervillains who had already appeared in other Marvel comic books. Eventually Thomas would return the X-Men to the themes that Lee and Kirby established. The end of Thomas's run on the series includes some very overt condemnations of prejudice.

While making the X-Men more like Marvel's other titles may have been logical from a certain business perspective it did take away some of the unique qualities of the series. Rather than being a series that was tackling a relevant issue, the title became a fight-of-the-month series. In *X-Men #22* (Jul. 1966) The X-Men fought a group of super-villains that included such uninspired characters as Count Nefaria, Plantman, the Scarecrow, Porcupine, and the Eel. In *The X-Men #24* (Sep. 24), "The Plague of Locusts," a conveniently-named Dr. Hopper attacks the world with a plague of giant grasshoppers in what seems like the plot from a science fiction b-movie from the 1950s. Soon the X-Men would fight villains more traditionally associated with The Fantastic Four and The Avengers. At least some fans took note of the change in tone. Many Marvel comic books feature a letters column, in which letters from fans are published and the editor of the comic book responds to the questions or complaints or praises the fan voices. The letters column is obviously a very mediated forum, the editor carefully selects what letters to publish, but it was used as a tool for Marvel to create a sense of belonging amongst their fans. In the first letters column, appearing in *The X-Men #5* (May 1964), Kenny Crowe wrote in saying, "I like the Homo Superior and Homo Sapiens bit in The X-Men. It tends to give the magazine something besides just 'good guys vs. bad guys'" (129). But, it was not uncommon to see letters which were critical of the

creative direction of the series be published in the letters column. For example, the

letters page of *The X-Men #29* (Feb. 1967) includes a letter by Ronald Ford which

reads:

> Awright! Enough is enough! It used to be that I liked the X-Men better than
>
> any of your titles. They were mutants, feared, not trusted, always on the side
>
> of humanity fighting evil mutants. So what happens? You turn these evil-
>
> mutant fighters into crummy super-villain combaters. You've turned an
>
> instant hit into a flop. So bring back evil mutants – singly or in a group – in
>
> the sensational tradition of The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. Their purpose
>
> is supposed to be fighting mutants such as these. Leave the super-villains to
>
> your other costumed do-gooders. C'Mon, give it some thought! (690)

Marvel's light-hearted response to Ford's letter was to point out that they had

previously received many letters complaining about using Magneto and the

Brotherhood of Evil Mutants too often in their stories.

Although the use of mutants as a metaphor for minorities was lessened in

this time, the diversity of the title actually increased. Of course, with a previously all-

white cast, the likelihood of diversifying was pretty good. And, in this case, the

diversity does not include a sensitive portrayal of other cultures. *The X-Men #25*

(Oct. 1966) features the first significant characters to appear who are not white

Americans. The main villain of the issue, El Tigre, and his two henchman come from

the fictional Central American nation of San Rico. The three villains contain many

stereotypes of Latin American culture. One henchman dresses in a mariachi outfit

while the other dresses in a poncho. They wield bolos, a machete, and poisoned

darts. In a comic book universe which frequently features heavy sci-fi elements for American protagonists, Central America has not yet discovered guns, much less lasers.

Thomas would also introduce two mutants who would later become part of a more international team of X-Men. The Banshee is an Irish mutant who first appears as a villain, later becomes a sometimes-ally of the X-Men, and becomes a full-fledged member of the team in the 1975 relaunch. As *X-Men* was nearing the end of its initial run of original issues Thomas also introduced the Japanese mutant Sunfire who was the villain in the issue. Banshee and Sunfire never became members of The X-Men during this period, but Havok and Polaris, two white mutants, did join the team. Appearances of minority mutants increased, but the team remained composed of entirely white American members.

In addition to diversifying the characters appearing in the series, the back-up stories Marvel began publishing, which revealed the origins of the individual X-Men characters, had a much stronger theme of fighting prejudice than the main stories did. Thomas was the writer for the majority of these back-up stories. One of the first instances of Cyclops using his powers in public is related. Cyclops uses his optic blasts to disintegrate a crate that was falling from a construction site and would have killed the crowd below. With a rather illogical reaction, the crowd immediately wants to attack Cyclops. One member of the crowd yells "He must'a been some kind of mutant…a monster with deadly powers!" To which a man in a bow tie and bowler hat replies "Then…he's more dangerous than a falling crate…by far!" Irrational fear and hatred of mutants has returned to the title, at least in the back-up stories. After

avoiding the theme for many issues, Thomas seems to have recognized that it was an important feature of *The X-Men*. In an interview, Thomas admitted that "in hindsight it was probably a mistake" to try and turn the X-Men into a more traditional superhero team (DeFalco , "Thomas" 23).

Following the series of back-up stories that established Cylops's origin, the Iceman was the next member of the X-Men to have his past told beginning in *The X-Men #44* (May 1968). When an encounter with a bully ends with Iceman revealing his mutant powers, the small town quickly turns against him.

A couple issues later, with Gary Friedrich taking over as writer for this chapter, the imagery of the story takes an unmistakable turn towards the lynch mobs which took many African American lives. The townspeople attack the sheriff to prevent him from protecting Iceman and Cyclops and prepare to hang them both. Unlike some artifacts of American entertainment, such as the silent film *Birth of a Nation*, the lynch mob that takes justice into its own hands is clearly the villain of this piece.

X-Men #65 (Feb. 1970) tells the final chapter of an attempted alien invasion of Earth. Written by Dennis O'Neal with art by Neal Adams the story takes a new and important angle in the themes of diversity and understanding. Up to this point the X-Men comic books have largely dealt with the evils of hatred. The series has promoted the concept that hating others because they are minorities in society is wrong. The focus has been on condemning those who have prejudicial attitudes. This issue takes the important step of featuring racial minorities in positive roles. In all previous 64 issues of X-Men comic books to this point there had been only two

panels that showed an African American. The Black Panther appeared in the final

panel of *The X-Men #45* (Jun. 1968) and there is one African American policeman

shown in *X-Men #57* (Jun. 1969)[8].

In the storyline Professor X using his incredible telepathy to search the Earth

"probing, searching, questioning, demanding - - seeking kindred spirits - -men and

women of good will! -- Human beings who have in good measure the single trait he

desperately needs - - compassion! For it is the only thing that will best the enemy!"

Professor Xavier intends to use compassion and love to repel the alien Z'Nox. As

Xavier finds the souls of humanity who are good enough a montage of images

accompanies the narration. Included in the montage are, based on appearances and

dress, an American child, an African woman, a Middle Eastern man, a Native

American man, another American child, an American couple, a Russian man and

woman, and an African man. This shift from considering the evil that prejudiced

men and women can do to the good that everyone can add to the world will be

continued when Marvel begins to print new stories in 1975.

Throughout all 66 issues of this run the entire team is composed of white

mutants. Despite the at times obvious metaphor of mutants being feared and hated

in a manner similar to racial minorities in the United States, almost all of the

minorities who appear are villains, often with stereotypes representing their

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[8] Neal Adams drew *X-Men #57* (Jun. 1969) with the African American cop and *X-Men #65* (Feb. 1970) with African Americans shown as among the most noble minds on Earth. He also drew *Green Lantern #76* (Feb. 1970) which features a famous scene in which an African American approaches Green Lantern, who has many outer space adventures and asks him, "I been readin' about you...How you work for the blue skins.. And how on a planet someplace you helped out the orange skins...And you done considerable for the purple skins! Only there's skins you never bothered with--! The black skins! I want to know... How come?! Answer me that, Mr. Green Lantern!"

ethnicities. The only new members of the team are white mutants, while all the minority mutants are the villains. This is one of the disconnects between the larger theme readers are told about and the actual content of the stories.

Gender

While much of this project will be looking closely at the portrayals of gender in individual issues of the X-Men comic book series, one overarching aspect of the series should be addressed early on. The team name is unavoidably masculine despite the team always having female members. Sometimes women have outnumbered the men on the X-Men for significant runs on the series. Despite the fact that for most of the published adventures of the X-Men the team has included prominent female characters the team name has rarely been discussed as a gender issue within the published comics or by creators.

To better understand and analyze this concern a few matters should be addressed. First, The X-Men was not the initial proposed name for the comic book or the superhero team. Stan Lee, the co-creator of the series, explains:

Originally, I proposed naming the chronicle of our merry little misfits *The Mutants*. I thought it would make a great title. But I was outvoted by the powers-that-be in the front office. I was told, with much conviction, that nobody knew what a mutant was, therefore that couldn't be the title of the magazine. I tried, in my stumbling, bumbling way, to say that some people knew the word, and those that didn't would soon learn after the book was published. But, as you can tell by the present title, yours truly didn't always emerge victorious! However, undaunted and unbowed, I returned with

another name–*The X-Men*. I truly expected to be booted out of the office for

that one. I mean, if people didn't know what a mutant was, how in the would

they know what an X-Man was? But I guess I'll never make my mark as a

logician–everyone okayed the title. ("Our Merry")

The Mutants would have been a gender neutral title for a team of characters that, in

the first issue at least, featured four active male heroes and one heroine, as well as

the crippled male leader of the team.

Second, the debate concerning sexist language has been going on for decades,

but it had not yet begun in earnest when Marvel Comics first published *The X-Men.*

One of the first and most famous articles drawing attention to the sexual bias of

language was "De-Sexing the English Language," which appeared in the first issue of

the feminist publication *Ms. Magazine*. The article, written by Casey Miller and Kate

Smith, argues against tendency of the English language to make the generic human

male with words such as "mankind."

Ms. Magazine began publication in 1972, a full nine years after the first issue

of *The X-Men* was published. In 1963 the use of terms such as "men" or

"brotherhood" to describe a group of both men and women was unlikely to have

been considered much of a concern to the average American. Indeed, the practice is

still common today, though more are aware of the connotations such word choices

have. However, while the use of "X-Men" to describe a group of men and women is

reflective of the time period when the term was coined, it is odd that it has gone

largely, though not completely, unquestioned almost forty years later.

With a woman on the team the title X-Men serves much as "mankind" or "men" has in the English language, a gendered noun acting with non-gendered inclusiveness. Even the villains in early issues employ similar male-dominant titles. The first team the X-Men battle is called The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, despite having a female member (only one, much like the earliest incarnation of the X-Men). In the letters column, though, readers did discuss the team name and the gender implications. In a letter published in *The X-Men #28* (Jan. 1967) Dennis Clark wrote

> Dear Stan, Roy, and Werner,
>
> This is not a social letter. Neither is it a hate note. It's just a few lines to emphasize an important point. For years loyal fans have read the X-Men with pleasure. The stories are great, the art magnificent, inking irresistible, and the lettering luscious. So, what's my gripe? The name! It's the name! For years people have read the X-Men without (I repeat – without) noticing one certain super-heroine – Marvel Girl! For years you have called the team the X-*Men.* Poor Jean – she's being insulted. She's a female, a poor innocent mutant who is called an X-*Man*! Maybe you could change the name to the X-People or something, but please do something. (667)

The official response to the letter, written in the Marvel's standard informal and playful manner, was:

> Your point is well taken, pungently presented, and daringly documented – but – somehow we question the fact that the X-People is the kind'a mag title that'll knock anyone outta his tree! Mebbe we can change our name to The X-Men and Friend, or some such passionate phrase! (667)

In fact, in the very first issue the group was referred to as "the X-Men and Marvel Girl" in one line of dialogue, but other than that the term X-Men is used inclusively for Marvel Girl as well. Although a future writer does employ the idea of calling a group "The X-People" it is doubtful Marvel ever seriously considered a name change.

A couple issues later, in *The X-Men #31* (Apr. 1967) another letter writer addresses the team name, coming to the defense of using "The X-Men." Jeff Zweig, using some of the same reasoning which would later be criticized in the Ms. Magazine article referenced above, wrote:

> I must show one fan the error of his ways. He wrote to you to complain that the title "X-Men" excludes females. I would hasten to inform him that the term "mankind" refers to women as well as men, and if it's a generic term I fail to see why "X-Men" shouldn't be one, too. (736)

Zweig's letter goes on to address recent events in the comic book series, and the response to his letter answers those concerns and does not touch on his discussion of the team name.

There are a couple instances in which the team name has been altered in recognition of the inherent male-dominant nature of "X-Men." In 1998, Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz imagined a future version of a mutant team in Marvel universe called it the X-People, the very alteration suggested more than thirty years before in the letters page. In 2010 Marvel published a one-shot comic book entitled *X-Women*. Written by Chris Claremont and drawn by the French artist Milo Manara the story featured an adventure of several of the female members of the X-Men.

However, this latter work ignited controversy from several comic book commentators, notably because Manara is most well-known for his erotic and pornographic art. Comicvine.com published a post entitled "Brutally Honest: X-Women #1: - celebration or exploitation?" which concluded that the book looked more like an exploitation of women than a celebration of strong female characters, which is how Marvel had promoted the one-shot. Similarly, comicbookresources.com published a review by James Hunt which concluded,

> The relationship between pornography and comics has, historically, been thinner than many people would openly admit. […]That goes double for "X-Women #1", a book drawn by Milo Manara, an artist notorious for his pornographic works. The book has, not unreasonably, ignited people's passions in more ways than one. For some, it's an exploitative, needlessly titillating comic. For others, it's a rare chance to see a master of his craft draw some of their favorite characters. […]There are scenes and images Manara chooses to draw that do make me uncomfortable. It is, at times, little more than porn.

Hunt also argues, however, that

> […]one difference worth noting between Manara's artwork and the vast majority of current superhero artists is that Manara strives for a physical ideal that could actually exist. The backs may be arched, the mouths may be slackened, but the spines are far from dislocated and the expressions far from glassy. Manara's characters are in-proportion. They move and exist in

real space. For possibly the first time ever, Psylocke is depicted as visibly

Asian, rather than as a white woman with slightly Asian eyes and skin tone.

The artistic portrayal of female characters, often with unrealistic proportions which

may be meant to titillate the reader, will be addressed in more depth later. While *X-Women* caused concerns for its portrayal of female characters, problematic

portrayals of women go back to *The X-Men #1*.

The title of the series is but one of the problematic aspects of gender roles

and portrayals that will be encountered in the history of X-Men comic books. In this

initial run of *The X-Men*, female characters are in the minority. By far the most

prominent female is Jean Grey, who uses the codename Marvel Girl. Another mutant,

Lorna Dane who is codenamed Polaris, will guest star in a few issues and act as a

member of the team in the final storyline of this period. Eventually, Beast, Iceman,

and Angel begin dating women who appear semi-regularly in the strip, but only as

romantic interests for the men, not as fully fleshed-out characters. In the entire run

of 66 issues which makes up this period of X-Men comic books, the team only faces

one female villain, the Scarlet Witch, Wanda Maximoff, who is a reluctant member of

The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants.

Marvel Girl

Jean Grey, who uses the superhero codename Marvel Girl, is the only female

team member for most of the first 66 issue-run of *The X-Men.* Initially, she is treated

as an object of love for the male members of the team and has many domestic traits

associated with the housewife ideal of the post-World War II America; the

conception of the American female that would be criticized in Betty Friedan's

landmark work *The Feminine Mystique*. Initially, despite being objectified by many of the men in her life, Marvel Girl dresses conservatively and most of her inner thoughts concern a potential relationship with Cyclops. Later on, her costume changes to reflect the Cosmo-girl ideal of beauty espoused in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, but her personality largely remains that of a domestic girl hoping to find meaning in a romantic relationship with Cyclops.

In the initial roster of X-Men, the code names generally are related to a specific aspect of the mutant power each member has. Cyclops wears a visor which makes him appear to have one eye, Angel has feathered wings, Iceman turns to ice, and Beast has inhumanly large hands and feet. Marvel Girl's codename is much more generic, and could be applied to any character with superpowers. Indeed, Marvel Comics also feature the adventures of Ms. Marvel, Captain Marvel, and Marvel Boy. It should also be noted that Marvel Girl's codename does not identify her as woman, but uses the younger, adolescent gender marker, *girl*. This is contrasted by Iceman, who is not Iceboy. Making the inconsistency even more pronounced is the fact that in the first issue Iceman is identified as "a couple years younger" than the rest of the team. Marvel Girl's codename marks her as the youngest, most innocent and perhaps weakest of the group, even though she is not in fact the youngest and her powers make her quite formidable, depending on the writer. In several of the adventures the X-Men have she is shown to be the most frail member and to need the most care and protection.

Marvel Girl's powers, at this point, consist of telekinesis, the ability to move objects with her mind. The strength of her powers seems to vary from issue to issue.

In the first issue Marvel Girl lifts Beast in the air and later a large group of soldiers with apparent ease. But in later issues she is warned not to use her powers to lift objects heavier than what she could lift using her muscles. She also develops a tendency to become lightheaded and at times faint when straining with her powers.

In the first issue of the series Marvel Girl is introduced as a new student at Xavier's School for Gifted Students. While having a new character enter into an established setting is a classic narrative device to allow readers to be introduced to the world, Marvel Girl does not end up as the eyes into this new world of mutants. Rather, Marvel Girl is quickly objectified by the four male members of the team. The reader, to a certain degree, is directed to gaze at Marvel Girl, rather than look with shared wonder at the new world she is discovering.

As Marvel Girl is approaching the school in *The X-Men #1* (Sep. 1963) Professor Xavier calmly notes that she is a "most attractive young lady" (15) while preparing the other students to meet her. The teenage boys on the team are less reserved in their appraisal. Cyclops, Angel and Best crowd to a window to watch her walk up the pathway to the school. Iceman, who is the youngest on the team, explains that he's glad he's not a "wolf" like the other members of the team. Iceman will fairly quickly develop "wolf"-like tendencies and demonstrate unreserved attraction for various female characters. Meanwhile, Cyclops proclaims that Jean Grey is "a real living doll" while Angel exclaims, "A redhead! Look at that face…and the rest of her" (16). Angel later notes that "She has one very obvious power…the power to make a man's heart beat faster" (10).

While the boys are clearly objectifying Jean Grey, she does not stand idly by acting as a piece of art for them to gaze upon. When Cyclops is offering her a chair, explaining that he would "bring her the whole room of furniture if she asked" Jean surprises Cyclops by using her telekinesis to pull the chair from his hands across the room, deliberately making Beast, who had been fawning over her leap out of the way of the chair (17). Additionally, when Beast is very forward and leans in for a kiss Jean lifts Beast in the air in retaliation, saying "I'm not exactly helpless, as you can see" (18). She goes on to spin him until he's dizzy before dropping him to the floor. This display does not stop the team from ogling Jean, however. After Angel wonders "Where did the new doll go?" the peak around a corner to see her just changed into her uniform. Iceman, who earlier protested his lack of interest in women, says "Wowee! Looks like she was poured into that uniform!" (24).

This treatment from the other members of the team doesn't stop with the first issue. In the second issue Marvel Girl is called "fair damsel" (35), "gorgeous" (38), and "little lady" (44). The third issue has a particularly troubling panel in which Professor Xavier professes his own love for Marvel Girl in a thought balloon, thus alerting readers to his affections but not the other characters. While his age has not been revealed at this point, it is clear that he is at the very least middle-aged, though his bald head might indicate an even older gentleman. All of the students at his school are teenagers, and though no official age is given for the characters, she cannot be older than eighteen at the time she first entered Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. After graduating from Xavier's School she enters college, so the school is the equivalent of a high school. Even though the revelation of Professor X's love for

Jean Grey was included in the third issue, it seems likely that Lee and Kirby decided that the idea of Professor Xavier pursuing Marvel Girl was too problematic, as it was not brought up again during their run, or even addressed at all by other writers for over thirty years.

A full catalogue of all the ways in which Marvel Girl is objectified is not necessary, but a few examples from future issues will help illustrate the point that this continues during much of this run. In *The X-Men #4* (Mar. 1964), in the heat of battle, Marvel Girl is called "little friend" (99) and "gorgeous" (100). In *The X-Men #8* (Nov. 1964) Cyclops wishes he "could tell her the words I really want to say! How gorgeous her lips are…how silken her hair is…how I love her! But I dare not…" (182). Within a few issues Marvel Girl is as smitten with Cyclops all the men are with her, though she never admits it to him directly in this period. Instead the reader is treated to many lovelorn thought balloons as each secretly pines for the other unrequitedly for the initial 66 issue run of *The X-Men*. Even though most of the men on the team profess at least attraction, if not outright love for Marvel Girl, none mentions any aspect of her which they find attractive other than her looks. Not even her superpowers are a source of interest for them.

This may be because the manner in which her powers are employed is not terribly impressive early on. The X-Men have a training facility, called the Danger Room, where they hone their powers and practice fighting. While the rest of the team is often shown fighting one another or escaping death traps, Marvel Girl is more likely to spend her training time passing a wooden block through a series of hoops which resemble a children's toy, as seen in *The X-Men #3* (Jan. 1964), or

opening a box and lifting out a cake as she does in *The X-Men #4* (Mar. 1964), or

threading yarn through a punch board, as shown in *The X-Men #8* (Nov. 1964).

She repeatedly calls for help, because she is too weak to continue on with the

task at hand. In *The X-Men #2* (Nov. 1963) Angel must carry her back to the mansion

because she "feels faint" after using her powers (35). And during a training session

Marvel Girl is tasked with lifting a gigantic ball above her head, but quickly she

begins to call out, "Growing tired…can't hold the weight much longer…too large to

hurl away…Wh—what can I do?" (44). Cyclops not only uses his optic blasts to send

the ball to the other side of the room, he picks her up as he does so, marking the

second time in the issue a man has carried her after she has exhausted herself using

her powers. In the same issue Marvel Girl is "tricked" by the Vanisher, the only

member of the team to be incapacitated in battle, when she is hit by sleeping gas and

needs to be rescued by Iceman, and then supported by both Cyclops and Beast. *The*

X-Men #3 (Jan. 1964) has Marvel Girl crying out, "Cyclops!! Do something! It's too

big for me to handle!" as an elephant charges the team (72).

In the same issue, the entire team is captured, tied up, and blindfolded.

Professor Xavier, who is at a remote locations but through his psychic powers is

aware of the X-Men's predicament, must guide Marvel Girl in using her powers to

free the team. Professor Xavier psychically communicates with Jean, telling her

"Marvel Girl, I am sending my thoughts to you! You are not as helpless as you think!

Do exactly as I say…" (76). Professor Xavier then must guide Marvel Girl through

the most basic use of her powers to perform rather obvious tasks. He tells her, "You

have the telekinetic power to mentally move an object. Use that power to remove

your blindfold!" (77) Professor X then further guides her, explaining, "Look around you quickly! […] I can "see" what see by probing your mind! Ahh! That is what we need!" Jean has seen a knife thrower's wagon, and Professor Xavier guides her in opening a window and summoning a knife, only then does he say "Now the rest is up to you!" (77). All along, Marvel Girl had the power to free the team, but the implication is that she is not clever or intelligent enough to use her powers appropriately. The male patriarchal figure had to walk her step by step, and only when the knife is actually in her possession and all she must do is cut the ropes binding her is she trusted to be able to complete the task and then free the team.

Although she may have superpowers and wear the costume of the X-Men, Marvel Girl's role on the team is often that of the damsel in distress, especially during the first years of publication. *X-Men #4* (Mar. 1964) sees the entire team threatened by a wall of fire, and even though she is not injured, Cyclops picks her up and carries her to safety while the rest of the team runs away on their own (100). In *The X-Men #6* (Jul. 1964) Marvel Girl collapses from the strain of trying to slow Beast's fall and Iceman must prevent Beast from crushing her (138). In *The X-Men #7* (Sep. 1964) Marvel Girl collapses from attempting to use her powers to lift a villain called The Blob, and is reprimanded by Cyclops, "You shouldn't have strained yourself against impossible odds like that! Leave him to me now!! Only my power beam can beat him!" (171). In the same issue when an explosion occurs near the team all the members protect themselves, except Marvel Girl, who is shielded by Angel. Marvel Girl is captured in *X-Men #10* (Mar. 1965), and the rest of the team must go to rescue her. Angel is also captured, but when he sees that Marvel Girl is

"numb with fear" and unable to act it is his quick thinking that allows them to escape. In the process of escaping Angel must tell Marvel Girl exactly how to use her powers, because she is too incapacitated to think for herself (241)Although Marvel Girl's powers are an asset, she frequently is too physically weak to use them, or a man must direct her because she is too emotionally frail.

Interestingly, much as there was a sudden and somewhat unexplained change in how the minority metaphor was used in *The X-Men*, which came to a head with the Sentinel Trilogy, Marvel Girl's role on the team sees a significant change in those same issues. In *The X-Men #15* (Dec. 1965) Jean makes a notable jump in confidence and ability. She even directly tells Beast that "I'm hardly a damsel in distress" as she levitates herself through the air (347). Her words ring true, as in this adventure it is Beast and Iceman who are captured and need to be rescued by the team. And instead of falling into traps, it is Marvel Girl who calls out "Boys! Look out!" when Cyclops and Angel fail to see an enemy (356). And, as Marvel Girl is straining with her powers as she has so often before, instead of fainting as the reader may expect her too, she calls out a triumphant "I did it!" and stands tall as she mentally pushes a giant robot sentinel to the ground (359). Marvel Girl's newfound confidence carries into the next issue. Again, Marvel Girl is straining to topple a sentinel when the team sees she is struggling, and one member calls out "Hey! Jeanie needs help! Let's move!" but before the men can arrive to save her, she succeeds and calls out "Too late! I downed him myself!" (378). And in the final escape Jean carries Angel to safety, reversing the role they've had so many times before. Even as they're finally escaping from a high wall Cyclops is falling back on

the established routine for the team and worries about who will carry Marvel Girl to safety before she tells him not to worry because she can levitate herself to the ground (386).

Why are there such drastic changes in the role of Marvel Girl in these issues? It is hard to say for certain, but much as the Civil Rights movement was drawing attention to many of the prejudices racial minorities faced, the feminist movement was highlighting many gender issues during the time period Lee and Kirby were producing these X-Men comic books. 1963 not only saw the first issue of *The X-Men* hit the stands, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was published and became a bestseller. Friedan identified what she called a repressive image of women which had become common in society. Women, in post-World-War-II-society, had been told to "seek fulfillment as wives and mothers" (57) and find contentment in cooking, sewing, raising children, and doing their husbands' laundry. Experts informed women that "they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity," even as society set about creating narrow parameters for what defined femininity (58). While domestic roles inherently repressive to women, society was dictating that domesticity was the only place where women could be happy. Many women can find happiness in domestic roles, but few other options were available at the time, and *The Feminine Mystique* and the feminist movement raised awareness of this problematic social expectation.

Lee and Kirby were creating a comic book at a time when many social changes were occurring, and those changes affected the stories being told. Jean Grey will evolve as a character and develop many different character traits, but originally,

Marvel Girl had many traditional domestic roles that society expected of women.

Lee and Kirby were products of the age *The Feminine Mystique* criticizes, when

women were expected to be only find fulfillment and satisfaction in their roles as

wives, mothers, and homemakers.

Marvel Girl matches many of the roles of femininity which Friedan criticizes.

First, her identity is closely linked to the advances of the male members of the team,

and her own secret longing for Cyclops. In post-war America, much of the idealized

concept of womanhood was not as an individual, but as part of a heterosexual pair.

This was not the only image of femininity promoted in American culture, but it was

one of the most dominant. Clearly the men on the team are also very concerned with

romantic relationships, but there are other defining characteristics for each of them.

While Cyclops is shown worrying about being the field leader of the X-Men and the

larger issues facing mutants even as he longs for Jean Grey, the only insights reader

gain from reading Marvel Girl's thoughts are that she wishes Cyclops loved her. Her

identity is linked exclusively to her romantic feelings, and she is shown as being

incomplete without Cyclops's affection.

Marvel Girl also adopts a domestic role on the team. *The X-Men #6* (Jul. 1964)

begins with a full-page panel showing Professor X, Angel, Cyclops, Beast, and Iceman

seated around the dining room table, while Marvel Girl is sticking her head around a

doorway in the upper left hand corner of the image. The men are all in the

foreground, while Marvel Girl is in the background. Professor X says, "It was a

delicious meal, Jean! Thank you for helping out on the cook's day off!" to which Jean

replies, "I was glad to do it Professor!" (131). From the image, it is unclear if Jean

partook of any of the meal herself, or simply waited quietly in the kitchen while the men ate.

After the X-Men battle The Juggernaut, who also happens to be Professor Xavier's half-brother, in *The X-Men #13* (Sep. 1965) all the men are injured, and Marvel Girl is shown caring for them while wearing a nurse's uniform. Cyclops laments that they've never had so many injured before, to which Iceman replies that "With a nurse like Jean, it's a pleasure!" When Beast mentions that his mother would kiss him to aid his healing, Jean notes that she is not her mother, and Angel offers a wry "That's for sure!" in reply (318).

A stronger Marvel Girl who appears in *The X-Men #14* (Nov. 1965) and *#15* (Dec. 1965) seems to offer some level of recognition that she had been more or less a token female member of a boy's club up to that point. However, while Marvel Girl remained more confident of her powers from this point forward, many of the domestic markers which defined her role as the female on the team were not abandoned. For example, the last panel of *The X-Men #18* (Mar. 1966) shows Jean wearing an apron and carrying a tray of food out to the table where all the men eagerly await the meal (433). And she is the damsel in distress again in *The X-Men #19* (Apr. 1966), though a point is made when the team is escaping from a collapsing mine that Marvel Girl does not need to be told what to do and can easily keep up with the boys. And in *The X-Men #35* Cyclops orders Marvel Girl to stay behind because the threat they are facing is so dangerous, and he does not want Marvel Girl to be injured. So in some ways readers encounter a strange mix of the old damsel in distress and the new confident Marvel Girl.

Marvel Girl has acted as a cook and nurse but she will adopt another role traditionally associated with housewives: seamstress. When the team has their uniforms redesigned, twice in this era, Marvel Girl designs and produces the outfits. Originally the team wears uniforms with the same blue and yellow color scheme and basic design, with the exception of Iceman, whose powers simply make him look like a snowman at first and like he is carved out of ice after artists change how he is drawn. Occasionally, even before the official costume redesign, Marvel Girl is drawn with a different shaped mask that does not cover her hair.

In *The Supergirls: Fashion, Feminism, and the History of Comic Book Heroines*, Mike Madrid criticizes the roles and costumes of early Marvel superheroines, such as Marvel Girl. Madrid argues that these female characters "take on traditional female roles within the group as mothers and handmaidens: sewing uniforms, making coffee, and doing secretarial work. All the while, they conceal their femininity beneath unisex costumes that match those of their male counterparts" (109). The roles the superheroines had in the early 1960s Marvel comic books reflect the domestic ideals of the 1950s, and the costumes are certainly representative of the conception of femininity before Gurley Brown, the editor of Cosmopolitan magazine, helped subvert patriarchal norms by creating the "Cosmo Girl" beginning in 1965. Brown promoted this sexually liberated interpretation of womanhood on the magazine's cover with images of models featuring "exposed cleavage, teased hair, heavy make-up, and flamboyant and suggestive costumes (Oullette 123).

While a regular criticism of comic books has been the unrealistic and overly sexualized portrayal of women's bodies in extremely revealing outfits, it is worth noting that Jean Grey is shown with normal proportions and modest clothing in these early issues. While many artists draw what is often referred to as "eye-candy" for male readers, Jack Kirby and Werner Roth generally draw Marvel Girl in a manner that is not outlandish for a 16-18 year old girl. Her curves realistic, her breasts are not exaggerated in size or shape, and her costume covers her from head to toe with the only skin being revealed around her mouth. This will not always be the case in costume design and artist portrayal of Jean Grey.

The first redesign of the team uniforms is very minor. Some of the patterns of blue and yellow are shifted minimally and red belts are added. Oddly, when showing off the new uniforms, Marvel Girl comments that she "was getting tired of all that yellow in the old ones…" when the amount of yellow that has been removed form the uniforms is very little at all.

One seemingly minor change in Marvel Girl's costume is that her neckline is now v-shaped, rather than a circular shape that closely hugs her neck. This change resulted in something of a migratory length, with the v-neck of her costume sometimes being shown to plunge downward. For the first time, in *The X-Men #33* (Jun. 1967) with art by Werner Roth, the reader sees an uncovered cleavage line in an X-Men comic book. The art is angular and the actual line of cleavage shown makes little anatomical sense, so it is not a terribly cheesecake-style image, but it will be far from the last time cleavage is shown in *The X-Men*. As with many comic books, the breasts and butts of female characters will become very exaggerated and

focused on in future issues, while the muscles of male characters will see similar exaggeration.

Possibly in response to numerous letters written in by fans asking for the characters to have more individual looks, Marvel gave the team a much more drastic set of costume changes in *The X-Men #39* (Dec. 1967). Again, Jean Grey is responsible for designing and making the team's new costumes. Jean explains that "Just before the episode with the Juggernaut, I had been hard at work on a pet project of mine – with the Professor's permission! Here's a pack for each of you! In it, you'll find—a new costume!" (16) Marvel Girl's costume is a single piece of green fabric that has a v-neckline and ends in a very short mini-skirt. In some panels, the top of the costume is drawn completely off the shoulders, essentially wrapping Marvel Girl's torso and arms and nothing else. The men on the team remain fully covered by their costumes, though Beast's hands and feet are bare to allow him greater dexterity. Marvel Girl's costume offers little protection in the field of battle.

Marvel Girl's costume reflects the image promoted in some women's magazines, such as Cosmopolitan. Her outfit is more suggestive and less-conservative. However, while it may reflect some aspects of the second wave of feminism, it may also serve as a more suggestive look to attract the predominantly male readers of comic books. While her outfit has become more revealing and her bare legs are often drawn longer than is realistically possible, the rest of her anatomy is drawn with relative restraint.

In *The X-Men #48* (Sep. 1968) Jean Grey will begin to wear even skimpier outfits in her new, short term, role as a fashion model. The team has temporarily

disbanded and are assuming cover roles. Jean Grey becomes a swimsuit model, while Scott Summers becomes a radio technician. Jean takes a job that requires beauty but no brains, while Scott takes on a role that requires brains but looks are irrelevant. The comments from the men on the set of the photoshoot echo Marvel Girl's teammate's first comments about her looks from *The X-Men #1* (Sep. 1963). The boss, a woman, in the scene says, "Carlo, you ordered four models for the beachwear job–and you've just used only the new one, Jean Grey! What's so special about her?" And the photographer replies, "She's fresh, boss lady! Like an easter bunny or an oven hot biscuit! And that's the name of our game!" Another male in a suit adds "He's got a point there, Candy! That's the tastiest package of goodies we've opened around here in months!" (1). While most of Jean is in profile in this scene, she is depicted as twisting in such a way that her bikini-covered breasts are clearly depicted for the reader.

However, though Marvel Girl's costume becomes progressively more revealing and she takes a job as a swimsuit model, she is the lone member of the X-Men to go on to college when the team graduates from Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. Of course, her college career largely serves to introduce a potential new love interest and new threats to the team while her studies are rarely shown. For example, her professor happens to be insane and launches a deadly plague of gigantic locusts against humanity and a boy who has flirted with her has a brother who becomes a supervillain. And, as the stories go on Marvel Girl spends more time with the team and less time at college, and in the ends she simply seems to cease attending college, never finishing her studies.

In the back-up stories published in *The X-Men* stories are told of how many of the team members discovered their powers and the reactions of their friends and families. In flashbacks in the main stories and in the back-up stories we learn the origins of Professor X, Cyclops, Beast, Angel, and Iceman. In *The X-Men #57* (Jun. 1959) there is a back-up feature on Marvel Girl, but it is unlike the previous back-up stories. Rather than a narrative, this features Marvel Girl directly addressing the reader and describing her powers. This is the first part of any X-Men comic written by a female writer. The back-up feature has an announcement from the editors:

> "Ye olde bullpen thought it'd be glitzy if, just for a change, this featurette on the mesmerizing Marvel Girl were written by a member of the supposedly weaker sex! So, make room for lovable Linda Fite, ex-Marvel staffer and X-Men fan supreme!" (16)

Fite's description of Marvel Girl follows the pattern of many previous displays of Marvel Girl's powers, using them to complete domestic tasks.

Oddly, one of the first things Marvel Girl tells the reader is "I'm not the domestic type" (17). But this back-up feature explaining who Marvel Girl is to readers has Marvel Girl display her powers by telekinetically picking an apple, peeling it, baking an apple pie, and doing housework such as dusting. Additionally, in a page in which she is showing how her powers can help fight villains, she mentions that she can "never turn down a date on the pretext that I'm all tied up" as she demonstrates pulling a pair of scissors out of a drawer to cut a rope she is bound with. While showing how she can use her powers in a fight Marvel Girl deflects a mace thrown at her, uses scissors to free herself when tied up, shows how she can

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unlock a door if "she ever finds herself prisoner," and lift herself over a wall. One example is defensive, while the rest involve escaping after capture, she does not show a single offensive use of her powers until near the end of the feature. In two of the final panels she incapacitates a man with her thoughts, a type of telepathy she does not use often in the actual comics at this time. She explains that Professor X trained her to "will a person to be defeated without ever using physical force" (20).

Jean Grey will become a more complex character in future issues, but in these first 66 issues she more often fulfills stereotypical roles as a damsel in distress, a domestic presence in a boy's club, a nurse, and a love interest rather than a fully fleshed-out character. While her costume change reflects the emergence of the cosmo-girl ideal in society, she remains a conservative and domestic figure in her personality and role on the team.

Scarlet Witch and Polaris Marvel Girl is clearly the most prominent female character in this period, while Scarlet Witch and Polaris are the next most prominent. Scarlet Witch, who was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and first appeared in *The X-Men #4* (Mar. 1964) has several similarities with Marvel Girl. Much like Marvel Girl, the Scarlet Witch is the lone female on a team with a masculine name. The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants is led by Magneto and consists of Toad, Mastermind, Quicksilver, and Scarlet Witch. The Scarlet Witch also must deal with forward men making advances. In the first scene we see Scarlet Witch in, Mastermind tells her "You are spunky, my little witch! I like that in a female! Someday I may even decide that you would be a worthy mate for Mastermind!" (85). Of course, the heroes are not much more reserved in their appraisals of Scarlet

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Witch. When Angel sees her in the course of battle he thinks to himself, "Wow! What a dish!! If she's an evil mutant I want an application" (96).

In another similarity with Marvel Girl, Scarlet Witch has an oddly generic name on a team whose other members have codenames closely related with their powers. Magneto can control magnetism, Toad has slightly grotesque features and leaps in a toad-like manner, Quicksilver can move super fast, and Mastermind can create illusions in other people's minds. Scarlet Witch generally creates bad luck. She causes accidents in ways she can't control. If she points at a person, water may spill on them, or the wall behind them may collapse. Her powers are erratic and generally uncontrollable. Marvel Girl is often shown as dependent on Professor X or Cyclops, while Scarlet Witch is completely dependent on her brother, Quicksilver. Quicksilver always comes to her aid when she is in trouble, and she frequently calls out to him.

Polaris, who first appears in *The X-Men #49* (Oct. 1968) is a very different character than Marvel Girl or Scarlet WitchAlthough she is immediately seen as a potential love interest by Iceman, she is not simply waiting for a man to show interest in her as Marvel Girl does. In *The X-Men #60* (Oct. 1969) Polaris has a conversation with Jean on the subject of a relationship with Iceman and says, "Bobby [Iceman] may be fun Jean, but I'm nobody's girl!" and she later tells Iceman explicitly that she is nobody's property.

Marvel Girl and Scarlet Witch, each created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1963, reflect the stereotypical domestic ideal of the 1950s and early 1960s. Their worth is determined by the men in their lives, their father figures, siblings, and love

interests. Polaris, who was created by Arnold Drake, Don Heck, and Werner Roth in 1968 is a more liberated woman, refusing to be defined by her father, Magneto, or the romantic advances by Iceman. Her personality is indicative of changes in the feminist movement. While Jean Grey has external shifts, her character remains the same.

Number Analysis

Having discussed some of the ways in which racial minorities and females were used in the series, a final analysis of their representation in various roles in the series will prove valuable. The following analysis will consider members of the X-Men, villains the team fought, and guest stars in the comic book. Guest stars will encapsulate two different types of roles. First, any established character in the Marvel Universe who makes an appearance in a non-villainous fashion. Occasionally, even characters who battle the X-Men will be identified as guest stars rather than villains. For example, when the Avengers appear in *The X-Men #10* and fight the X-Men it is because of a misunderstanding, not because the Avengers are villains, thus they are counted as guest stars. Additionally, characters who recur in the X-Men comics, but are not official members of the team are counted as guest stars. Individuals such as newscasters, members of the military who appear only in one issue, or members of a crowd that shout dialogue will not be counted as guest stars.

I will address the racial and ethnic makeup of the characters who appear in this period, their nationalities, and their genders. If a character is a demon, robot, alien, or other fictional group that does not conform to traditional ethnicities they will be categorized as a demon, robot or alien. In the course of the study there will

be human characters with no identifiable ethnicity, due to their mutations, which will be categorized as "Unknown." If a character from one of these fictional groups has a clearly identifiable country of origin, that will be used in terms of nationality. If a demon, robot, or alien has a clearly identifiable gender that will be used when categorizing gender.

Nine characters appear as members of the X-Men in these 66 issues. All nine are white. Beyond simply looking at the number of characters who appear this analysis will consider the number of appearances each character made. So, if for example, Iceman had an appearance in all 66 issues, even if only for a single panel in an issue, that would count as 66 appearances. In total, there are 375 appearances by members of the X-Men in these 66 issues, and all 375 appearances are by white characters.

The villains the X-Men fought were a slightly more diverse group, though fictional identifications such as aliens, demons, and robots played a larger role in diversifying the X-Men's enemies than minority representation. The X-Men fought 64 different villains in this period. Of these 42 (65.6%) were white, 7 (10.9%) were robots, 4 (6.3%) were Latino, 4 (6.3%) were aliens, 2 (3.1%) were Egyptian, 1 (1.6%) were Asian, 1 (1.6%) was Jewish, 1 (1.6%) was a demon, 1 (1.6%) was Irish, and 1 (1.6%) was a subterranean beings.

The numbers are slightly different when considering the number of appearances these villains had versus simply the number of villains. In total, there were 174 appearances by villains. Of these 122 (70.1%) were by white characters, 13 (7.5%) were by a Jewish character, 13 (7.5%) were robotic characters, 8 (4.6%)

were by alien characters, 7 (4.0%) were by Latino characters, 6 (3.4%) were by Egyptian characters, 2 (1.1%) were by a subterranean character, 1 (.6%) was by a demonic character, 1 (.6%) was by an Irish character, and 1 (.6%) was by an Asian character.

There were 23 guest stars in these issues, and of these 22 (95.7%) were white and 1 (4.3%) was Black. The lone non-white guest star was the Black Panther, the king of the fictional African nation of Wakanda in the Marvel universe. There were 51 appearances by guest stars, and 50 (98%) were by white characters, and 1 (2.0%) was by a Black character.

From these numbers it is clear that during this period the vast majority of characters were white, but the most diverse group was the villains the X-Men fought. The X-Men were 100% white and the guest stars 95.7% white, but the villains only 67.2% white. There were 96 total characters who appeared and 74 (77.1%) of them were white. In the first 66 issues there were 600 appearances by characters in *The X-Men* and 548 (91.3%) of them were by white characters.

In terms of gender representation the numbers skew heavily male. Marvel Girl appears in

Character	Appearances as X-Men	Percentage of issues
Professor X	41	62.1%
Cyclops	65	98.5%
Beast	66	100%
Angel	65	98.5%
Iceman	66	100%
Marvel Girl	65	98.5%
Mimic	3	4.5%
Polaris	2	3.0%
Havok	2	3.0%
Table 6: Number of appearances by members of the X-Men from 1963-70		

65 of 66 issues. Polaris appears in 9 issues (though only as a team member in two issues)[9]. Table 6 provides a breakdown of breakdown of the characters' appearances as members of the X-Men.

If we consider each issue a character appears in as one appearance and add up each characters' total number of appearances, team members appear for a cumulative total of 375 times in the first 66 issues of *The X-Men*. Of 375 appearances by members of the X-Men, 308 appearances represent male team members and 67 represent female team members. From 1965-70, 82.2% of the team member appearances in individual issues are male, while 17.8% are female. This number will shift dramatically in later periods as the team becomes much more balanced in terms of gender representation. Also, the number of strong female villains will increase dramatically.

In total, the X-Men battled 64 different villains in this period. Sixty-two (96.9%), were men, while two (3.1%) were women (Scarlet Witch, and a Savage Land "mutate" named Lorelei). There were 174 appearances by villains in these issues. 166 (95.4%) of those appearances were by men, while 8 (4.6%) were by women.

One potential reason for so few female villains is Stan Lee's belief that male villains were more popular. Even after he stopped writing the series, Lee was

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[9] It is not always clear who is an official member of the team in every issue of the series. Sometimes a member announces they are retiring, but never actually leave the team. Other times former members come back for an adventure but do not join the team. For these statistics, the list of "Feature Characters" in Marvel's *The Uncanny X-Men: The Official Index to the Marvel Universe* will be used.

Marvel's editor-in-chief, and had a significant say it what was published. Roy

Thomas explains:

> …drawing on myth and legend, I devised a beautiful female Irish mutant
>
> called Banshee. Stan, though, informed me that super-villains were more
>
> popular than super-villanesses, so I had to make the Banshee a male. I got a
>
> few letters decrying my ignorance of the sex of banshees, but I was still fairly
>
> proud of our creation, especially the catchy green costume Werner designed.
>
> Still, when Marvel introduced the Banshee's daughter Siryn year's later,
>
> wearing her dad's old costume, I sighed; that's what the Banshee should have
>
> looked like, from the start! (507)

The only two female supervillains to appear are members of teams that are

dominated in number and personality by men.

There were 23 guest stars in this period. Nineteen (82.6%) were men, four

(17.4%) were women. The guest stars made 51 total appearances. Thirty-seven

(72.5%) appearances were by men, while 14 (27.5%) were by women.

Totaling the total number of X-Men, villains, and guest stars in X-Men comics

from the 1960s reveals that there 94 distinct characters that appeared. Of these, 86

(91.5%) were men and eight (8.5%) were women. There were 600 appearances by

characters in these 66 issues. Of these, 511 (85.2%) were men and 89 (14.8%) were

by women.

Another very important aspect of the comic books are the covers. The cover

images are a key in marketing the books, and because of how comics are displayed

on newsstands and in stores more people see the cover of a comic book than read the content.

410 characters appear on the covers of *The X-Men* in the 1960s. Of these, 381 (92.9%) are white, 9 (2.2%) are Jewish, 8 (2.0%) are robots, 6 (1.5%) are alien, 2 (.5%) are Latino, 2 (.5%) are Egyptian, 1 (.2%) is Asian, and 1 (.2%), is from a subterranean race.

While Jean appears on a similar number of covers as the four other active members of the team in this time period, the way she is portrayed is vastly different than her teammates. An analysis of the cover images from this period reveals that Marvel Girl is portrayed as a passive member of the team. In the sixty-six issues published, Marvel Girl appears on 57, or 86.4% of the covers. This is basically in line with the other main characters of the series, so it is not as though she was underrepresented. Professor X appeared on 21.1% of the covers, Cyclops on 90.9%, Angel on 86.4%, Beast on 92.4%, and Iceman on 89.4%.

As is clear from the numbers provided above, for this stretch of X-Men comic books the entire team is featured more often than not on the covers. However, in 23 of the covers, Marvel Girl appears at the back of the group image of the team. This amounts to 34.8% of all the first 66 covers, or 40.4% of the covers Marvel Girl appears on. On 18 (7.1%) of the covers, all of the male members of the team are shown attacking a villain while Marvel Girl is passively in the background. Marvel Girl is never shown on the attack while the other members of the team are in danger.

In this period of *The X-Men*, the greatest proportion of characters are white and male. The females tend to be shown in passive or domestic roles and are the most likely team members to be captured or in need of rescue. The most diverse characters are the villains. While no minority characters are the feature heroes, Jews, Latinos, Egyptians, Irish, and Asians are shown as villains.

Chapter 4: 1975-1983: An International Team of…Mostly White Males

When the X-Men relaunched it was with a deliberate effort to diversify the team, which was a partial success. While the team became much more international, the members who are on the team for the majority of the issues are white males. The most significant exception to this is Storm, an African female who is one of the strongest female characters and one of the strongest minority characters to appear in the entire series.

The Relaunch and a Narrative Summary

Between 1970 and 1975 Marvel did not publish any new issues of *The X-Men*, but the characters did not completely disappear from the Marvel universe. The X-Men still guest-starred in other Marvel comics or appeared in an anthology titles such as *Marvel Team-Up*, which featured a rotating cast of Marvel characters. The X-Men comic book would be relaunched in 1975, first with a special issue *Giant-Size X-Men #1* and subsequently with a regular series, and gain in popularity through several years. Beginning in 1981 the mutant character Dazzler was featured in her own monthly comic book and in 1983 the *New Mutants*, a new monthly comic book following a new class of teenagers Xavier is training began to be published. These two series marked the first expansion of the X-Men franchise. The analysis in this chapter will consider the X-Men comic books published between May 1975 and February 1983. These include *Giant-Size X-Men #1*, *The X-Men #94-113* and *The Uncanny X-Men #114-166*.

In 1975, Marvel would begin to publish original adventures of mutant superheroes, though the process that ultimately resulted in *Giant-Size X-Men #1* had

little to do with the X-Men at all, it had to do with selling more comics internationally. In the early-to-mid-1970s the comic book industry was experiencing a decrease in overall sales. The domestic market was yielding fewer sales, and the president of Marvel, Arthur Landau, believed increasing foreign sales was the best way shore up Marvel's shrinking profits. Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs write of this period in the industry, when fans complained that quality seemed to be slipping as quickly as sales, explaining:

> No matter what genres or gimmicks were tried sales kept contracting and contracting[...] Comics needed a miracle and it didn't look like anyone in charge was capable of producing one. Marvel President Arthur Landau's idea of a money-making idea was this: create a team of international superheroes representing all the major foreign markets in which he could sell Marvel product. (205)

Roy Thomas, who had written 35 issues of *The X-Men* in its original run, was the editor-in-chief of Marvel when Landau proposed an international team of superheroes. Thomas suggested that they use the X-Men for the international team of heroes, keeping a couple of the original team members and introducing new mutants from foreign countries (DeFalco "Thomas" 33). The goal was to have the new characters represent markets where Marvel Comics already had a significant presence.

Eventually Len Wein and Dave Cockrum became the writer and artist in charge the new adventures of the X-Men. And while the team they put together was indeed international, Thomas says that "somehow or other, by the time Len [Wein]

was writing the book, the whole idea of having the new heroes be from countries where Marvel sold a lot of comics got lost" (DeFalco "Thomas" 34). The new members of the X-Men would include a Russian and a Kenyan, hardly markets where Marvel was selling lots of comics 1975.

This new team members were Nightcrawler (a German teleporter named Kurt Wagner), Storm (Ororo Munroe, a weather controller from Kenya), Colossus (the Russian Peter Rasputin who could turn his flesh to steel), Banshee (the Irishman Sean Cassidy who had a sonic scream), Warpath (John Proudstar, a Native American with super-strength), Sunfire (a fire-wielder from Japan named Shiro Yoshida), and Wolverine (the Canadian with claws and a healing factor known only as Logan). Not all of these characters would remain X-Men for long, but this relaunch firmly established the X-Men as a team that embraced international characters in a way that other Marvel superhero teams, such as the Avengers or the Fantastic Four, rarely have.

Joe Quesada, the current editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics has offered a different interpretation of the reasoning behind the X-Men's relaunch. Quesada's version relies less on the bottom line and more on thematic resonance:

> The plan was to create a team of characters that were not only diverse in their powers; their diversity would be compounded by their ethnicity, genders, political views and preferences within. A super-powered team that reflected the diversity of a world that was shrinking by the minute. A world whose future could be glorious if we all learned the lessons of tolerance and acceptance, or could end up as a black pit of despair if we let fear rule our

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lives. Needless to say, this struck a chord within all of us, and the X-Men were

reborn. (4)

There are several possible reasons Quesada's description of the relaunch varies so

much from the version described by Jones and Jacobs and confirmed by Thomas.

First, Quesada wrote his description in 2003, almost thirty years after the event.

While he is a prominent figure in the comic book industry today, his first published

work in the comic book industry, as an artist, was released in 1994. His

interpretation is most likely based as much on hindsight as anything else. And in

hindsight, what he described is what happened with the X-Men, even if it was not

originally intended when discussion of the project began. Additionally, as editor-in-

chief of Marvel Comics, when speaking publically he may be interested in recounting

a version of history that is driven by creative concerns more than business concerns.

While fans of popular culture know that money drives many decisions, the illusion

that less-mercenary concerns are behind the production of our entertainment is

often promoted by the entertainment industry.

Because Thomas was in the room where the meeting took place, it is far more

likely that the relaunch of the X-Men was a matter of convenience where a pre-

existing property, with all the trademark and copyright concerns that entailed, could

fulfill a business-driven mandate. But this may be one instance where purely

monetary concerns improved the quality and thematic resonance of a creative

project. One reason that the X-Men may have struggled so much to find an audience

in their initial issues could be that they lacked key elements of the prejudice

metaphor that the series addressed in storylines and dialogue. All of the original X-

Men were white, middle-to-upper-class Americans. This was a very WASP-ish group to be struggling against prejudice in a minority metaphor. Further complicating this particular group as representative of a racial metaphor is the fact that none of these mutants were in any way distinguishable from white Americans. While later mutants would often have distinctive features which would set them apart from all of humanity, such as fur, horns, or different skin pigmentation, the original X-Men could pass as non-mutants whenever they wished. Not only could the X-Men pass as non-mutants, they could pass as white humans, thus eliminating the institutionalized and social prejudices ethnic minorities faced.

A hypercorrection of this minority omission occurred when the new team was introduced in the 1975 relaunch of the X-Men title. There was not a single white American among the new members of the team, and many of the minority groups represented had been the subject of widespread prejudice in the United States, much of it institutionalized by the government. Germans were mistrusted after World War II and the well-publicized horrors of the Holocaust. Africans have a long history of suffering from prejudice in America beginning with the slave trade. The general feelings toward Russians during the Cold War were far from friendly, and having an Eastern European accent could lead to accusations of Communism. Anti-Irish sentiment was strongest in the mid-1800s in the United States when discrimination in the workplace included the posting of NINA signs in want ads (No Irish Need Apply). Native Americans have been mistreated within the United States since settlers first reached the country's shores, and the forced movement onto reservations is only one of a long list of grievances. During World War II the federal

Government forced Japanese Americans to live in internment camps because of mistrust.

The only exception to this trend of characters from groups who had suffered prejudice in America is Wolverine, the Canadian, but he was a pre-existing character, having already appeared in issues of *The Incredible Hulk*. Len Wein created Wolverine while writing *The Incredible Hulk*, and brought the character over to his new series. Wolverine does take on the role of the outsider on the team, and adopts cowboy imagery, such as a cowboy hat, and mannerisms. The cowboy is an iconic image of a lonesome societal outsider, and traditionally the cowboys in American pop culture are white men who have no racial or gender barrier to acculturation, but nonetheless function outside of society.

According to Thomas, one of the initial ideas for the relaunched X-Men title was to have "a couple of the original members, like Cyclops, […] go looking around the world gathering mutants from other countries" (DeFalco "Thomas" 33), but this idea did not come to fruition. Professor X and Cyclops remained on the team, while the rest of the original team chose not to remain, but the team did not travel to foreign countries searching for mutants. The only other mutants sought out by the team in this period are two American women, Alison Blaire and Katherine Pryde. Initially, Professor X serves as the leader of the team with Cyclops as the battle leader. If anything the team's travel is more intergalactic than international in this period, with numerous adventures taking them to outer space, the moon, and to other galaxies.

After *Giant-Size X-Men #1* the new adventures of the team resumed in a bi-

monthly title with *The X-Men #94* (Aug. 1975). Chris Claremont, who was Len Wein's

assistant, was given the job of writing the title when Wein decided his schedule was

too busy to continue with the series.

Roy Thomas stepped down as

editor-in-chief and Wein was

promoted to the position, which

limited the number of titles he could

write. Claremont would write the

Writer (co-plotter)	Issues
Dave Cockrum	*Giant Size X-Men #1*
Chris Claremont	#94-166
Bill Mantlo (co-plotter)	#106
John Byrne (co-plotter)	#108-9, #111-143
Table 7: Writers and co-plotters of *The X-Men* from 1975-1983	

title for the next sixteen years, writing what are considered some of the most iconic

X-Men stories. During this period, Claremont wrote every script, though Bill Mantlo

was given

credit for co-plotting one issue, and

John Byrne is credited with co-

plotting 34 issues, as shown in Table

7. Artists who worked on the title in

this period included Dave Cockrum,

Bob Brown, John Byrne, Tony

DeZuniga, Bob McCloud, Bill

Sienkiewicz, Brent Anderson,

Artist	Issues
Dave Cockrum	*Giant-Size X-Men #1*, #94-107, #145-51, #153-8, #161-4
Bob Brown	#106
John Byrne	#108-9, #111-143
Tony Dezunga	#110
Brent Anderson	#144, #160
Bob McLeod	#152
Bill Sienkiewicz	#159
Paul Smith	#165-6
Table 8: Artists who worked on *The X-Men from 1975-1983*	

and Paul Smith. Occasionally two artists worked on the same issues, which is

reflected in Table 8 when the same issue is credited to two artists. When Byrne was

brought on as artist the title became monthly, rather than bi-monthly.

For the majority of the issues in this run the team consists of Professor X, Cyclops, Storm, Colossus, Nightcrawler, and Wolverine. Other character who serve on the team for multiple issues include Banshee, Sunfire, Thunderbird, Marvel Girl (or Phoenix, after a change in codename), Havok, Polaris, Angel, and Sprite (Kitty Pryde, who will have several codenames before settling on Shadowcat). Beast and Iceman make occasional guest appearances, as do other heroes from the Marvel universe, but not as official members of the team.

Giant-Size X-Men #1 (1975) begins with Professor X travelling the world to recruit mutants to help rescue the original team of X-Men. This portion of the story reflects Thomas's original vision for a globetrotting version of the X-Men, as Professor X visits Germany, Canada, Kenya, Japan, Siberia, and an Indian Reservation in Arizona to recruit the new X-Men. It is revealed that the original team, including Havok and Polaris, were all captured on an island, and only Cyclops escaped. Cyclops leads the new team and rescues the captured X-Men. Sunfire declines an offer to join the team and the original X-Men, save for Cyclops, all decide to retire as X-Men and go lead their own lives. Havok and Polaris also leave, so the new X-Men consist of Professor X, Cyclops, Storm, Banshee, Thunderbird, Colossus, Nightcrawler, and Wolverine.

This team line-up is short-lived, however, as Thunderbird dies on their first mission while battling Count Nefaria. Moira MacTaggert, a former lover of Xavier's, is introduced as the team's doctor and housekeeper. The new team soon faces demons, an alien threat, and a new version of the mutant-hunting robots called the sentinels. Marvel Girl rejoins the team during the battle with sentinels, which takes

them to outer space. While returning to Earth the damaged space shuttle must pass

through a solar flare full of radiation. Knowing that nobody can survive the radiation

from the hangar of the shuttle, Marvel Girl locks the rest of the team in a radiation

proof hold to pilot the shuttle herself. She hopes to use her telekinesis to shield

herself from as much radiation as possible, but accepts that she will die saving the

others. After the shuttle crashes into a bay the team reaches shore and mourns Jean

Grey, when she suddenly rises out of the water in a new costume proclaiming

herself to be Phoenix. Phoenix then collapses, but will eventually make a full

recovery.

While Jean recovers, Professor X is receiving psychic contact with an alien

empress, Lilandra, who requests the X-Men's help in defending her empire. The

team also visits Ireland, where Banshee has inherited a castle (where, of course,

leprechauns live). Banshee's cousin, Black Tom Cassidy, and the Juggernaut have set

a trap for the X-Men. After defeating the villains the X-Men return home and are

caught up in the intergalactic battle about which Lilandra contacted Professor X.

Lilandra's brother, D'Ken has dethroned her and taken the title of Emperor of the

Shi'ar.

The X-Men are transported to another galaxy and battle The Imperial Guard,

a group of superpowered aliens loyal to whoever is Emperor of the Shi'ar.

Eventually the X-Men restore Lilandra to her throne and she is again the Empress of

the Shi'ar empire. In this adventure they meet The Starjammers, a group of rogue

intergalactic pirates who are led by Corsair. In a soap-opera-style twist, Corsair is

Cyclops's father, who was kidnapped from Earth when Cyclops and Havok were

small children. Corsair recognizes Cyclops, but does not reveal that he is his father. This outer-space storyline was referred to as "The Phoenix Saga" as Jean Grey played a key role, displaying previously unrevealed levels of power to save the universe.

After a few minor threats the X-Men face Magneto (who since they last battled had been turned into an infant, then re-aged to a young adult). Magneto captures the X-Men, as well as Beast, and takes them to his base in an Antarctic volcano. When attempting to escape the volcano begins to erupt and Beast and Phoenix are separated from the rest of the X-Men. Beast and Phoenix escape to the Antarctic surface, while the rest of the team discover a tunnel leading to the Savage Land, the prehistoric jungle world hidden in the heart of the Antarctic. Each group believes the other perished in the eruption.

Phoenix and Beast return home tell Professor X the X-Men died. A grieving Professor X accepts Lilandra's offer to visit her empire, and the two are soon in love. Meanwhile, when leaving the Savage Land the other X-Men are picked up by a ship bound for Japan. In Japan the X-Men help Sunfire defeat Moses Magnum, a villain who had been threatening to sink the island nation unless declared Emperor. In the battle, Banshee is injured and his vocal cords damaged preventing him from using his powers. Elsewhere, Phoenix visits Moira MacTaggert in Scotland where she has a compound to study mutants. Dr. MacTaggert test Phoenix's powers and realizes they are more powerful than ever before and still increasing.

The X-Men return to North America, but their plane is diverted to Canada where they are attacked by the Canadian superhero team Alpha Flight, who wish to

bring Wolverine into custody for abandoning his work with the Canadian government when he joined the X-Men. Wolverine agrees to accompany Alpha Flight, but shortly escapes and rejoins the X-Men. The X-Men return home, defeat the villain Arcade who trapped the heroes in his death-themed amusement park, and then learn that Phoenix is alive and on Muir Island. Once on Muir Island the X-Men must defeat and kill Proteus, Moira MacTaggert's son whose mutant powers to warp reality are out of control and have driven him insane.

When the X-Men return to New York their computer, Cerebro, has detected two new mutants. Professor X, who has returned from outer space, splits the team into two to contact each mutant. Unbeknownst the X-Men, a villainous group of mutants called The Hellfire Club is also interested in contacting the two new mutants. Mastermind, a former member of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants is part of the Hellfire Club and manipulates Phoenix, giving her false visions of a past life in 18th century America. In a storyline called The Dark Phoenix Saga the X-Men battle the Hellfire Club, but Mastermind's illusions unsettle Phoenix. This coupled with her expanding powers, drives her insane. She joins the Hellfire Club briefly, as their Black Queen (the inner circle of the Hellfire Club all had titles based on chess pieces, the most powerful being the Black King and Queen and the White King and Queen).

Phoenix breaks free of Mastermind's illusions and drives him mad by forcing his mind to comprehend the immensity of the universeAlthough free of Mastermind's illusions, Jean Grey is still unstable. As the X-Men flee Phoenix's dark side bursts forth, complete with a darker themed costume. Dark Phoenix flies into outer space and travels to another galaxy, home of the Shi'ar Empire. There,

hungered because of her travels she consumes the sun of a solar system which had an inhabited planet, killing billions of the alien D'Bari. Dark Phoenix battles Shi'ar spaceships and then returns home. On Earth Jean Grey battles the Dark Phoenix force, recognizing that when she gained her Phoenix powers an alien entity entered her mind. Professor X helps Jean to lock away the Phoenix force in her subconscious, and Cyclops proposes to Jean but the X-Men are immediately transported away by the Shi'ar. Lilandra orders Jean Grey to be executed for the crimes committed by the Dark Phoenix, and the X-Men battle to save her. In the end, Jean Grey fearing she would some day lose control of herself again sacrifices herself, ending the battle between the X-Men and the Shi'ar Imperial Guard. Following these events Cyclops takes a leave of absence from the X-Men. Angel rejoins the team and Kitty Pryde, one of the two mutants the X-Men detected before battling the Hellfire Club, comes to the X-Men for training. She has the ability to become immaterial and pass through solid objects.

. A storyline called "Days of Future Past" begins several decades in the future with an adult Kitty Pryde avoiding Sentinels in a dystopic future. The surviving members of the X-Men use psychic powers to send her adult mind back through time to her teenage body to help the X-Men prevent this future in which mutants are hunted down and either killed or put in concentration camps. In the present day Kitty reveals that a newly formed Brotherhood of Evil Mutants will assassinate Senator Kelly, who is running for President on an anti-mutant platform. The X-Men save Senator Kelly, and Kitty Pryde's adult mind returns to her time period.

In subsequent issues Kitty Pryde single-handedly defeats a demon and eventually adopts the codename Sprite, Scott Summers is hired on as hand on a boat captained by a woman named Lee Forrester, and the X-Men defeat Dr. Doom and Arcade, who had teamed up. Cyclops and Lee end up on a deserted island in the Bermuda Triangle, but discover that it is Magneto's new base. Magneto threatens to destroy the world unless all nations recognize him as their leader, and the X-Men attack him at his new base. In the course of battle Magneto nearly kills Sprite, but then realizes she is only a child (14-years-old), and sees that his hatred of humanity has made him into a monster. He abandons his base leaving behind the X-Men whom he had nearly defeated.

Cyclops's father returns to Earth to recruit the X-Men's help. A terrorist faction has kidnapped Lilandra and left clues leading the Shi'ar Empire to suspect Earth was responsible. The Shi'ar Empire will shortly attack Earth if Lilandra is not recovered. Cyclops learns that Corsair is his father in this meeting. The X-Men return to outer space and battle the Shi'ar and a new alien species, the reptilian Brood (who bear more than a passing resemblance and modus operandi to the aliens in James Cameron's *Alien* films). They rescue Lilandra, and peace is reestablished with the Shi'ar. The X-Men return to Earth, where Storm is bitten by Dracula, but eventually is freed from his powers.. The final storyline of this era has the X-Men returning to outer space and battling the alien Brood. It is discovered that the Brood implanted several of the X-Men with eggs which will kill the X-Men when hatched. In the end the X-Men kill the eggs, but are warned that on Earth Professor X is also carrying an egg of a Brood queen.

What will follow is a brief description of each new member of the X-Men. The basic personalities and characteristics will be analyzed. Subsequently, there will be a close reading of a few storylines with significant themes concerning racial intolerance or gender roles.

Characters

Nightcrawler

Nightcrawler is the first character on the X-Men who is obviously and unavoidably a mutant. In this new group of X-Men, the majority of characters look like normal humans when not using their powers. Nightcrawler can never look normal, at least not until he is provided with an "image inducer" which allows him to project a hologram giving him the appearance of a normal human.

While most mutants have their powers develop with the onset of puberty, Kurt Wagner was born with blue fur, yellow eyes, a tail, fangs, and only three fingers and three toes. His mutant powers, besides his appearance, are to teleport short distances and to disappear when in shadows.

Nightcrawler's appearances is often described as demonic. Claremont explains that

Brief description of each new member of the X-Men.

> The original concept of [Nightcrawler] was that he was an angry, bitter, tormented, soul. You know, "I'm trapped in the body of a monster." Well, Dave [Cockrum] and I both felt we'd seen that movie before. It's exactly what a reader would expect seeing someone who is blue and furry, has two toes, two fingers, fangs and a tail. But what if he wasn't? What if he turns out to be the most rational person on the team. What if, more than that, he turns out to

be the most traditionally religious person on the team. Why isn't he bothered

by the way he looks? Because "I am a child of God, and if God made me look

like this it is serving a purpose. But to complain about how I look is to say

that God made a mistake. Does God make mistakes? I don't think so because

I don't think I'm a wrong person. I'm a good person. I try to live my life

according to the precepts of the Lord." This is Nightcrawler's way of looking

at things and from that perspective, what's the problem?   And once you cross

that line and say, "It's not my problem. It's how you choose to look at me, not

how I am. This is who I am. Accept it or not, but it's not my fault." That gives

you, as a writer, a tremendous amount of freedom to comment on how

people perceive other people and […] to have a little fun along the way.

(Claremont interview)

As a mutant who cannot pass for a normal human, Nightcawler introduces a new

dimension to the series. A mutant who is identified at sight allows the mutant

metaphor to be more closely aligned with a racial metaphor.

Nightcrawler's use of the hologram technology to pass for a normal human is

an interesting aspect of the character. In the narrative universe the X-Men reside in,

the existence of mutants, aliens, and superpowered beings is common knowledge.

Being startled by Nightcrawler's demonic appearance would be a natural reaction,

but other monstrous-looking characters are on teams which are accepted and loved

by the normal humans of the Marvel universe. For example, the Thing of the

Fantastic Four has an orange, rock-like, or Tigra on the Avengers who has fur and

cat-like features. The general public is willing to overlook the non-human

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appearance of other heroes in the Marvel Universe, so the use of the image-tranducer marks a lack of willingness by Nightcrawler to accept his own minority identity.

Nightcrawler's German heritage is most clearly shown through his use of German words. When surprised or excited, Nightcrawler is likely to exclaim in his native tongue. This is a trait, under Claremont, that most foreign characters on the X-Men share. For many of the characters, the use of their native tongue is the defining representation of their ethnicity. It should be noted that the use of foreign words is not always correct. For example, Nightcrawler often calls Kitty Pryde "liebchen," a term of endearment or care in German, but it is sometimes printed "leibchen" which means "undergarment" or "bodice."

Banshee

Sean Cassidy originally appeared as a villain in the 1960's X-Men comic books, but reformed in that period as well. He has a sonic scream, and he can ride the soundwaves his scream produces so that he flies. He, like Sunfire and Wolverine, was a pre-existing character brought in during the relaunch of the X-Men comic book. Banshee embodies many stereotypes of the Irish. He has red hair, dresses in green, speaks with a thick brogue (depicted in comic books through expressions such as calling everyone "lad," using "yer" and "ye" in lieu of "your" and "you, or saying things such as "a foine broth of a boy"). Banshee inherits an Irish castle which is infested with leprechauns, and his powers and name are derived from an Irish myth.

There is difficult balance between recognizing a character's ethnicity and embracing stereotypes. One problem for Banshee is that for much of this run his defining characteristics are entirely those Irish stereotypes. Initially there is not much more to the character.

Banshee does become more interesting when, in the course of battle his vocal chords are damaged and he is unable to use his mutant power for a time. His budding relationship with Moira MacTaggert and the family dynamics which develop when he learns he has a daughter add depth to a character who for a time was a caricature of Irish culture.

Storm

Ororo Munro has become one of the most recognizable and iconic of the X-Men. She has appeared in most adaptations of the X-Men and appears as a member of the team more than any character other than Wolverine. Importantly, she assumes the role of field leader for the X-Men when Cyclops departs, making her the first Black team leader in Marvel comic books.

Storm, who has the power to control weather, is first introduced being worshipped by a group of indigenous Kenyans as a Goddess. Storm does not know she is a mutant and accepts her role as a goddess until Professor Xavier comes and explains to her a reality which replaces her traditional beliefs. This aspect of the story is uncomfortably close to classic imperialism, depicting the natives as an ignorant and naïve group with no conception of the modern world. Rather than the scientific explanation of Storm's powers which exists in the narrative universe, the

African tribe embraces a superstitious one. A white man must come in and teach

Storm about the world and her place in it.

Storm undergoes many changes in her character but in this period she

mostly functions as an extremely confident team leader. She is often sexualized,

frequently appearing topless with only her hair or wind lines obscuring her nipples.

Claremont argues that this is to honor her African heritage, which has different sets

of modesty, but it also was likely used to entice adolescent male readers. Unlike

Nightcrawler, Banshee, and Colossus, Storm's dialogue is not written with a heavy

accent. If anything, she speaks with a heightened formality, perhaps reflective of her

status as a goddess when she was recruited into the X-Men.

While Storm is the lone female character in the new members of the X-Men,

she is far from the at-times token presence Marvel Girl had in the original run of the

series. She does not pine for any members of the team, and though several team

members flirt with her, she is not the object of affection Marvel Girl was. Also, while

the only Black character on the team, she avoids many stereotypes that were

common for Black comic book characters at the time. Mike Madrid notes:

> Ororo was codenamed Storm, one of the first heroines to bear a modern *nam*
>
> *de gurre* that didn't use "girl," "woman," or "lady. […] Tall, Stately and
>
> elegant, with mane of long white hair, angular exotic features, and blue eyes,
>
> Storm eschewed the blaxpoitation aesthetic of the times by foregoing hot
>
> pants and giant afros. (170)

Madrid goes on to argue that she was not overly sexualized, but her body-baring costume and penchant for disrobing do invite the reader to objectify her body and ignore the more progressive aspects of her character.

Sunfire

Shiro Yoshida can fly and generate and control a hot flame-like plasma. Unlike many of the new characters introduced, Sunfire immediately has a personality that goes beyond cultural stereotypes, though it is not a particularly pleasant or flattering personality. Sunfire is shown to be prideful, angry towards the other members of the team, and, more defensibly, fiercely loyal to his homeland. He had appeared in the first run of X-Men stories as a villain, but is recruited by Professor X to rescue the original team. He served for this one mission, but then quit the X-Men.

When the X-Men found themselves in Japan on a later adventure he refused their help until the emperor ordered him to accept their aid. His loyalty is strictly to his emperor and country, not to mutantkind or Professor Xavier's dream. Sunfire's frequent references to his empire and his emperor harkens back to the stereotypical fear of the "yellow peril" that was common in American popular culture in the early twentieth century.

Colossus

Piotr Nikolaievitch Rasputin, who often simply goes by Peter, has the power to turn his body into "organic steel" which makes him almost impervious to harm and also grants him super strength. When Professor Xavier recruits Colossus, he is

working on a Communist collective farm. Piotr is sometimes described in the comic books as a simple Russian farmboy.

Colossus, and his family, fit several Russian stereotypes which are commonly seen in popular culture. The workers on the farm are all dressed like poor peasants. Colossus, in his powers and personality, is a stoic, strong man. Russian men have often been portrayed as quiet, hard men, with the implication that they have been made so by the Russian winter. Other examples of this type of character include Ivan Drago from *Rocky IV* or, more recently, Mikhail from the television show *Lost*. Much like Nightcrawler, Colossus frequently makes exclamations in his native tongue which are not translated for American readers.

Thunderbird

John Proudstar was one of the first Native Americans to be featured as a superhero. An Apache, Proudstar is depicted as an angry man, bitter not only because of the unjust treatment his people had received at the hands of colonizing Europeans, but because he perceived the current leadership of his tribe to be complacent and lazy. He has super speed and strength and heightened sight, hearing, and smell. When readers are first introduced to the character he is hunting a bison by running alongside it as it gallops at full speed then he grabs it by the horns and kills it by throwing it into the ground.

When approached by Professor X, Proudstar refers to him as "cripple" and "white-eyes" and says that it's too bad "the white man" needs his help. He is easily manipulated by Professor X, who gets Proudstar to help him by simply saying "I

offer you a chance to help the world and you turn your back on me? Then perhaps what they say is true. Perhaps the Apache are all frightened selfish children" (??).

Thunderbird's costume includes a headband with feathers stuck in it, which was not commonly worn by Apaches. Feathered war bonnets were worn by the Sioux, Crow, Blackfeet, and other tribes from the Great Plains region. Thunderbird's costume also has a large fringe around the armbands. Apache men would wear buckskin shirts with fringes on the shoulders, so this aspect of the costume does reflect Thunderbird's tribal heritage, whereas the feathers seem to reflect a general stereotype about Native American apparel.

In *X-Men # 94*, Thunderbird's third appearance ever, the team is battling Count Nefaria when the villain is escaping on a jet. Thunderbird leaps onto the jet as it takes off and clings to it as it flies away. Banshee, who can fly, travels alongside the plane as Thunderbird smashes tears at the jet's fuselage and engine. Banshee tells Thunderbird to jump off the plane so that he can carry him to safety, but Thunderbird continues his attack until the jet explodes, killing both Count Nefaria and himself.

Thunderbird is the first death in the X-Men comic books series. And while many other characters since have died, and almost as many have been resurrected, Thunderbird has remained deceased. Count Nefaria, however, was revealed to have only been injured in the explosion and has since returned as a recurring villain of Iron Man and the Avengers.

An upset fan wrote in to Marvel to complain about the short time Thunderbird was featured as a member of the X-Men and the fact that he was killed.

Tom Runningmouth's letter was published in *The X-Men #97* (Feb. 1976). He

comments on Thunderbird being "oppressed," likely a reference to Cyclops yelling at

Thunderbird and telling him to follow orders and be a team player. The letter reads:

> After reading GIANT-SIZE X-MEN #1 I was proud to see one of my people, an
>
> American Indian –America's First Citizens—become a member. But to my
>
> dissatisfaction, in X-MEN #94 you started to oppress him. The story and art
>
> were good, but I was angry to see Thunderbird treated harshly. But the
>
> clincher was in X-MEN #95. You killed him. Why was he chosen? Why
>
> Thunderbird? (125)

The published response reads:

> A serious question, Tom; and one which deserves a serious answer. […]
>
> Why Thunderbird? Because he was the weakest potential character in the X-
>
> Men. He had no powers which weren't duplicated by other members of the
>
> team—by Colossus, or Nightcrawler, or Wolverine—and, harsh as it sounds,
>
> duplicated better. But worst off all, his character—as a character---had
>
> nowhere to go. All he was, all he really ever could be, was a wise-cracking,
>
> younger, not-as-interesting copy of Hawkeye the Marksman in the Avengers
>
> […] Proudstar deserved a better deal than that, and he could never get it,
>
> which is why he had to die. Because, when you think about it, it was better
>
> that he die with honor rather than spend the rest of his comic-book life trying
>
> to force himself into a person he wasn't. We're sorry Thunderbird had to die
>
> too, Tom, but we also think it was for the best. (125)

To be blunt, many parts of this explanation make very little sense. Certainly the writer may have felt that Thunderbird was the weakest potential character, and Wein and Claremont's opinions as writers were what led to the story of Thunderbird's death. And his powers were similar to Colossus, who has super strength, and Wolverine, who has heightened senses. But there are no similarities with Nightcrawler's powers, so it is odd that Nightcrawler was included in the list of characters Thunderbird too closely resembled. The comparison to Hawkeye, a member of the Avengers, another popular super hero team comic book published by Marvel, makes little sense. Hawkeye is a white expert archer who has no superpowers. He often fights with his teammates, which is similar to how Thunderbird is shown in his three appearances, but that is the extent of their similarities.

Also, to imply that there was nothing the writers could do other than kill the character is disingenuous at best. The writers and editors can do whatever they wish with the characters. There are myriad examples of characters undergoing radical personality changes, some with narrative impetus, some without. The writers were under no obligation to prevent Thunderbird from evolving as a character. Whatever the reason chosen to kill Thunderbird, be it to show the heightened stakes the team no operated under or because the Claremont wasn't a fan of the character, the idea that "it was better" that a fictional character who had been published in only three comic books "die with honor rather than spend the rest of his comic-book life trying to force himself into a person he wasn't" rings false.

Wolverine

In terms of popularity in comic books and media adaptations, Wolverine has by far been the most successful character added to the X-Men's roster. He has headlined several monthly comic books, many mini-series, and appeared on several other teams in addition to the X-Men. He has also had a feature film made about the character and has been the focus character of several films and cartoon series adaptations of the X-Men. He appears in more issues of *The Uncanny X-Men* than any other member of the team.

Wolverine, who simply uses the name Logan for his real identity, is a short, muscular Canadian mutant. He has enhanced senses and a healing factor which quickly heals any wounds. He also has three claws which can extend from each handAlthough not one of his mutant powers, Wolverine's skeleton has been coated with a nearly indestructible fictional metal called Adamantium.

Wolverine is something of an outsider on the team, often butting heads with the team leader and preferring to do battle his own way. He is, at this point, one of the only X-Men who is willing to kill in battle. Interestingly, Logan adopts many of the classic markers of the cowboy. When not in costume he often wears a cowboy hat and western themed bolos and belt buckles. In the other comic book titles Logan will appear in he is often shown as a lonely figure riding into a sunset on a motorcycle, a modern version of the cowboy's horse.

Even on the team of societal outsiders, Logan is an outsider. His adoption of the cowboy persona has little to do with his heritage, but may be one reason for his popularity. The cowboy is one of the most significant and enduring figures in American popular culture, and Wolverine is a superhero version of this classic

figure. For the good of the greater society he does the job others aren't willing to do, even though he never truly fits into that society.

Kitty Pryde

Beginning with *The Uncanny X-Men #139*, Kitty Pryde becomes an official member of the X-Men. She was introduced in *The Uncanny X-Men #129* as a 13-year-old girl who is very intelligent, especially with computers. She has the ability to "phase," or pass through solid objects. She was much younger then the other members of the X-Men when she joined the team, but quickly developed a crush on Colossus, which would be reciprocatedAlthough his age is not made clear at the time, it is implied he was almost twenty. She will use several codenames on the team, including Sprite and Ariel before she settles on Shadowcat.

It is very clear that Claremont and Byrne wanted Pryde to be a strong female character in the mold of Ripley from *Alien*. In fact, one of her stories lifts very heavily from *Alien*. Kitty is alone in the X-Mansion when a demon attacks. With no training in fighting, Kitty lures the demon to the hangar where the X-Men's jet is stored. She kills the demon by burning it with the afterburners of the jet. Byrne has said:

> We wanted to do an homage to the movie *Alien*, and I don't know whether I was demented r what in those days, but I honestly thought when I was drawing it that people wouldn't instantly realize where we got it from. I thought I was being really clever, how I was making little twists and turns to change it. Only the ending where she used the Blackbird [jet] to blast the N'Garai to death was the same. And then Chris kind of wrote [the script] even

more like the movie. By the time I actually read it, it was like, "Oh well, wait

till the lawsuits come…" But they never did (DeFalco "Byrne" 113).

Whatever else was lifted from *Alien*, the strong independent portrayal of a female

lead certainly is reflected in Kitty Pryde.

Unlike many female characters in comic books, Pryde is drawn to resemble a

very young teenage girl. Much like Marvel Girl in the 1960s, Pryde is drawn with a

very modest costume and with a body type that does not accentuate her breasts or

butt. At least one reader took note of this portrayal of Kitty Pryde. Julie St.

Germaine's letter was published in *The X0Men #136* (Aug. 1980) and read, in part:

> I'm even more thrilled about Kitty Pryde, however. She's young, unsure of
>
> how to handle her power, and most amazing of all: she's not pretty! I like
>
> that skinny, flat-chested kid. I like her suburban corniness and her
>
> resourcefulness […] One request: please don't call her "Cute Kitty Pryde"
>
> again—her lack of beauty is good; don't ruin it by giving her the cutes.

Kitty Pryde is one of the few female characters that has, in almost every iteration,

worn a costume that was not overtly revealing and consistently been drawn without

an overly exaggerated body type.

Race and Ethnicity

The first page of story in *Giant-Size X-Men #1* (1975) makes it clear that

prejudice will be a very important theme for the series. The scene opens with an

establishing shot of Wintzeldorf, Germany, then shows a mob with torches, with one

villager calling out "This way, men! The monster went this way!" The next panel

reveals Nightcrawler, a creature with blue skin, yellow large eyes with no pupils,

three large fingers and toes, a pointed tail, and pointy ears. His thoughts condemn

the villagers actions, "Monster is it? The fools! It is they who are monsters – with

their mindless prejudice!" (12) The townspeople risk burning their entire city to

capture Nightcrawler, and when they do they hold him down prepared to drive a

stake into his heart, but suddenly everyone but Nightcrawler becomes frozen in

place. Professor X has used his psychic powers to stop their minds. Professor X

invites Nightcrawler, whose name is Kurt Warner, to come to his school. Kurt asks,

"Can you help me to be normal?" to which Professor X replies, "After tonight's

misfortune, would you truly want to be?" Kurt's reply signals an early acceptance of

his mutant nature, "Perhaps not. I want only to be a whole Kurt Wagner! If you can

make me that, teacher…I will go with you." (14).

The gathering of a new team of X-Men ushered in a new era of much greater

diversity. But how was this diversity used in the comic book?   Chris Claremont,

who has had the most significant role in producing the X-Men adventures for the

longest tenure of any creator, explains that:

> The intent when Roy Thomas and Len Wein and Dave Cockrum got together
>
> in '74 to relaunch the series […was to] restructure things with a new group of
>
> characters and a more varied and international team. [A team that was]
>
> broader in terms of visual presentation, in terms of racial presentation, in
>
> terms of gender presentation. It would not be five upper-middle class white
>
> kids. It would be a mix of ethnographic and regional characters from around
>
> the world.

Nonetheless, simply having a diverse cast, though a welcome change form the status quo of superhero comics, did not ensure progressive portrayals of minorities. At times, old stereotypes were employed to reveal a character's culture. But more often, progression was seen compared to how minorities were being portrayed in popular entertainment. Certainly the mere presence of a diverse cast of characters in heroic roles was significant for the comic book industry which had spent much too long publishing the adventures of white men.

X-Men writer Fabian Nicieza explained that, in his mind, having a diverse cast is important not to be to be socially relevant or representative of every minority, but to tell the best stories. "Personally, I think such diversity is very important, but not for PC-related reasons, just the opposite, actually, because diversity creates greater opportunities for differences of opinion, background, life experiences, which helps generate more conflict which is the foundation for good drama" (Nicieza). Similarly, Chris Claremont explains that "You take each character as they are, you shuffle them together, you see what works for them [...] and also gives the other characters to react to, to relate to, to deal with. At that point you're off and running to building a story or building and resolving a conflict" (Claremont)

But when exploring a character's background, it can be difficult to balance honoring a cultural tradition and using stereotypes as a shorthand explanation of the character's motivations. When Nicieza was asked if there was a balance between representing a culture and using stereotypes, he replied:

> Of course there is, but the writer is rarely the one who knows when he or she has crossed that line. Usually, the reader will be sure to tell you. [Not to be]

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flip about it, but sometimes [...] stereotypes exists for a reason, because it is a

prevalent or consistent behavior of a particular group. For me, often, the real

fine line is actually using a stereotype but not making it stereotypical. A

recent example, which actually wasn't even for comic book work I'm doing,

but for a virtual world start-up I'm involved with, we created several

characters and the person doing our focus-testing research said that having

an African-American female athlete with a single mother and no father in her

life was a stereotype. Before I could even say a word, the artist I'm working

with asked, "Are you saying there are no single African-American mothers

raising children with no father in sight?" I figure, now I can sit back and

watch, considering the artist in question *is* African-American. She tried to

explain that, "Of course there are, but depicting them that way is

stereotypical." We had a nice discussion about what the differences are

between stereotypical depictions and stereotypes which helped clarify

everyone's' thoughts on the subject in a positive way. (Nicieza)

Claremont also addressed this concern, expressing his belief that "Ideally you avoid

stereotyping the character by dealing with each person as an individual. What

makes them who they are" (Claremont). Some of that may be elements of their

culture which some may interpret as stereotypical, but there must be more to the

character than simply those elements.

One interesting aspect of the group dynamic is that initially the new

members of the team do not get along, and much of their problems have to do with

their own prejudicesAlthough they seem united against the prejudice they

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experience from normal humans, they use pejorative terms based on nationalities. Thunderbird, an Apache Indian, calls Professor X "white eyes" when he first meets him and when Professor X asks for help he replies, "The white man needs me? That's tough! I owe him nothing but the grief he's given my people!" (23). Cyclops refers to Thunderbird as "Geronimo" (30), Thunderbird calls Sunfire "the Jap!" (30). Banshee is referred to as "Irish" by Wolverine (35) and as "Shamrock" by Thunderbird (55).

Claremont wanted to included flawed individuals who find a way to struggle through life in an adopted family. These early prejudices are part of the rough edges which the characters had but which are softened through their bonding. Claremont has said that

> "..at it's core [*The X-Men* is] a book about outcasts, people who are so screwed over in their lives that they have no family but the one that they built for themselves. It's a quest for family. It's a quest for a place to belong, a place where you are welcome among people who believe deep down inside that they would never be welcomed anywhere else. To me, *The X-Men* works best when it says to the reader "You are welcome here. We are your guides. You're an outcast, we're outcasts—Let's bond!"

Because of this perspective, the prejudice the mutants face in the Marvel universe becomes much more prevalent under Claremont's writing than what was previously seen. The X-Men develop an us-versus-them mentality which is forged through constant displays that "they" want nothing to do with mutants.

For example, the *X-Men #94* (Aug.1975), the first of the new stories in the regular X-Men title following years of reprints, has a storyline that is an homage to *The X-Men #1* (Sep. 1963). The team must protect a military base that has been taken over by a villain bent on world domination. In *The X-Men #1*, the villain is Magneto, in *X-Men #93* it is Count Nefaria and his Ani-men. One notable difference between the two stories, however, highlights greater prevalence of anti-mutant prejudice which will be a hallmark of Claremont's tenure as writer. In the 1963 story, the military leader thanks the X-Men for their service and promises that "Before this day is over the X-Men will be the most honored name in my command!" (31). In *X-Men #94* (Aug. 1975) the military commander hopefully asks if the Avengers have arrived when the X-Men's jet flies to the army base. When Cyclops identifies the team as the X-Men the general responds, "Figures, I mighta known you muties'd show up with Nefaria around" (62). Whereas the earlier issue featured a military leader who was an unprejudiced nondiscriminatory, to use Robert Merton's system, in this issue the military is led by a prejudiced nondiscriminatory. Soon the X-Men will regularly encounter prejudiced discriminators.

Gender

The two main female characters on the team during this time are Jean Grey, who changes her codename to Phoenix in *The X-Men #101* (Oct. 1976), and Storm, who appears in every issue during this period. Other significant female characters include Kitty Pryde and Mystique.

One notable aspect of this run is that Storm serves as the team leader for a significant period, the first female and the first African American to lead the a

superhero team. While Wasp would be the first female to lead the Marvel superhero team the Avengers beginning in *The Avengers #217* (Mar. 1982) and Invisible Woman would lead the Fantastic Four beginning in *Fantastic Four #384* (Jan. 1994), Storm predates them as a female team leader, becoming the X-Men's leader in *The Uncanny X-Men #131* (Nov. 1980). Storm is also the first Black superheroine in mainstream comic books. As the leader of the X-Men, she is also the first Black leader of a superhero teamAlthough a very strong character, Storm does have a weakness, her own personal kryptonite. Storm suffers from debilitating claustrophobia, which does cause her to occasionally pass out or become ineffective for the team.

While Storm's role as leader is important, this period does see an increase in the amount of skin displayed by comic book characters, both male and female. Storm's costume is much more revealing that anything worn by Marvel Girl in the 1960s. Concerning Storm's penchant for being depicted without clothes, though always with at least minimal covering by hair or objects in the foreground, Claremont explained:

> You have this strikingly beautiful woman, but she's from a totally different cultural and ethnic background thrown into the heart of upper and middle class suburbia. And to use an extreme example, [her thinking] "Why do I have to wear a bathing suit?" and then everyone reacting to her. Part of her is thinking "This is really silly" and then part of her is thinking, "Well, I'm in Rome I must do as the Romans do, no matter how absurd it is." Again, you think about why one wear clothes, the standard base rationales are as a

defense against the weather, the environment. As a reflection of perceived

societal rules and modesty. As an expression of character. In Storm's case the

environmental part of the equation isn't there. It doesn't matter whether it's

winter or summer, being in control of the weather means she can define

what her local environment is. She's comfortable whether it's 105 degrees or

105 below zero. Therefore, that's out of the equation so it's then a matter of a

moral choice or a fashion choice, and then what? Because you're talking

Northeast Africa versus suburban New York. How does that fit together?

How does she feel wearing traditional Euro-American attire as opposed to

traditional African attire. Again it's something to play with, it's a direction to

go.

Claremont's explanation offers a reason for Storm to choose to disrobe at times, but

the frequency with which it is shown to readers seems to reflect more than just

honoring her cultural norms.

Storm's role on the team is unlike many other females in superhero team

comics. As noted previously, she acted as team leader following Cyclops's departure,

giving orders to men which was quite atypical. While Cyclops struggles to control

Wolverine, Storm does so easily. Madrid notes that "In an early adventure, she stops

[Wolverine] from attacking team leader Cyclops with a touch of her hand and a

simple command" (170). Storm tells Wolverine, "You will do nothing,

Wolverine…not now. Not ever…or you will answer to me." Additionally, she was not

a figure in a romantic love triangle, which was a common feature in the soap opera-

esque comic book storylines. Eventually, in a story published in 2006, Storm marries

Black Panther, who was introduced in 1966 as the first African superhero in mainstream comic books.

Jean Grey undergoes a significant change in these issues as well. In a prolonged storyline, Jean Grey undergoes a character transformation. Grey becomes more assertive in her personal life, more powerful in her mutant abilities, and changes her codename from Marvel Girl to Phoenix. Eventually, she turns evil and takes the name Dark Phoenix and becomes a threat to the entire galaxy. In this story, it is revealed that her turn towards evil is a result of her body being bonded with an intergalactic entity referred to as the Phoenix Force. Years later, a retcon reveals that it was not Jean Grey who turned evil and becomes a galactic threat, but the Phoenix Force was impersonating her form. It is clear that Claremont, Byrne, and the editors intended this storyline to be Jean Grey and not an impersonation of her by an interstellar force. For this analysis, it will be treated as though Jean Grey is the featured character in the storyline.

In fact, the series made a met-reference acknowledges a significant change from the previous status quo of Jean Grey and Scott Summers. Recognizing that the two had openly pined for each other for the duration of the original run on the series, but had never acted on those feelings, the series gave a wink to the readers. In *X-Men #98* (Apr. 1976) there is a two-panel appearance by Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. Kirby and Lee walk past Scott Summers and Jean Grey, who have just shared their first kiss, Kirby remarks "Hey Stan, you know who they were? I tell ya, they never used to do that when we had the book." Lee responds," Ah Jack, you know these young kids—they got no respect" (129). Notably, this kiss was instigated by

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Jean Grey, who told Scott he needed to stop worrying about everything and just kiss her. This is a far cry from the reserved character who longed for Scott from a distance.

The changes in Jean Grey's personality are on several fronts. First, she was originally in constant need of being rescued. Often, she was shown not knowing how to use her powers and needing the guidance of a male leader in order to be of use to the team. Early on in Claremont's run this narrative trend is boldly overturned. In *The Uncanny X-Men #100* Marvel Girl takes control of a deadly situation and saves the entire team. She not only acts independently in doing so, she has to knock out Cyclops, the team leader, who would have prevented her from risking her own life. As the X-Men are aboard a shuttle heading back to Earth she orders the rest of the team and the pilot into a shielded cargo hold. She stays in the cockpit, which has had its shielding damaged, and uses her powers to read the pilot's mind to know how to safely guide the shuttle home even as she uses her telekinesis to block as many radioactive particles as she can. She acts boldly and independently of the orders she was given by Cyclops in order to rescue the team.

Even as her personality is becoming more bold, her powers seem to be increasing. In the following issue she rises from the wreckage of the shuttle and claims to now be Phoenix instead of Marvel Girl, and much of her later power increase is linked to the phoenix force, a cosmic entity which bonded with her during the shuttle crash. But even before being joined to the Phoenix force she was showing more strength in her telekinesis and more psychic ability. Phoenix uses her new powers to save the entire universe inside of a structure called the M'Kraan

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crystal, which if it had collapses would have started a tidal wave of destruction ending all creation.

At the beginning of a storyline called "The Dark Phoenix Saga," which spans eight issues, Jean Grey also becomes much more forward with Scott Summers, instigating what is implied to be their first sexual encounter. This act occurs early on in Jean Grey's dissent towards evil, implying that Jean Grey's sexual awakening is tied to her turn towards evil. The sexualisation of the character continues when, due to the manipulations of Mastermind, Jean Grey becomes a member of The Hellfire Club and dons a fetishistic outfit for several issues. Under the manipulations of Mastermind Jean Grey becomes the Black Queen of the Hellfire Club. The Hellfire Club rulers adopt titles based on chess pieces, and the White Queen and the Black Queen are the most powerful women in the organization. While the men wear anachronistic Victorian clothing, with ruffled shirts and cravats, the women dress in, essentially, lingerie.

As she becomes sexually aggressive in her behavior and her dress she becomes more evil. When joining the Hellfire Club Jean takes on the name the Black Queen. However, when she sees through Mastermind's deceptions she drives him insane and leaves a Hellfire Club. Wearing a darker version of her Phoenix costume, with maroon in place of the green, she calls herself the Dark Phoenix.

The peak of her villainy comes when she consumes a star at the center of a solar system which has an inhabited planet. The language used in the narration implies a sexual pleasure being derived from the destruction of the star:

An in the center of the super-nova she created, Dark Phoenix thrills to the

absolute power that is hers. She is in ecstasy. Yet she knows that this is only

the beginning—that what she feels now is nothing compared to what she

experienced within the great M'Kraan Crystal. She craves that ultimate

sensation. (*The Uncanny X-Men #135)*

The M'Kraan Crystal references to an earlier adventure, the first time Phoenix used

the full extent of her new powers. Thus, a search for the sensations from her first

experience with her powers has driven Phoenix mad and now threatens all life. This

narration, combined with the earlier sexual awakening of Jean Grey coinciding with

her descent into evil, implies that her sexual yearning is driving her to commit

heinous acts. Jean Grey has gone from the conservative Marvel Girl, to the sexually

aggressive Phoenix, to the villainous and cosmically lustful Dark Phoenix. Jean Grey

later confesses to Scott Summers that "I hunger, Scott...for a joy, a rapture, beyond

all comprehension. That is part of me, too. It...consumes me."

Mike Madrid explains this transformation as a condemnation of the sexual

revolution which occurred in America. He writes:

The sexual revolution of the 70's cast a new light on women's intimate needs,

and specifically, the quest for the orgasm. 1976's *Hite Report on Female*

Sexuality found that only 30% of women had experienced orgasm. Every

month *Cosmopolitan* magazine, with its cleavage baring cover models,

promised new secrets to achieving the elusive orgasm. [...] Dark Phoenix's

struggles were a parable for the late 70's, where the hedonistic search for

pleasure and gratification led to addiction and ultimately death. The glamour

of Studio 54 and the wild delights of the nightlife were dimmed in the early

80's, when the first reports of the "gay cancer" that would become AIDS

began to surface. May felt that it was atonement for the bacchanalia of the

70's. Phoenix too had to atone for the genocide she had committed in her

quest for pleasure. (174-6).

Dark Phoenix's punishment is her death. The Shi'ar Empire, who the X-Men had

aided in previous adventures, came to Earth to make Dark Phoenix stand trial. In the

subsequent battle which results between the Shi'ar Imperial Guard and the X-Men,

Jean Grey who has taken control of the Phoenix Force which corrupted her,

sacrifices herself rather than see her fellow X-Men fall in battle. Her death ends the

battle, and in the aftermath a grieving Cyclops quits the X-Men.

A retcon by later writers changes the character of Phoenix and Dark Phoenix

from Jean Grey to a cosmic force which took on her form, but to the reader at the

time The Dark Phoenix was a morality tale involving one of Marvel's first

superheroine's fall from grace. The good girl readers knew from the earliest issues

of the X-Men experienced a sexual awakening with her boyfriend, Cyclops. As a

result she falls in with a new group of friends, the Hellfire Club, who introduce her to

further evilsAlthough she tries to reject this group of friends and return to her

earlier life, the new carnal desires are irrepressible and drive her to hurt those

closest to her in her quest to satisfy her urges. She doesn't care who she hurts, in

this case reaching the extreme of committing murdering an entire race of aliens in

pursuit of satisfaction for her cravings. In the end, the only way to correct all the

problems she has wrought is through self-sacrifice, in this case atoning by giving her

own life in defense of her original friends. Claremont and Byrne have said that this storyline was originally intended to introduce a progressive cosmic-powered superheroine, but in the end the moral of the story was much more conservative.

To a certain degree, the change was mandated by the editor of Marvel Comics at the time, Jim Shooter. Shooter insisted that Phoenix needed to die as a punishment for the genocide she committed, whereas Claremont and Byrne simply wanted her to be depowered. But, depowering Jean Grey would have still carried a similarly conservative message, with implications that sexual awakening in women has dire consequences unless removed. Cyclops, who was obviously a participant in Phoenix's sexual experience, has no such repercussions. In fact, he will go on to be romantically attached to several women before Jean Grey returns.

In a drastic change from the first period, there are several strong female characters among the villains the X-Men face. A new version of the villainous team The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants appears during this run, but this time the team is led by a female, Mystique. Mystique has the ability to change her form into any appearance she desires, but her natural state is with blue skin, yellow eyes, and red hair. Another group the X-Men battles is the Hellfire Club, which has a group of four in charge of the organization. Included in this group is Emma Frost, the White Queen, and, albeit briefly, Jean Grey as the Black Queen. Another female leader in this period is Callisto, who serves as leader of the Morlocks, a group of mutants whose deformities have caused them to live in the New York sewers to avoid persecution. Between Storm leading the X-Men, Mystique leading the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, the White Queen as one of the leaders of the Hellfire Club, and

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Callisto leading the Morlocks, the number of women in leading teams sees a significant increase in this period.

The Number Analysis

In terms of gender representation this period of X-Men comics is much more balanced in some ways, but still very heavily male-oriented in others. The percentage of female representation on the team remains largely the same as in the 1960s, but the villains and especially the guest stars are more evenly distributed between males and females.

Sixteen different characters appear as members of the X-Men in the 74 issues published in this period. Of these, 12 (75%) are male and 4 (25%) are female. This is a very slight increase percentage wise

Character	# of Appearances	% of Issues
Storm	74	100
Colossus	74	100
Wolverine	74	100
Nightcrawler	74	100
Cyclops	59	79.7
Professor X	49	65.3
Banshee	37	50
Kitty Pryde/Sprite	26	35.1
Marvel Girl/Phoenix	21	28.4
Angel	12	16.2
Thunderbird	3	4.1
Iceman	2	2.7
Havok	2	2.7
Polaris	2	2.7
Sunfire	2	2.7
Beast	1	1.4
Table 9: Number of appearances by characters as a member of the X-Men between 1975-83		

over the first period of X-Men comic books, when with a smaller number of characters appearing on the team 77.8% were male and 22.2% were female. *Giant Size X-Men #1* through *The Uncanny X-Men #166* did see a much greater turnover in team membership than the previous era. While the

core team of the X-Men appeared in almost all the first 66 issues of the series, in this second period Storm, Colossus, Nightcrawler, and Wolverine appear in all 74 issues, while the other 12 team members come and go, with some only appearing in two or three issues before leaving the team. Table 9 displays the characters who appeared in at least one issue as a member of the team with a breakdown of the total number of their appearances.

In terms of the number of appearances made by characters, the male members of the X-Men made 389 appearances while the female members of the team made 123. In total, 76% of appearances of team members in this period were by men, while 24% were by women. This represents a slightly higher percentage of appearances by women when compared to the 1960's X-Men comics, when 82.1% of the appearances by team members were

by men and 17.9% by women.

In the first period of X-Men comic books, almost all of the villains they faced were men. They only battled two women and one genderless villain, a computer program. In this second period of X-Men comics the team faces more female villains who make more appearances. Of the 75 villains the X-Men battled, 57 (78.1%) were male, 14 (18.7%) were female, and 4 (5.3%) had no identifiable gender, either because they were formless demons, aliens with no clear gender, or electronic villains with no discernible gender markers. There were 200 appearances by villains in these issues, with 155 (77.5%) of those by men, 34 (17.0%) by women, and 11 (5.5%) by villains with no identifiable gender.

The greatest change in gender representation occurs with the guest stars. Several regular female guest stars were introduced, including Moira MacTaggert and Lilandra. While both of these women serve as love interests for members of the team, Banshee and Professor Xavier, respectively, they are defined by much more than being simply the love interests for male characters. Moira MacTaggert fends of enemies by wielding machine guns in her first appearance and is one of the leading scientists on the mutant phenomenon on the planet. Lilandra is the Empress of an entire alien empire. While the female guest stars in the 1960s were almost always simply defined as love interests, the female guest stars in this period represent much greater character development.

Seventy-one characters guest-starred in X-Men comic books in this period. Of these, 44 (62%) were male and 27 (38%) were women.

Gender	Male	Female	N/A
X-Men	389 (76.0%)	123 (24.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Villains	155 (77.5%)	34 (17.0%)	11 (5.5%)
Guest Stars	162 (49.7%)	164 (50.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	706 (68.0%)	321 (30.9%)	11 (1.1%)
Table 10: Number of appearances by characters, organized by gender, between 1975-83			

In terms of appearances, however, for the first time there were more female appearances than male for a category. Of 326 appearances by guest stars, 162 (49.7%) were by men and 164 (50.3%) were by women. In total, there were 162 characters that appeared between *Giant-Size X-Men #1* and *The Uncanny X-Men #166*. Of these 113 (69.8%) were male, 45 (27.8%) were female, and 4 (2.5%) had no identifiable gender. There were 1,038 appearances by characters in these issues. Of these 706 (68.0%) were by men, 321 (30.9%) were by women, and 10 (1.1%) were by characters with no identifiable gender. This represents a

significant increase in female representation from the first period of X-Men comic books. In the 1960s, 91% of the characters were men and they made 85.1% of all appearances. Between the two periods in consideration,representation of women increased in total number of characters by 19.4% and in terms of appearances by 16.1%. While some of the ways in which women were presented remain problematic, there were more portrayals of women as leaders and as independent characters in this period.

On the covers, the most prominent part of any comic book, there 78 different characters featured in this period. Of these 57 (73.1%) were male, 17 (21.8%) were female, and 4 (5.1%) had no identifiable gender. There 411 different appearances by characters on covers. Of these 300 (73%) were male, 104 (25.3%) were female, and 7 (1.7%) were male. In the 1960s, 84.8% of all characters appearing on covers were male and 15.2% were female.

In terms of racial representation, there is a trend towards greater diversity in terms of heroes, villains, and guest stars, when compared to the X-Men comic books from the 1960s. First, the race and ethnicity of characters will be analyzed, followed by their nationalities. The X-Men became much more diverse in terms of nationalities on the team, though the highest percentage of the team remains white. While almost 80% of character appearances by the X-Men in this period feature white characters, only a little over 30% of them are American.

There are 16 characters who appear on the team in this period, of these 12 (75%) are white, 1 (6.3%) is Black, 1 (6.3%) is Jewish, 1 (6.3%) is Asian, and 1 (6.3%) is Native American. Because Sunfire, who is Asian, quits the team in his

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second appearance, Thunderbird, who is Native American, dies after three issues, and Kitty Pryde, who is Jewish, joins the team late in this period the team is still heavily white during this time. There were 512 appearances by members of the X-Men in these 74 issues. Of these, 407 (79.5%) were by white characters, 74 (14.5%) were by a Black character, 26 (5.1%) were by a Jewish character, 3 (0.6%) were by a Native American characters, and 2 (.4%) were by an Asian.

What these numbers seem to indicate is that while the team did diversify from it's previous incarnation, when the team was 100% white, in terms of ethnic identity the X-Men remained overwhelmingly white. As will be seen shortly the team became much less American with respect to its membership, but in terms of what a comic book audience would see on the page the team remained mostly white and male.

As with the earlier period, the villains are much more diverse than the heroes. Of the 75 villains to appear, 40 (53.3%) were white, 1 (1.3%) was Black, 1 (1.3%) was Jewish, 1 (1.3%) was Native American, and 1 (1.3%) was Egyptian. Additionally, 25 (33.3%) were aliens, 4 (5.3%) were demons, 1 (1.3%) was a robot, and 1(1.3%) was a living island.[10]. While the X-Men battled aliens in the 1960s this period really cemented the interstellar aspect of the X-Men, with stories which alluded to popular films such as *Alien* and *Star Wars*.

In terms of appearances, there were 200 by villains. Almost all of these appearances were by white characters or aliens. White villains appeared 125

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[10] The robot villain was the mutant-hunting Sentinels. In every story they appeared in there was more than one Sentinel, but rather than counting each Sentinel as an individual villain the Sentinels are considered one villain for the purposes of this study.

(62.5%) times, and aliens 55 (27.3%) times. The next most common race represented in the villains were Jews with 5 (2.5%) appearances, robots with 5 (2.5%) appearances, demons with 4 (2.0%) appearances, Black characters with 2 (1.0%) appearances, Native Americans with 2 (1.0%) appearances, and there was 1 (0.5%) appearance by an Egyptian villain and a living island.

The guest stars also were most often either white or alien. There were 71 guest stars in this period. Of these, 36 (50.7%) were white, 23 (32.4%) were alien, 4 (5.6%) were Black, 3 (4.2%) were Asian, 2 (2.8%) were robotic, 1 (1.4%) was Jewish, 1 (1.4%) was Native American, and 1 (1.4%) was demonic. Of the 326 guest appearances in these issues 178 (54.6%) were by white characters, 89 (27.3%) were by alien characters, 20 (6.1%) were by Black characters, 17 (5.2%) were by Asian characters, 15 (4.6%) were by robotic characters, 4(1.2%) were by Jewish characters, 2 (0.6%) were by Native American characters, and 1 (0.3%) was by a demonic character.

Combing these numbers for the total, the numbers still bear out a comic book series heavily dominated by white characters which is still functioning as a metaphor about prejudice. There were 162 characters in these issues, and 88 (54.3%) of them were white. The next most common category was alien, with 48 (29.6%) characters. There were also 6 (3.7%) Black characters, 5 (3.1%) demonic characters, 4 (2.5%) Asian characters, 3 (1.9%) Jewish characters, 3 (1.9%) Native American characters, 3 (1.9%) robotic characters, 1 (0.6%) Egyptian character, and 1 (0.6%) living island.

The actual appearances are even more dominated by white characters. Of 1,038 appearances, 710 (68.4%) were by white characters, 144 (13.9%) were by aliens, 96 (9.2%) were by Black characters, 35 (3.4%) were by Jewish characters, 20 (1.9%) were by robotic characters, (19 (1.8%) were by Asian characters, 7 (0.7%) were by Native American characters, 5 (0.5%) were by demonic characters, 1 (0.1) was by an Egyptian character, and 1 (0.1%) was by a living island. Notably, while Latinos had a few appearances as villains in the first period of X-Men comics, there were no appearances by Latinos at all in this period.

One aspect which should be considered when looking at these numbers is the problem presented by characters such as Nightcrawler, who is categorized as "white," but who bears no resemblance to a white man because his mutant power has left him with blue fur. He does have an "image transducer" which hides his true appearance under a hologram when he goes out in public and wishes to pass as a human. When using this device, he chooses a white complexion (usually using Errol Flynn's face). Nightcrawler is the only member of the X-Men in these issues who has not clear visible ethnic markers. His speech patterns do easily identify him as German.

With 68.4% of the appearances in the comic books from this period coming from white characters the title looks more diverse than the comic books from the 1960s when 91.2% of the appearances were by white characters, but it is still not as diverse as one would expect from a comic book series dealing with the themes the X-Men are famous for. But when looking at the nationalities of the characters, the numbers represent a much more diverse title.

Among the 16 characters to appear as X-Men in this period, 9 (56.3%) were American, 1 (6.3%) was Irish, 1 (6.3%) was Russian, 1 (6.3%) was German, 1 (6.3%) was Kenyan, 1 (6.3%) was Apache, 1 (6.3%) was Canadian, and 1 (6.3%) was Japanese. But most of the American characters did not regularly appear in these issues. Of the 486 appearances, 148 (30.5%) were by American characters, 74 (15.2%) were by a Russian character, 74 (15.2%) were by a German character, 74 (15.2%) were by a Kenyan character, 74 (15.2%) were by a Canadian character, 37 (7.6%) were by an Irish character, 3 (0.6%) were by an Apache character, and 2 (0.4%) were by a Japanese character.

Primarily Americans and aliens are represented in the nationalities of the villains and guest stars from this period. In terms of the other nationalities present, there is a greater number of distinct nationalities represented in this period, but they are not without stereotypes. For example, the only French character was one of Count Nefaria's Ani-Men, who all resembled animals. While most were Americans, Frog-Man was French, likely an unfortunate reference to a common derogatory term for the French. Of the 75 villains to appear in this period, 26 (34.7%) were alien characters, 25 (33.3%) were American characters, 7 (9.3%) were Canadian characters, 4 (5.3%) were demonic characters, 2 (2.7%) were German characters, 1 (1.3%) was an Irish character, 1 (1.3%) was an Italian character, 1 (1.3%) was a French character, 1 (1.3%) was a British character, 1 (1.3%) was an Ethiopian character, 1 (1.3%) was an Egyptian character, 1 (1.3%) was a Scottish character, 1 (1.3%) was an Australian character, 1 (1.3%) was from the fictional nation of Latveria, 1 (1.3%) was a Transylvanian character, and 1 (1.3%) was a living island.

In terms of appearances, of 200 appearances 92 (46.0%) were by American villains, 59 (29.5%) were by alien villains, 15 (7.5%) were by Canadian villains, 6 (3.0%) were by German villains, 5 (2.5%) were by an Irish villain, 4 (2.0%) were by demonic villains, 3 (1.5%) were by a Scottish villain, 3 (1.5%) were by a Latverian villain, 2 (1.0%) were by an Italian villain, 2 (1.0%) were by a French villain, 2 (1.0%) were by a British villain, 2 (1.0%) were by an Ethiopian villain, 2 (1.0%) were by an Australian villain, 1 (0.5%) was by an Egyptian villain, 1 (0.5%) was by a Transylvanian villain, and 1 (0.5%) was by a living island. When combining the appearances of heroes, villains, and guest stars there 164 characters who made 1,040 appearances. Of these, 120 (73.1%) of the characters were either American or alien, and 597 (57.0%) of the appearances were by Americans or aliens.

Chapter 5: 1983-1991: Greater Diversity and Balanced Gender Representation

This period represents the most diversity on the team as well as the greatest balance in terms of gender representation. After Claremont leaves the title and other creators come on the title sees an increase in the number of white males on the team of heroes, though the villains remain a more diverse group.

Creative Teams and a Summary of the Stories

This period saw significant changes to the cast of the series, the makeup of individual characters, and the tone of the X-Men. Perhaps the most significant change came from the creative team at the close of this period of X-Men comic books. Chris Claremont's ended his sixteen-year run as the writer of the series with *The Uncanny X-Men #280*, which was written by Fabian Nicieza. Claremont wrote every issue of the series between *X-Men #94* (Aug. 1975) and *The Uncanny X-Men #279* (Aug. 1991). These 185 issues are considered one of the most successful runs by a creator on any comic book series, in terms of both financial success and creative output.

Both Claremont and Bob Harras, the editor of the X-Men books at the time Claremont left, admit that behind-the-scenes tensions about the direction of the books resulted in the end of the Claremont era. A very popular and talented new artist, Jim Lee, had been assigned to the X-Men books and wanted to direct the plots in a direction that Claremont felt retread on stories he had already told. In Claremont's own words:

Working with Jim was a lot of fun, but the institutional strains were starting

to kick in. The problem was that Jim was just as strong-willed as I was. Jim

wanted to do stuff that reminded him of the things that made him get into

comics in the first place. He wanted to bring back Magneto and do the

Sentinels and all that sort of stuff. My problem was I'd already done those

things…at least twice. I wanted to try and find some new stuff to do. […] Bob

Harras was editing *X-Men* in those days and he was a lot more simpatico with

Jim than he was with me. Looking back at it from the vantage point of the

here-and-now, I can see no one had either the perspective or the incentive to

find a way out. There was just no comfort zone. There was all this butting of

heads and we all got boxed into corners. Bob and Jim wanted to do what they

wanted to do and the feeling was I could not or would not go along, and they

were going to do it anyway. I thought, I've worked too hard. The time has

come maybe to see if I can survive without the X-Men. So I quite *X-Men* and

left Marvel. (DeFalco "Claremont" 75)

Claremont would describe the feeling of leaving the series and the characters, many

of whom he had created, by saying "it was wrenching, I felt like I had abandoned my

kids" (DeFalco "Claremont" 79).

Harras had admitted that there was a lot of tension between himself,

Claremont, and Lee, but he felt that it was a creatively fruitful tension.

Not that it was pleasant, but the tension was being transformed into really

dynamic comics that people were reacting to. I thought, "If we can just ride

this out a little longer, everything is going to settle down." But that didn't

happen. (DeFalco "Harras" 178)

Harras also explains that he and Claremont fundamentally disagreed on what the X-

Men comics should be about. Harras felt that the aliens and the magical dimensions

that had become common in Claremont's writing departed too significantly from the

core of the X-Men:

> I felt like we had to go back to what *X-Men* was all about, and to me *X-Men*
>
> *w*as Xavier and Scott and Jean and all the other classic characters. But Chris
>
> didn't want to do that kind of stuff any more. He felt he had done it already,
>
> My point was "Sure, but *that's* the X-Men!" It was getting so we were
>
> speaking the same language, but we couldn't understand each other.
>
> (DeFalco "Harras" 178)

If Harras's vision of the X-Men included the original roster of the team, it is

understandable why he had become disenchanted with Claremont's writing. In this

period, while Xavier appears in 25 issues, Cyclops only appears in seven issues as a

member of the team, and no other original member of the X-Men is featured as a

team member at all.

Rather this period of *The Uncanny X-Men* saw the introduction of many new

characters to the team and many

changes in personality to those

appearing. For example, Magneto, the

long-time arch-nemesis of the X-Men

becomes a member of the team for a

Writer (co-plotter)	Issues
Chris Claremont	*#167-279*
Fabian Nicieza	*#279-80*
Jim Lee (Co-plotter)	*#274*
Table 11: Writers and co-plotters of *The Uncanny X-Men* from 1983-91	

number of issues. Claremont wrote all but one issue in this period, though Fabian

Nicieza co-plotted *The Uncanny X-Men #279* (Aug. 1991), which was Claremont's

final script. The writers and co-plotters from this period are outlined in Table 11.

Claremont worked with a number of artists in this period. Particularly following *The*

Uncanny X-Men #249 (Early Oct. 1989), because that issue marked the first of a period in which the comic book was published twice a month. Because most artists could not maintain such a quick pace of production, there were frequently guest-artists doing single issues as fill-ins while the regular artist worked on the next storyline. Issue *#273* is particularly notable, as eight artists worked on it. The artists to work on the title in this period included Paul Smith, Walt Simonson, John Romita Jr., Barry Windsor-Smith, Rick Leonardi, June Brigman,

Artist	Issues
Paul Smith	*#167-70, 172-174, 278*
Walt Simonson	*#171*
John Romita Jr.	*#175-197, 199-200, 202-3, 206-11*
Barry Windsor-Smith	*#198, #205*
Rick Leonardi	*#201, 212, 228, 231, 235, 237, 252, 273*
June Brigman	*#204*
Alan Davis	*#213*
Jackson Guice	*#216-7*
Marc Silvestri	*#218, 220-222, 224-7, 229-30, 232-4, 236, 238-44, 246-7, 249-51, 253-55, 259-61, 273*
Bret Blevins	*#219*
Karry Gammill	*#223*
Rob Liefeld	*#245*
Jim Lee	*#248, 256-8, 267, 269-72, 273-7*
Kieron Dwyer	*#262*
Bill Jaaska	*#263, 265*
Mike Collins	*#264, 266*
Art Adams	*#268*
Whilce Portacio	*#273*
Klaus Janson	*#273*
John Byrne	*#273*
Michael Golden	*#273*
Larry Stroman	*#273*
Andy Kubert	*#279-80*
Steven Butler	*#280*
Table 12: The artists of *The Uncanny X-Men* between 1983-91	

Alan Davis, Jackson Guice, Marc Silvestri, Bret Blevins, Karry Gammill, Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Kieron Dwyer, Bill Jaaska, Mike Collins, Art Adams, Whilce Portacio, Klaus Janson, John Byrne, Michael Golden, Larry Stroman, Andy Kubert, and Steven Butler. The exact issues they worked on are detailed in Table 12.

While the entire run of the X-Men, particular during Chris Claremont's run as writer, has been compared to a soap opera, this period becomes particularly complex and convoluted. Interpersonal relationships shift and change, the make up of the team is fluid, and characters undergo radical alterations in character.

To begin with, Professor Xavier has a new body cloned for him because he was infected with the egg of an alien Brood queen which was killing him. His mind is transferred to this new body and he regains the ability to walk. He begins to train a new class of students, a team featured in the spin-off series *New Mutants.* While the cast and series of the New Mutants will not be considered in depth, it is worth noting that the initial roster of the team consists of an American male, a Vietnamese female, a Cheyenne female, a Brazilian male, and a Scottish female. The team has three females and two males and only one American.

The team and its members experience several radical changes in this period. When Angel is kidnapped by a group of mutants whose mutations have deformed them so much they are outcasts from society, the X-Men must travel into the sewers to rescue him. In a battle for supremacy of the group of outcasts, who call themselves Morlocks, Storm wins the right to lead the group.

Rogue, who had previously fought against the X-Men as a member of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, quits that team and asks to join the X-Men as she

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attempts to reform her life. Mystique, the leader of the Brotherhood is particularly hurt by this as Rogue is her adopted daughterAlthough some are hesitant to accept Rogue she proves herself to the X-Men on an adventure when the team travels to Japan for Wolverine's wedding. Wolverine, who had left the team for a time, returned to invite them to his wedding where various fights ensued. However, his fiancé, Mariko Yoshida, calls off the wedding at the last minute.

Cyclops decides to end his relationship with Lee Forester. Soon he meets a woman who looks exactly like Jean Grey named Madelyne Pryor. Madelyne has no memory of her past, and Scott at times suspects she may be Jean. Scott and Madelyne marry, and Scott retires from the X-Men.

Colossus and Kitty Pryde had been dating, but Colossus breaks up with her. Shortly thereafter the Morlock Caliban kidnaps Kitty and intends to marry her. Storm uses her influence as leader of the Morlocks, though she rarely interacts with them, to free Kitty. Rachel, a mutant from the future who previously appeared in the "Days of Future Past" storyline, arrives in the present time and soon joins the X-MenAlthough it is not yet revealed, in her timeline she is the daughter of Cyclops and Phoenix.

A mutant inventor named Forge has created a weapon that will depower a mutant. The U.S. government wants to use the weapon on Rogue, who has been framed for murder, but Storm is accidentally shot instead. Forge, guilty over his role in Storm's power loss, invites her to his home as he will try to reactivate her powers. The have a brief romance until Storm discovers that he was the inventor of the

weapon that took her powers. Meanwhile, Cyclops's former girlfriend, Lee Forester, discovers Magneto's body floating in the ocean and rescues him.

A sorcerer named Kulan Gath transforms all of New York City into medieval times until the X-Men and other Marvel superheroes are able to undo the spell. After the city is returned to normal, Professor Xavier is attacked by a group of college students who believe he is a mutant. Magneto, meanwhile, is making an effort to reform. While at a gathering of Holocaust survivors he is attacked and captured by the mutant team formerly called The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. They now go by the name Freedom Force and work for the U.S. Government. They took this job with the government in exchange for full pardons for their previous criminal acts. Magneto is put on trial in France for crimes against humanity. However, due to his de-aging to an infant and re-aging to adulthood, all crimes prior to his rebirth are stricken. Professor X goes to recuperate from an attack he suffers from anti-mutant bigots with his love, Lilandra. He asks Magneto to help the X-Men and train the New Mutants, a role which Magneto accepts.

Cyclops returns with his wife and new child, Nathan. Missing his old adventures, he asks to lead the team again. Storm has returned and also wishes to lead the team, and the two have a sparring session to determine who will lead. Storm wins despite still having no mutant powers. Cyclops receives a phone call that his old love, Jean Grey, has been discovered alive at the bottom of the bay where the space shuttle crashed (over 100 issues ago). In a retcon, it is revealed that an interstellar entity called the Phoenix Force bonded with Jean Grey during the shuttle crash. It took her form, memories, and personality and left Jean Grey's injured body

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in a cocoon to recuperate. Cyclops, in a rather indefensible move, abandons his wife and newborn son to reunite with Jean Grey. Cyclops and the other original members of the X-Men have their adventures published in a spin-off series call *X-Factor*.

The X-Men and the Hellfire Club are forced to unite in battle against Nimrod, a sentinel from the same future timeline as Rachel. They defeat the futuristic sentinel, but two members of the Hellfire club are killed in the battle. Meanwhile, members of the Morlocks are being murdered, including children. A new villainous team, the Marauders, is responsible for the attacks. In a violent fight, several X-Men are injured, and Colossus goes so far as to kills one of the marauders. This storyline, called "The Mutant Massacre" also begins the long-running feud between Wolverine and a villain named Sabretooth. Kitty Pryde, Colossus, and Nightcrawler are sent to Muir Island to convalesce from their serious injuries under Moira MacTaggert's care.

There are several changes in the X-Men's roster at this time. Betsy Braddock, a telepathic mutant codenamed Psylocke, joined the team. She was a white British woman whose mind is transferred into the body of an Asian ninja. Dazzler, a mutant with the power to convert soundwaves into light and energy beams who was introduced in the X-Men comics before being spun-off into her own series, joins the team for the first time. Havok rejoins the X-Men while Polaris, possessed by a force called Malice, joins the Marauders.

Madelyne Pryor is attacked by the Marauders and her baby son, Nathan, is kidnapped. The child is taken to the Marauder's leader, Mr. Sinister, who it is revealed has been manipulating Scott Summers's life for years. The X-Men take Madelyne Pryor in for her protection. The new group of X-Men are tested in battle

against Juggernaut and bond in the process. Storm seeks out Forge, and following a mystical journey and battle, regains her mutant powers. The X-Men, joined by Storm and Forge, are in a battle in Dallas which results in their deaths, which is broadcast to the world. However, the team is immediately resurrected by a goddess, Roma. They set up a new base of operations in Australia.

The X-Men battle another group, cybernetic soldiers called the Reavers. They also discover and defeat small colony of Brood. One of the most significant storylines, and one with themes about prejudice and intolerance, involves the island nation of Genosha. Located off the East coast of Africa, Genosha is a country with a thriving economy and very modern standard of living. However, the nation's economy is secretly based off of the slave labor of mutants. Mutants are manipulated by a genetic scientist, called the genengineer. Besides ensuring their enslavement, the genengineer attempts to breed mutants with specific powers to help fulfill specific labor needs. Several X-Men are captured by the Genoshan police force, called Magistrates. They are eventually freed and some of the foundations of Genoshan society are shaken.

Alex Summers, grieving because his girlfriend, Polaris, has joined the Marauders begins a tentative romance with his brother's ex-wife, Madelyne Pryor. However, when Pryor sees Scott on television with Jean Grey she becomes enraged. A demon offers her the power to make Scott suffer, which she accepts.

In a storyline called "Inferno" Madelyne Pryor becomes the Goblin Queen and turns New York into a demon-infested Hell. The story crosses over with issues of *X-Factor* and *New Mutants*. The mutant teams battle the demonic forces and much of

New York is returned to normal, though the Goblin Queen's lair remains. There, Mr.

Sinister reveals that Madelyne Pryor is a clone of Jean Grey that he created. He had

manipulated Scott's life so that his DNA and Jean Grey's DNA could be combined to

create a powerful mutant, but Jean Grey's "death" had thwarted his plans. Madelyne

Pryor dies in a battle with Jean Grey after these revelations. Her son, Nathan, is

infected with a disease that modern science cannot cure, so he will be sent to the

future where he is raised as a soldier. He will eventually return to the present as a

fully-grown man and become a leader of a team of mutants and eventually a

member of the X-Men.

A young Asian American mutant named Jubilee follows the X-Men through a

portal back to their base in Australia. When the X-Men are attacked by a group

called the Reavers, several members of the team step through a portal called the

Siege Perilous, which transports them to random locations around the globe. Those

who go through the Siege Perilous have amnesia and some have been physically

altered by their journey. Wolverine, who remains behind loses his battle with the

Reavers and is left for dead. Jubilee, who was in hiding, rescues Wolverine and helps

him to heal.

In the absence of the X-Men who are scattered across the globe with amnesia,

a new team of X-Men is formed based on Muir Island for a brief time. The storyline

shifts to focus on the gathering of the X-Men who passed through the Siege Perilous

and helping them to regain their memories. A large crossover story called the X-

Tinction Agenda takes place in all the comic books Marvel publishes related to the X-

Men. Taking place on Genosha, the teams must battle Cameron Hodge, a cyborg with

an insane hatred of mutants. Following this, the X-Men return to outer space to aid Professor X and his wife, Lilandra, in a battle against shape-shifting aliens called Skrulls. And in the last storyline before the X-Men split into two teams, the team must battle Professor Xavier's insane son. In the course of the battle Xavier's spine is damaged and he is again confined to a wheelchair.

New Characters

Rogue

Rogue, whose real name (Anna Marie Raven) is not revealed until 2004, is one of several reformed villains that will join the X-Men. The first reformed villain on to join the team was Mimic, and Banshee and Sunfire were also villains in their first appearances. Rogue's mutant power is to absorb the memories and the special abilities of anyone her skin comes into contact with. Normally, the absorption of the memories and powers is only temporary, but with prolonged contact the absorption can become permanent. One of the first characters Rogue maintained contact with for too long was a superhero named Ms. Marvel, and Rogue permanently absorbed her memories, her super-strength, her power of flight, and her near-invulnerability.

Rogue discovered her mutant power the first time she kissed a boy, and was quite traumatized by the experienced. As Michael Mallory says of Rogue,

> The knowledge that the mere touch of her bare skin can be dangerous to anyone, mutant or otherwise, not only affects her dress—she must remain covered head-to-toe at all times—but it leaves her with a level of sexual angst with which few, if any, can really empathize. (86)

Despite Mallory's assertion, Rogue often appears in varying states of undress in the X-Men comic books, even going for almost an entire issue without clothing, with shadows and objects in the foreground preventing full nudity, as she escapes the torture of Genoshan soldiers.

Rachel Summers (Phoenix)

Rachel Summers first appeared in *Uncanny X-Men #141* (Jan. 1981) as a part of a potential future timeline. The storyline involved X-Men from a dystopian future attempting to alter the past to change their timelineAlthough the X-Men in the present day do prevent the inciting incident that led to Rachel's dystopia, her timeline continued to exist. She traveled back to the present day and became a member of the X-Men.

In Rachel's timeline she was the daughter of Cyclops and Jean Grey, and she takes her mother's codename as a member of the X-Men. She possesses powerful psychic abilities and telekinesis, much like her mother.

Betsy Braddock (Psylocke)

Psylocke is an interesting case. In this period she is a British woman with telepathic powers. She was introduced in another series, *Captain Britain*, and is the sister of that series' namesake. Readers who began to read *The Uncanny X-Men* in the 1990s would be hard-pressed to recognize the 1980's version of Psylocke. This version, an upper-class white British woman, is very conservative in dress and social interactions.

Her character will undergo a radical transformation which will result in her mind being in an Asian body, a different set of mutant powers, ninja training   and a

much more seductive personality and a significantly skimpier costume. Mike Madrid explains:

> Gone was the lovely English rose; in her place a statuesque gold skinned
> Asian beauty. Psylocke's sculpted body was wrapped in a skintight costume
> that showed off every curve and muscle. Her impossibly long legs were
> crisscrossed with straps that enhanced her muscular thighs. Psylocke's back
> arched to present her chest for all to admire. A revealing thong showcased
> her rock hard buttocks. […]The old Caucasian Psylocke had been a
> formidable telepathic fighter. The new Asian Psylocke was a killer,
> possessing ninja martial arts skills and a ruthless love of battle. […] Her new
> body finally gave Betsy the fighting skills and endurance of her dreams. She
> was the object of both fear and desire. Betsy Braddock might have been a
> lady, but as Psylocke, she was a babe. (270)

The Asian version of Psylocke, with one of the most revealing costumes any female on the X-Men will wear regularly, is generally drawn without any semblance of realistic body proportions. Moreso than any previous female character, this version of Psylocke enters into the nearly pure cheesecake portrayal from most artists.

Dazzler

Alison Blaire appeared in the same issue that Kitty Pryde first appeared in. Dazzler was immediate spun-off into her own short-lived solo comic book series. As such, Dazzler was on of Marvel's first titles to feature a female protagonist that was not part of a larger team. The character of Dazzler has an odd history, in that she was created to be a joint creation of Marvel Comics and Casablanca records. Marvel

Comics would help to create the name, look, and personality of a singer superhero, and Casablanca would release a record of a singer they found to adopt that persona. There were also rumors of a potential film project featuring the new character. After Marvel promoted the new character, even having her first appear in one of their top-selling comic books, Casablanca Records dropped out of the agreement. Marvel, having pushed Dazzler more than most new creations, decided to giver her a monthly comic book title to try and justify the promotion the character had received, though the series only ran for 35 issues.

Dazzler has the power to transform sound waves into light/laser energy. As a singer, she used her power to provide a spectacle to her performances. After her series was canceled she was brought back into the X-Men where she had first appeared.

Longshot

Longshot is the first member of the team who is not a mutant. Longshot appears to be a white human male, though with only three fingers and a thumb on each hand. He is, in reality, an artificially created humanoid from another dimension. He has the ability to alter the probability of random events around him so that they turn out in his favor. In the dimension where he was created Longshot competed in gladiatorial combat for a population that was obsessed with televised events and violence. The X-Men have been captured and forced to compete for the entertainment of this dimension's audience several times.

Jubilee

Jubilee is a young Chinese-American mutant who can generate bright explosive "plasmoids" which look like fireworks. After she was orphaned when her parents were murdered, Jubilation Lee began to live at the Hollywood Mall, using petty theft and money she gained by entertaining shoppers with her mutant powers to survive. At the mall she sees several members of the X-Men use a portal to transport to their Australian base, and she follows through. She hides out in the base, stealing food to survive. When Wolverine is attacked and no other members of the team are around she saves his life, and they form a close bond with Wolverine acting as a father figure to Jubilee.

Forge

Often in comic books Native American characters conform to several stereotypes. Their costumes often include feathers or a buckskin-type fringe. They often go on journeys of spiritual awakening. And their powers are very frequently closely related to nature and spiritualism. In some ways Forge departs significantly from these stereotypes, in others he embraces them. His character is shown as being divided between his technological side and his spiritual side.

His codename is a reference to his mutant power. Forge has the ability to understand how any machine is constructed instantly, and also the ability to understand how a machine could be constructed to meet any need he has. In essence, he has the power of invention. He lives in one of the most high-tech buildings in the Marvel universe. This is a far cry from other Native American characters such as Thunderbird, or later Warpath, who come from reservations that are depicted more as camping grounds than as cities with any sign of modernity.

Both Thunderbird and Warpath have sets of powers that increase their natural abilities. They have heightened strength, sight, and hearing. Conversely, Forge's power places him beyond the cutting edge of modern technology. Forge has even replaced an injured part of his leg with a cybernetic portion.

However, while his mutant power departs from the superheroic stereotypes of Native American characters, many of the storylines he is placed with, at least initially, conform to those very stereotypes. The result is an odd dichotomy of unique character traits and old stereotypes. Forge takes Storm on journeys of spiritual awakening and a former friend of Forge's chastises him for turning his back on his mystical heritage in favor of technology.

Gambit

Remy LeBeau is an American mutant with the power to charge objects with energy that causes them to explode when suddenly hit or impacted against other objects. Gambit was born and raised in New Orleans and belongs to a group called the Thieves Guild. Before joining the X-Men, Gambit was a master thief. Much like Nightcrawler, Colossus, or Banshee, Gambit's dialogue is often written with a thick phonetic accent, in this case French.

Significant Storylines for Race and Gender

A storyline involving Professor Xavier serves to make the metaphorical connection between mutants and racial and ethnic minorities unavoidable. In the story, Professor Xavier is attacked by bigoted students, a clear hate crime, and an example of hate speech towards mutants is linked to hate speech that exists in the real world.

In *The Uncanny X-Men #192* (Apr. 1985) Professor Xavier has begun working as an adjunct professor at Columbia University where, though he has not revealed himself to be a mutant to the world, he does touch on the plight of mutants in his class. He is attempted to draw his students' attention to the threat mutants face in an increasingly hostile world. As he explains to Storm,

The "mutant menace" has suddenly become a prime target for television and tabloid exposes, and the view most often presented is so hostile I fear they'll do lasting—possibly irreparable—harm. More mutants are born every day, Ororo. What hope have they—or humanity—in a world where they're condemned outright as evil? (10)

After one of his evening classes as Professor Xavier passes in front of a building with graffiti reading "MUTIE DIE!" across its side a voice calls out "Mutie Lover!!" A group of students block his path and when Xavier says "Let me pass, please. I want no trouble," one of the students replies "Tough—we don't want your kind at our school" (30). Because Xavier is first called a "mutie lover" and, at this point, the students have no way of knowing he is a mutant, their hatred is clearly towards someone they perceive as being sympathetic to mutants, not a mutant himself. The hatred towards mutants has spread to any who would associate with or defend them.

Professor Xavier uses his mental powers to paralyze the limbs of his attackers, but as is explained in the thought balloons, "…more lurk in the shadows […] there are so many—their thoughts so chaotic—hard to keep track---did I spot them all, have I frozen…" (30). At this point a brick thrown by an assailant Professor

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Xavier had not seen strikes him in the head and all those who had been frozen are now free to move. They quickly conclude that "He must be one of 'em. The Prof's a mutie!" and with a cry of "Waste him" they all attack. As they leave his unconscious and bloody body on the sidewalk, the gang talks among themselves saying, "The nerve o' the sum-belly, passing himself off as a real human being," "Hey man, he won't be trying that again," "He got what he deserved," and "I dunno 'bout you all but this's given me a thirst, how's about we grab some brews" (30).

In subsequent issues Xavier returns to teaching after recovering from his injuries, but the students who attacked now plant a bomb in his office, which when triggered fails to kill anyone. In *The Uncanny X-Men #196* (Aug. 1985) Kitty Pryde comes upon the group of students who planted the bomb and Phil, one of the students, says to her, "I hadn't though of this till now, brat, but you attend Charles Xavier's Private School upstate. You a mutie then, Pryde, like him?!" Pryde responds to Phil, who is African American, by saying, "Gee I dunno, Phill---are you a nigger?" When Phil tells her to watch her mouth Pryde responds, "Watch yours! Especially when you use words like that and try to be intentionally hurtful" (14).

It is in this period that the first use of hate-speech, complete with slang and derogatory terms for mutants becomes common when portraying the prejudice the X-Men face. In this instance, the hate-speech is drawn as an unavoidable comparison to the language directed at African Americans, though in later years it will be also be uses as a metaphor for hate speech directed at homosexuals.

One of the most significant stories involving gender roles is "Inferno." Written by Chris Claremont, "Inferno" bears several thematic similarities to "The

Dark Phoenix Saga." Both stories involve a female character discovering new powers, being driven mad, threatening all of creation while adopting an evil persona, and finally dying to end the threat. In this case, Madelyne Pryor becomes the Goblin Queen and threatens to open a portal between hell and Earth. Madelyne Pryor is a clone of Jean Grey, so the similarities to the Dark Phoenix Saga include the physical appearance of the antagonist, not simply the themes of the story.

Pryor's story is very complex. She was introduced shortly after Jean Grey's apparent death in The Dark Phoenix Saga. Cyclops meets Pryor in Alaska, when he is visiting his grandparents after he has quit the X-Men to grieve for his loss of Jean Grey. Pryor could remember very little of her life before a plane crash of which she was the sole survivor. She has the exact same appearance as Jean Grey, and Cyclops is immediately attracted to her. After a rapid courtship, Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor marry, and Cyclops retires from his superhero life. Together Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor have a child named Nathan Summers.

This idyllic life was to be short-lived because when Cyclops received a phone call that his Jean Grey was alive, he immediately abandoned his wife and child. This action by Cyclops seems out of character, and it seems to have been driven simply by an editorial decision. The publisher wanted to reunited all of the original X-Men as a team in the pages of *X-Factor*, which is why the decision to resurrect Jean Grey and retcon the Phoenix storyline occurred. This also meant that Cyclops had to become a superhero again, and be disentangled from the home life he had established. It seems that rather than take time to do this, the decision was made to separate Cyclops from Madelyne and Nathan as quickly as possible.

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Understandably, Madelyne is upset at this turn of events. Because of her former association with Cyclops, her life is occasionally threatened by enemies of the X-Men, and the X-Men take her into their care to protect her. A demon, sensing Pryor's anger, begins to manipulate her and gives her access to demonic powers. This, coupled with the revelation that she is a clone of Jean Grey, drives her fully insane and she manifests incredible power and takes on the title of The Goblin Queen.

Much as Jean Grey's descent into madness was accompanied by more open sexuality and revealing outfits, Madelyne Pryor's change includes both those character transformations. In *The Uncanny X-Men #239* (Dec. 1988) the issue immediately prior to the beginning of Inferno and the Pryor's adoption of the Goblin Queen persona, she sleeps with Cyclops' brother, Havok. And again, as with the Dark Phoenix storyline, Pryor is the instigator of the sexual encounter. Pryor goes to Havok to seduce him, but he protests "You're my brother's wife!" (21). Pryor responds, "News to him, these days. Alex, I didn't walk out on him—I didn't abandon out baby—I didn't toss this commitment down the dumpster. If the marriage is over, it's none of my doing" (22). Then, while Havok sleeps following their implied intercourse, Pryor goes to make a deal with a demon which results in her fully becoming the Goblin Queen. And, as with Jean Grey when she was the Black Queen, the Goblin Queen's outfit is ridiculously revealing.

While a character such as Storm, who remains a very strong character even when losing her powers is a progressive female portrayal in superhero comic books, some of the most famous storylines in X-Men comic books deal with a female

character becoming more sexual in act and appearance, gaining new powers, going mad and becoming evil. There is a close intertwining of female sexuality and morality which is not as apparent with male characters. Cyclops abandoned his family because an old lover returned, but became the team leader of another group of heroes. The woman he abandoned becomes a supervillain.

The Number Analysis

This period is the most balanced of all in terms of gender representation. There is also a slight increase in diversity on the team, though overall the series becomes more dominated by white characters than it had been in the previous period of X-Men comics. The series also features a higher percentage of Americans on the team than the previous period.

There are 19 characters who appear as members of the team between *The Uncanny X-Men #167* (Mar. 1983) and *The Uncanny X-Men #280* (Sep. 1991)[11]. Of these, 11 (57.9%) are male, and 8 (42.1%) are female. These characters make 631 appearances in this period. Of these 331 (52.5%) are male and 300 (47.5%) are female. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the members of the team in this period and how often they appeared.

A few significant points stand out from this period. First, though the team has been completely dominated by male members for most of the series, in this period there are significantly more women on the team than men. Storm, Rogue, Dazzler, and Psylocke are the core of the team, with Wolverine, Longshot or Havok rotating

[11] Because of the significant alteration to Psylocke's body, the issues in which she appeared as a British woman are listed as Psylocke (1) and the issues in which she appeared as an Asian woman are listed as Psylocke (2).

in. Also, through *The Uncanny X-Men #280* (Sep. 1991) Storm has appeared more

than any other character. Her 156 appearances represent 61.9% of the original

issues published (discounting the reprinted issues between #67-93). The characters

that appear most frequently after Storm, though, are all men. Wolverine, Colossus, Cyclops, Nightcrawler, and Professor X are the only other character with more than 100 appearances through this period of X-Men comics.

The villains were still more than three-quarters men, but the number became slightly more balanced than previous periods. There were 143 characters who appeared as villains in these issues. Of these, 104 (72.7%) were male, 35

Character	Appearances (% of issues)
Storm	82 (72.6%)
Wolverine	77 (68.1%)
Rogue	74 (65.5%)
Colossus	71 (62.8%)
Nightcrawler	39 (34.5%)
Psylocke (1)	37 (32.7%)
Dazzler	37 (32.7%)
Shadowcat	32 (28.3%)
Longshot	31 (27.4%)
Havok	30 (26.5%)
Professor X	25 (22.1%)
Forge	16 (14.2%)
Banshee	15 (13.3%)
Phoenix (Rachel Summers)	13 (11.5%)
Psylocke (2)	13 (11.5%)
Jubilee	12 (10.6%)
Gambit	11 (9.7%)
Magneto	9 (8.0%)
Cyclops	7 (22.1%)
Table 13: The number of times characters appeared as members of the X-Men between 1983-91	

(24.5%) were female, and 4 (2.8%) had no discernible gender. There were 510

appearances by villains in these issues. Of these, 361 (70.8%) were by male villains,

140 (27.5%) were by female villains, and 9 (1.8%) were by characters (mostly

demons or aliens) with no discernible gender.

While there were more male characters that guest-starred than female

characters, the female characters appeared more frequently. There were 108 guest

stars in this period. Of these, 62 (57.4%) were male and 46 (42.6%) were female. Of the 548 appearances by guest stars, 280 (51.1%) were by females and 268 (48.9%) were by males.

In total, there were 270 characters that appeared in these issues. Of these, 177 (65.6%) were male, 89 (33.0%) were female, and 4 (1.5%) had no discernible gender. The actual number of appearances were much more balanced between genders than ever before. Of 1,689 appearances, 960 (56.8%) were by male characters, 720 (42.6%) by female characters, and 9 (.5%) by characters with no discernible gender. In the first time period analyzed in this study, 85.0% of all appearances were by male characters and in the second period analyzed 68.0% of all appearances were by male characters. The X-Men comic book series is showing a steady increase in the number of female characters portrayed in the series and also in how often the female characters appear.

While the diversity of the X-Men increases overall in this period, the diversity of the overall cast of characters decreases, as a higher total percentage of characters and appearances in this period are by white characters when compared with the period between *Giant-Size X-Men #1* and *The Uncanny X-Men #166*. The series is still more diverse, statistically speaking, when compared to the issues published in the 1960s.

Of the 19 characters to appear on the X-Men, 13 (68.4%) are white, 2 (10.5%) are Jewish, 2 (10.5%) are Asian, 1 (5.3%) is Native American, and 1 (5.3%) is Black. Strictly speaking, only 18 characters appeared as X-Men, but because Psylocke appeared in two different bodies with different ethnicities, each version of

the character is counted as distinct for the purposes of this analysis. There were 631 appearances by characters on the X-Men in this period. Of these, 467 (74.0%) were by white characters, 82 (13.0%) were by a Black character, 41 (6.5%) were by Jewish characters, 25 (4.0%) were by Asian characters, and 16 (2.5%) were by a Native American character.

As has been the case in every period analyzed so far, the villains are more diverse than the heroes. Of the 143 villains to appear, 90 (62.9%) were white characters, 25 (17.5%) were alien characters, 9 (6.4%) were Asian characters, 5 (3.5%) were robotic characters, 4 (2.8%) were Black characters, 4 (2.8%) were Native American characters, 3 (2.1%) were demonic characters, 2 (1.4%) were of unknown ethnicity, and 1 (0.7%) was an Egyptian character. Of the 510 appearances by villains, 340 (66.7%) were by white characters, 49 (9.6%) were by alien characters, 33 (6.5%) were by Asian characters, 21 (4.1%) were by robotic characters, 18 (3.5%) were by Native American characters, 17 (3.3%) were by Black characters, 13 (2.5%) were by characters with unknown ethnic origin, 11 (2.2%) were by Egyptian characters, and 8 (1.6%) were by demonic characters.

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Chapter 6: 1991-2001: New Creative Teams and Broadening the Mutant Metaphor

Following the departure of Claremont as writer of the series the new creative team often explored earlier characters and villains. As a result, the more recent more diverse characters began to appear less frequently. In another development, the mutant metaphor, which had most often been used to explore prejudice against racial minorities, began to be explored in terms of prejudice and hatred directed at groups. One storyline introduced the Legacy Virus and the subsequent reaction in the Marvel narrative universe in many ways reflected the HIV scare in the real world.

The Creators and General Storyline

This period represents a significant change in the publication practices of Marvel concerning the X-Men franchise. While there had been several previous spin-off titles associated with the X-Men franchise, including *Dazzler, New Mutants, X-Factor*, *Wolverine* and *Excalibur,* those series had different focuses than *Uncanny X-Men*. *Dazzler* and *Wolverine* featured the adventures of a single protagonist, *New Mutants* was about a young new generation of mutants being trained in their powers, and *X-Factor* was originally envisioned as a chance to reunite the original X-Men. In *X-Factor*, which launched in 1986, Cyclops, a resurrected Marvel Girl, Iceman, Beast, and Angel teamed up under the disguise of being a team of mutant hunters who would capture dangerous mutants for a price. In reality, they would take the jobs only to then remove the mutants from dangerous situations and train them. Eventually, X-Factor decides that the "mutant hunting" front inflames hatred,

and they drop the ruse, though they still do not interact with X-Men very often. *Excalibur* featured a team of mutants based in Britain, and employed several of Marvel's British characters as well as popular members of *The Uncanny X-Men* who were being written out of that series. The team title that interacted with *The Uncanny X-Men* most often was *New Mutants*, because they were also based out of Xavier's mansion.

In 1991, Marvel published *X-Men #1* (Oct. 1991) which was the highest selling comic book in history. This new series was to be a second "core" X-Men title, while all the other titles would be ancillary. At this same time *New Mutants* changed its name to *X-Force*, to more closely be associated with the other X-titles and also to recognize the new direction that title was taking. No longer would that team be students, they were now soldiers led by a mysterious mutant from the future named Cable. Cable was really Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor's son, Nathan, who had been raised in the future. *X-Men* and *The Uncanny X-Men* would feature two teams of X-Men which used the same base of operations, the X-Mansion. The "Gold Team" would be in *X-Men* and the "Blue Team" would be in *The Uncanny X-Men*. Originally, the plan was that the two teams would be completely separate, but quickly crossovers and guest-stars are shared between the two titles.

As previously touched on, Chris Claremont ceased writing *The Uncanny X-Men* due to creative and editorial conflicts. Jim Lee, a popular artist, wanted to take the X-Men in a direction Chris Claremont did not want to explore, and the editor gave preference to Lee. Unfortunately for Marvel, after a little more than a year Lee left Marvel Comics to found a new comic book company with six of the most popular

artists of the time. Marvel alienated

Claremont in order to appease Lee, who

left shortly thereafter. Following

Claremont's departure, Marvel brought

John Byrne in to script Jim Lee's plot

outlines, in hopes of connecting with the

fan base that saw the Claremont-Byrne

era as the height of X-Men success.

Byrne would only last a few issues

before frustrations caused him to quit.

Scott Lobdell replaced Byrne as

Writer (co-plotter)	Issues
John Byrne	*#281-5, 288*
Jim Lee (Co-plotter)	*#281, 285-8*
Whilce Portacio (Co-plotter)	*#281-8*
Scott Lobdell	*#286-319, 322-49, 390-3*
Mark Waid	*#320-1*
Steven T. Seagle	*#350-63, 365*
Ralph Macchio	*#364*
Fabian Nicieza	*#366-7*
Joe Casey	*#368*
Terry Kavanagh	*#369-73, 375-8, 380*
Jay Faeber	*#374*
Chris Claremont	*#379, 381-9*
Table 14: Writers and co-plotters of *The X-Men* from 1991-2001	

the writer, and he had a much longer tenure before being replaced by Steven Seagle,

Terry Kavanagh, and eventually Chris Claremont. Almost a decade after leaving the

title, and exactly 100 issues after he left, Claremont would return to *The Uncanny X-Men* for a nine issue run. Changes in editors and publishers at Marvel had made his

return, which seemed unlikely when he first left, possible. A full list of the writers

who worked on *The Uncanny X-Men* is

found in Table 14.

Significant artists from this period included Whilce Portacio, John Romita Jr.,

Andy Kubert, Tom Raney, Brandon Peterson, Joe Madureira, Chris Bachalo, Leinil

Francis Yu, Adam Kubert, and Salvador LaRocca, with many other artists filling in

briefly for single issues.. Jim Lee did not provide art for *The Uncanny X-Men* as he

was drawing the second X-Men title that had recently launched, though he did co-plot the stories in *The Uncanny X-Men* while he remained at Marvel.

This period of X-men comics begins with the X-Men having split into the Gold and Blue teams, so many of the most popular X-Men are now split between *The Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men*. Because of this, many popular characters such as Wolverine, Shadowcat, and Colossus begin to appear less frequently in *The Uncanny X-Men*, though it is likely they were still appearing in other X-Men related comic books. This study will only examine the portrayals in *The Uncanny X-Men*.

One of the first storylines from this period involves Bishop, a mutant law enforcer form the future traveling back through time to the present day in pursuit of time-travelling criminals. Bishop, an African American mutant with the power to absorb energy and redirect it back out of his body in laser-like blasts. He becomes trapped in the present day and after the X-Men help to capture the criminals he was hunting he joins the team.

The next storyline is called "X-Cutioner's Song," a crossover that included *The Uncanny X-Men, X-Men, X-Factor,* and *X-Force.* This was a twelve-part story that featured one chapter in each X-title for three consecutive months. At a concert organized by a mutant pop star to promote diversity Professor Xavier is giving a speech when he is shot by a man who looks just like Cable, who is the mysterious leader of the young team of mutants called X-Force. It is revealed in the course of this storyline that Cable is Nathan Summers, the child Cyclops had with Madelyne Pryor. Nathan had been infected with a disease and sent to the future for advanced medical aid. Cable, older than Cyclops in the present, has travelled back in time to

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the present. The man who shot Professor Xavier was a clone of Cable, who was himself the child of a clone. After more than thirty years, X-Men continuity is getting quite convoluted.

At this time a new recurring threat to mutants is introduced, the Legacy Virus. The Legacy Virus is a disease which, initially, is confined to the mutant population but eventually begins to affect normal humans as well. This storyline is introduced in the early 1990s, when the AIDS scare was quite prominent in the media. The first victim of the Legacy Virus is Illyana Rasputin, the younger sister of Colossus. Upset over the death of his sister, and the prejudice he sees all around, Colossus leaves the X-Men to join Magneto, believing that a more aggressive strategy is needed to protect mutants.

In another crossover with the other X-Men titles, this one called "Fatal Attractions," Magneto rips the adamantium off of Wolverine's bones and through his flesh. In reaction, Professor Xavier performs a "mindwipe" of Magneto, which leaves him in a coma. The "mindwipe" will late be revealed to have left a portion of Magneto's psyche in Professor Xavier's mind which will result in Professor Xavier going insane and becoming a supervillain, in what is now a tradition in X-Men comic books.

Jean Grey and Scott Summers are married and Cyclops and Cable being to establish a relationship as father and son. Banshee and a reformed Emma Frost, formerly the villainous White Queen, decide to team up to train a new class of young mutants. Introduced in the pages of *X-Men* and *The Uncanny X-Men* this new team is spun-off into its own comic book, *Generation X*.

Professor Xavier's insane son, codenamed Legion, travels back in time twenty years to kill Magneto, believing that this will shape the world in a manner pleasing to his father. Instead, an alternate dystopic timeline results called The Age of Apocalypse results. Eventually the normal timeline is restored. During this storyline, all of Marvel's X-titles ceased publication for four months and were replaced by new titles set in the Age of Apocalypse. This study will not include this four-month replacement title in the analysis of *The Uncanny X-Men*.

The X-Men are warned of an oncoming threat called Onslaught. Magneto's base is destroyed and out of the wreckage an amnesiac man who looks like Magneto emerges and takes the name Joseph. In a crossover that affects all the major superhero titles Marvel publishes, Onslaught attacks. It is learned that Onslaught is Professor Xavier, or rather a psychic entity created in Professor Xavier's mind after he mindwiped Magneto. Eventually, the psychic entity is given physical form, and leaves Xavier behind. The combined efforts of Marvel's heroes defeat Onslaught, and Professor Xavier is then taken into custody.

There are several groups organized against mutant civil rights at this time. One is called the "Friends of Humanity," and while they have political goals, they often resemble white supremacist groups that will attack those they do not like. Mutants and those related to mutants are beat up by the Friends of Humanity. Building on the theme of political opposition to mutant rights is the crossover event "Operation: Zero Tolerance" in which the government, in conjunction with international governments, hunts down all mutants to try to capture or kill them. When the Prime Sentinels employed by Operation: Zero Tolerance are deemed to be

out of control the government rescinds Operation Zero Tolerance's authorization to act on U.S. soil.

Dr. Cecilia Reyes joins the X-Men and is the first Latino/a character to join the team. The X-Men, after surviving attacks by the Shadow King, Sauron, and Alpha Flight, search for Professor Xavier, who has been in custody since Onslaught. They recover Xavier and are able to restore his powers, which had not worked since Onslaught was defeated.

Magneto returns and it is discovered that "Joseph," who emerged from the wreckage of Magneto's base was only a clone. Joseph dies in battle. Subsequently, in a battle with Apocalypse Cyclops seemingly sacrifices himself, though in a storyline called "The Search for Cyclops" he is rescued and returns to the team.

The New Team Members

Bishop

Lucas Bishop is a time-traveling mutant from the future. While Storm was the first Black member of the X-Men, Bishop is the first African American member of the team. He has the power to absorb energy and redirect it out as plasma blasts. He comes to the present day in pursuit of renegade mutants from the future, but after they are defeated he is unable to return to his time period and joins the X-Men. In his time the X-Men are legendary, but as a result of his time travel his memories of what he learned about the X-Men are jumbled and fleeting.

Bishop has been trained as a soldier his entire life, and in his timeline the war between mutants and humans has been much more open and devastating than what

is seen in the X-Men's present day. Bishop's soldier-like attitude to the X-Men's missions sometimes puts him at odds with the team, which though a fighting unit, is much more individualistic than a military unit. Bishop is very disciplined and organized, but sometimes struggles to take orders from the team leader when he believes he has seen a better course of action. Because of this, many find him to be arrogant and abrasive.

White Queen

The White Queen is yet another reformed villain who becomes a member of the team, joining the likes of Banshee, Sunfire, and Rogue. In subsequent periods White Queen is a regular member of the team, but at this time she is only briefly a member of the X-Men. After one adventure with the team she then goes with Banshee to train the next generation of mutants in a series called *Generation X*. White Queen has psychic powers on the level of Jean Grey. Some of her most defining characteristics are her arrogance, her extremely elitist and aristocratic attitudes, and her penchant for wearing revealing outfits at all times. The White Queen was one of the first female characters in the X-Men to wear a costume that was clearly meant for seduction.

Cannonball

Samuel Guthrie was one of the first team young mutants to be trained in the series *The New Mutants* which premiered in 1983. His joining the X-Men represented his graduation from adolescent student to full-fledged X-Man, which had been his life's dream. He has the power to generate concussive blasts which propel him in flight at great speeds. As he is flying his body produces a protective

field so that he cannot be harmed, so he can slam into objects or foes without fear of personal injury.

Joseph

Joseph is the name taken by a man who identically resembles Magneto. Because he stumbles out of the wreckage of Magneto's old base, it is assumed that he is an amnesiac Magneto. However, it is revealed that he is a clone of Magneto, who was created by Sabra for the sole purpose of killing Magneto. Joseph's storyline is at times confusing, and it seems likely that he was originally intended to be Magneto, but later writers made the decision to have him be a clone.

Cecilia Reyes

Cecilia Reyes is a Puerto Rican doctor who reluctantly joins the X-Men after several offers. Marvel Comics has identified her as Afro-Latin American, She is the first Latina to join an X-Men team, though Latino/a characters had appeared previously in the spin-off X-Men books. Cecilia Reyes initially chose not to join the X-Men because she wished to focus on her work in medicine and had no interest in becoming a superhero. She has the mutant ability to project a force field around her body, though the power has been expanded into a more aggressive use in some stories. The majority of the stories featuring Cecilia Reyes did not occur in *The Uncanny X-Men*, but in one of the other mutant titles published by Marvel. While initially Reyes, who is a strong, independent character and very accomplished in the field of medicine, avoids most of the negative stereotypes that are sometimes used in popular culture when depicting African Americans or Latinos, she develops an

addiction to an illegal drug in one of the few storylines in which she is featured. Professor Xavier helps her to break this addiction.

Maggot

Japheth was a Black South African character who did not endure for long life on the team in *The Uncanny X-Men*. His mutant powers were telepathic control over two large slug-like maggots named Eeny and Meeny, who also served as his digestive system. These maggots can digest anything, and after returning to Maggot's abdomen, give him superior strength and energy from the nourishment they carry.

Initially little is known about Maggot, but it is later revealed that as a child in South Africa during Apartheid his mutation was misunderstood by all around him. Magneto finds Japheth and helps him learn to control the maggots which serve as his digestive system. When Japheth witnesses Magneto murder several white Afrikaner soldiers who had been murdering Black South Africans he rejects Magneto's solution to the prejudice in his country, and runs away from his benefactor. While this character history does help to broaden the scope of the prejudice metaphor in X-Men comic books beyond race relations in the United States, it is not touched on by the character or the themes in stories after it is revealed.

Clearly, the back story about South Africa was not intended when Maggot first appeared, because "if you look at his early appearances, you will see Australian dialect in his speech" because the character's creator, Scott Lobdell, "intended Maggot to be Australian, not South African" ("Maggot"). After the South African

backstory is decided, the character frequently uses Afrikaans slang rather than Australian dialect.

After his maggots return to his body to feed him, his skin turns blue for a time. However, it will return to his normal skin tone shortly. Because of this Maggot, like Colossus, can appear to be either a mutant or pass as a normal human depending on if his powers are in use. Unlike Colossus, Maggot is still is identified as part of a minority group, in both his home country and the United States when using his mutant powers or appearing as a normal human.

Marrow

After Nightcrawler, Marrow is one of the first members of the X-Men who is always clearly identified as a mutant. Because her mutant powers causes bones to protrude from all over her body she cannot pass for a normal human, as most of the X-Men can. Marrow is another character who first appeared as a villain, and then became a member of the X-Men. In her appearances as a villain Marrow is very grotesque, but under the tutelage of the X-Men she gains greater control of her powers and becomes more classically attractive.

Cable

Cable is Nathan Summers, the child of Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor who was taken into the future and raised there, only to return to the present day as a soldier determined to destroy the threat of Apocalypse. Cable appeared regularly in *X-Force* as the leader of that team as well as in his own long-running series, *Cable*. Cable's stay on the X-Men often highlighted the tension in his relationship with his father,

Scott Summers, and his pseudo-mother Jean Grey. Besides not having been raised by them, Cable is older than either of them, creating a unique family dynamic.

Thunderbird II

Neal Shaara was a new mutant introduced during Chris Claremont's brief return to the X-Men titles. The character had no relation to the original Thunderbird from *Giant-Size X-Men #1*. While India has a very diverse set of ethnicities and cultural groups, we are not told much about the character's heritage other than that he is Indian and his family lives in Calcutta. While he takes the codename Thunderbird, his powers are almost identical to Sunfire, another character who was part of the team that relaunched the X-Men franchise in 1975.

Gender

In previous periods the storylines "The Dark Phoenix Saga" and "Inferno" have been analyzed. In both instances a female associated with the X-Men gained new powers, succumbed to an outside influence, and threatened all of existence. A storyline with similar plot points from this period is "Onslaught." Professor Xavier, influenced by a seed of evil from Magneto's mind, creates a new psychic entity called Onslaught. Eventually this psychic entity takes on physical form and leaves Xavier's mind and body, and threatens all life on Earth.

One of the key differences in these storylines is the gender of the protagonist/antagonist, and how their gender is an aspect of their displays of evil. While Jean Grey, joining with the Phoenix Force became the Dark Phoenix and Madelyne Pryor receiving demonic powers from S'ym became the Goblin Queen,

Professor Xavier, coupled with aspects of Magneto's mind, gave birth to Onslaught. Marvel's official explanation of Onslaught's origin is that,

> When Charles Xavier telepathically rendered Magneto catatonic, he unknowingly absorbed Magneto's dark ego. Magneto's negative emotions merged with Xavier's suppressed urges, forming a powerful, dormant psionic entity - the self-dubbed Onslaught. […]Soon after, Xavier encountered X-Man (Nate Grey) on the astral plane, who pulled Xavier's astral form into the physical world. Onslaught thus escaped Xavier's mind, but was still "tethered" to Xavier. ("Onslaught").

Thus, while it was Jean Grey and Madelyne Pryor who became villains, Professor Xavier housed Onslaught and more or less gave birth to the creature, but was not physically within its being. Dark Phoenix was the devourer, and consumed an entire star and threatened to consume all of creation. The Goblin Queen opened a portal to a hell dimension and threatened to have demons destroy this plane of existence. Originally, Onslaught sought to ensure peaceful coexistence between humanity and mutants by fascistic force, but in the end he decides that the destruction of both groups is the only way to guarantee peace.

Jean Grey and Madelyne Pryor become more sexual in both their path to villainy and in their roles as villains. Professor Xavier, conversely, becomes a hyper-masculine being. Both Jean Grey and Madelyne Pryor had sexual encounters signal their descent into evil. The first warning the X-Men have of the coming of Onslaught is the defeat of their long-time foe and Professor Xavier's half-brother the Juggernaut by an unnamed foe. The women are sexualized in their villainy,

Professor Xavier is marked as more strong and violent, single-handedly defeating a foe that had troubled the entire team of X-Men numerous times before.

Also significant is the way these characters evil forms are shown. In Jean Grey's path to becoming the Dark Phoenix she became the Black Queen, and wore black lingerie as her costume. The Goblin Queen wore what were essentially tattered rags that barely covered her as her costume. Onslaught is a massively armored being. His size and armor are signs of his power, whereas the sexuality of the Black Queen and Goblin Queen were highlighted.

The consequences that these heroes face for their turn to towards evil are also different. The Dark Phoenix and the Goblin Queen were both killed in order to balance the scales of justice. Professor Xavier is simply arrested following the events of Onslaught. The women, who threatened mankind with their power and sexuality, must be exterminated. The man, who also threatened the entire world, is incarcerated.

Ethnicity

One of the most significant storylines from this period is the crossover "Executioner's Song." While this story does not have many elements which deal with prejudice towards racial minority, it does have a story element that offers a new interpretation for the mutant metaphorAlthough many have cited other interpretations, including the social anxiety and feelings of being an "outsider" that so-called "geeks" experience in high school, the prevalent interpretation for mutants had been an allegory for racial minorities. The conclusion of "Executioner's Song"

introduced a new element that invites the readers to interpret mutants as a metaphor for the alienation homosexuals experienced in society.

The villain of the story, Stryfe, releases a disease called the Legacy Virus which will only infect mutants. At first, normal humans are relatively unconcerned with this new disease which will not threaten humans. However, eventually the Legacy Virus makes the jump from mutants to also infecting humans. Moira MacTaggert, a longtime character in the X-Men series was the first human to die because of being infected by the Legacy Virus.

Fabian Nicieza, one of the writers "Executioner's Song" storyline has said that as a group, the writers hoped to create a greater separation between the X-Men and the rest of the Marvel universe by introducing the Legacy Virus.

We specifically discussed ways to alienate mutants even further from mainstream superheroes, since by then the thematic tone of prejudice was cemented into the book's structure. One thing the "new wave" of writers discussed was "why are mutants railed against but people are okay with the Fantastic Four or Thor?" The presentation of our theme was complicated by the inconsistency shown by the fictional population of the universe.

HIV/AIDS was a very prevalent topic at the time and absolutely as creators, having gone through our 20's in the 80's, we were well informed by the thematic underpinnings of prejudice against gays as a result of the virus outbreak.

But, Nicieza also wants it to be made clear that this does not mean that suddenly all readers should equate mutants with homosexuals. Rather, this introduced a new

layer to the metaphor, one which remained open to interpretation by both creators and readers.

The "Operation: Zero Tolerance" storyline does have some elements that line up with historical precedents from the history of the United States. And it is one of the more overt attempts to bring the looming threat from the future timelines the X-Men have seen, mutants being rounded up into concentration camps, into the present day. However, the story did not align strongly with contemporary concerns from the period when it was published. The threat of the government rounding up a group of people and placing them in concentration camps because of an aspect of their genetic code did not sound as threatening as it would have shortly after Japanese Americans were rounded up, or even as it would today with Guatanomo Bay still functioning as a base for untried enemies of the state.

Statistical Analysis

The period from *The Uncanny X-Men #281* (Oct. 1991) – *The Uncanny X-Men #393* (Jun. 2001) sees a reversal of several trends in terms of the representation of females in the series. In every previous period the percentage of female characters increased in the categories of X-Men team members, villains, and guest stars. In this period, the percentage of male characters in the series increases in every category, in some case dramatically. From *The Uncanny X-Men #167* (Mar. 1983) – *The Uncanny X-Men #280* (Sep. 1991) 64.2% of all characters in the series were male, in this subsequent period that number jumps to 71.1%.

Twenty-six characters appeared as members of the X-Men in the 112 issues

published in this period. Of these, 17 (65.4%) were male, and 9 (34.6%) were female. There is very little difference in those percentages when looking at the total number of appearances in this period. There were 765 appearances by team members in these issues. Of these 501 (65.5%) were by male characters and 34.5% were by female characters.

In terms of gender representation, the villains were the most imbalanced group in this period. Of the 163 villains the X-Men battled 131 (80.4%) were male and 32 (19.6%) were female. The appearances were almost identically balanced. Of the 391 appearances by villains, 309 (79.0%) were male and 82 (21.0%) were female.

There were 126 characters who guest-starred in the series in this period. Of these, 76 (60.3%) were male and 50 (39.7%) were female. Of the 436 appearances by guest stars between October 1991 and June 2001, 255 (58.5%) were by male characters, and 181 (41.5%) were by female characters.

In total, 315 characters appeared in *The Uncanny X-Men* in this period. Of these, 224 (71.1%)

Character	# of appearances
Storm	80 (70.8%)
Gambit	62 (54.9%)
Professor X	60 (53.1%)
Phoenix	56 (49.6%)
Beast	51 (45.1%)
Wolverine	48 (42.5%)
Rogue	50 (44.2%)
Bishop	45 (39.8%)
Iceman	44 (38.9%)
Angel	44 (38.9%)
Colossus	43 (38.1%)
Cyclops	28 (24.8%)
Marrow	24 (21.2%)
Nightcrawler	21 (18.6%)
Psylocke	21 (18.6%)
Kitty Pryde	16 (14.2%)
Cannonball	16 (14.2%)
Joseph	14 (12.4%)
Jubilee	14 (12.4%)
Cable	8 (7.1%)
Forge	8 (7.1%)
Maggot	4 (3.5%)
Thunderbird II	3 (2.7%)
Banshee	2 (1.8%)
White Queen	2 (1.8%)
Cecilia Reyes	1 (0.9%)
Table 15: Number of appearances by members of the X-Men between 1991-2001	

were male and 91 (28.9%) were female. The percentages were a little more balanced in terms of total appearances, though the number still skews heavily towards male dominance in

Category	# of male characters (percentage of total)	# of female characters (percentage of total)
Heroes	17 (65.4%)	9 (34.6%)
Villains	131 (80.4%)	32 (19.6%)
Guest Stars	76 (60.3%)	50 (39.7%)
Total	224 (71.1%)	91 (28.9%)
Table 16: The number of male and female characters appearing between 1991-2001		

sheer numbers. Of the 1592 appearances by characters in these issues, 1065 (66.9%) were male and 527 (33.1%) were female.

The covers of *The Uncanny X-Men* also generally featured more male characters than female characters in this period.. There were 148

Category	# of male character appearances (percentage of total)	# of female character appearances (percentage of total)
Heroes	501 (65.5%)	264 (34.5%)
Villains	309 (79.0%)	82 (21.0%)
Guest Stars	255 (58.5%)	181 (41.5%)
Total	1055 (66.9%)	527 (33.1%)
Table 17: The number of appearances by male and female characters between 1991-2001		

characters that appeared on the covers of *The Uncanny X-Men* between issues #291 and issue #393. Of these 113 (76.4%) characters were male and 35 (23.6%) characters were female. There were 488 appearances on the covers of *The Uncanny X-Men* in this period. Of these, 347 (71.1%) were male and 141 (28.9%) were female.

Once again, in terms of racial make up, the majority of the characters to appear in *The Uncanny X-Men* were white. And again, the villains were more diverse than the members of the X-Men and the guest stars. And, as has been common since

the Claremont era began, aliens were one of the most common groups besides white characters. In this period there is an increase in the number of characters who are introduced with relatively little official background information provided in either the comic books themselves or in official Marvel publications. There were more characters who appeared in *The Uncanny X-Men* in this period than any other that will be analyzed, and many of these new characters were depicted with mutations that remove any identifiable ethnic markers. Because of this, there are more characters that will be categorized as "unknown" in regards to ethnicity and nationality in this period.

Of the 26 characters to appear as members of the X-Men, 17 (65.4%) were white characters, 3 (11.5%) were Black characters, 2 (7.7%) were Asian characters, 1 (3.8%) was a Jewish character, 1 (3.8%) was an Afro-Latina character, 1 (3.8%) was a Native American character, and 1 (3.8%) was an Indian character. There were 765 appearances by members of the X-Men in this period. Of these, 573 (74.9%) were by white characters, 129 (16.9%) were by Black characters, 35 (4.6%) were by Asian characters, 16 (2.1%) were by a Jewish character, 8 (1.0%) were by a Native American character, 3 (.4%) were by an Indian character, and 1 (.1%) was by an Afro-Latina character.

Of the 163 villains to appear in these issues, 88 (54.0%) were white.   The next most represented group, as has become standard for *The Uncanny X-Men*, are the groups of villains with fictional ethnicities, including 17 (10.4%) alien characters, 9 (5.5%) robot characters, and 3 (1.8%) demonic characters. Additionally, in this period there are 22 (13.5%) villains with no identified ethnicity.

In descending order, the other ethnicities of the villains are 9 (5.5%) Asian characters, 6 (3.7%) Black characters, 4 Egyptian (2.5%) characters, 2 (1.2%) Native American characters, 1 (0.6%) Jewish character, 1 (0.6%) Latino character, and 1 (0.6%) Indian character,

There are 391 appearances by the villains in these issues. The majority of these appearances, 214 (54.7%) are by white characters. Fictional characters make significant appearances, including, 34 (4.6%) by alien characters, 22 (5.6%) are by robotic villains, and 4 (1.0%) are by demonic villains. There are 47 appearances by villains with no known ethnicity. In this period there are more appearances by Asian and Egyptian villains than other ethnicities. In descending order of number of appearances, the other ethnicities represented in the villains of this period include 18 (4.6%) appearances by Asian characters, 18 (4.6%) appearances by Egyptian characters, 15 (3.8%)appearances by Black characters, 9 (2.3%) appearances by Jewish characters, 7 (1.8%) appearances by Native American characters, 2 (0.5%) appearances by Indian villains, and 1 (0.3%) appearance by a Latino character.

The guest stars in this period are the less diverse than the heroes and villains. Of the 126 guest stars to appear in this period, 85 (67.5%) are white. There are 10 guest stars that have fictional ethnicities, 6 (4.8%) alien guest stars and 4 (3.2%) robotic guest stars. In this period there are 2 (1.6%) guest stars with no identifiable ethnicity. There are 11 (8.7%) Black guest stars, 6 (4.8%) Native American guest stars, 5 (4.0%) Latino guest stars, 5 (4.0%) Asian guest stars, and 2 (1.6%) Jewish guest stars.

The actual number of appearances by guest stars are even less diverse. Of the 436 appearances, 305 (70.0%) are by white characters. There are 17 (3.9%) appearances by alien guest stars and 5 (1.1%) appearances by robotic guest stars. There are 2 (0.5%) appearances by characters with unknown ethnicity.

Race	# of Heroes (% of total # of heroes)	# of Villains (% of total # of villains)	# of Guest Stars (% of total # of guest stars)	# of all characters (% of total # of characters)
White	17 (65.4%)	88 (54.0%)	85 (67.5%)	190 (60.3%)
Unknown	0 (0.0%)	22 (13.5%)	2 (1.6%)	24 (7.6%)
Alien	0 (0.0%)	17 (10.4%)	6 (4.8%)	23 (7.3%
Black	3 (11.5%)	6 (3.7%)	11 (8.7%)	20 (6.3%)
Asian	2 (7.7%)	9 (5.5%)	5 (4.0%)	16 (5.1%)
Robotic	0 (0.0%)	9 (5.5%)	4 (3.2%)	13 (4.1%)
Native American	1 (3.8%)	2 (1.2%)	6 (4.8%)	9 (2.9%)
Latino	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)	5 (4.0%)	6 (1.9%)
Jewish	1 (1.8%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.6%)	4 (1.3%)
Egyptian	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.3%)
Demonic	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.0%)
Indian	1 (3.8%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)
Afro-Latino	1 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)
TOTAL	26	163	126	315
Table 18: The number of characters in different ethnic groups to appear between 1991-2001				

In total, between *The Uncanny X-Men #281* (Oct. 1991) – *The Uncanny X-Men #393* (Jun. 2001) the series is more diverse than the previous period, but over 60% of the characters to appear are white and almost 70% of the appearances are by white characters. There were 315 characters that appeared in these 112 issues, and 190 (60.3%) were white characters. There were 23 (7.3%) alien characters, 13 (4.1%) robotic characters, and 3 (1.0%) demonic characters. Twenty-four (7.6%) characters appeared with no identifiable ethnicity. There were 20 (6.3%) Black characters, 16 (5.1%) Asian characters, 9 (2.9%) Native American characters, 6

(1.9%) Latino characters, 4 (1.3%) Jewish characters, 4 (1.3%) Egyptian characters, 2 (0.6%) Indian characters, and 1 (0.3%) Afro-Latina character.

In total, there were 1,592 appearances by character in this period. Of these, 1,092 were by white characters. There were also 51 (3.2%) appearances by alien characters, 27 (1.7%) appearances by robotic characters, and 4 (0.3%) demonic characters. There were 49 (3.1%) appearances by character with no known identifiable. There were 180 (11.3%) appearances by Black characters, 77 (4.8%) appearances by Asian characters, 34 (2.1%) appearances by Native American characters, 32 (2.0%) appearances by Jewish characters, 22 (1.4%) appearances by Latino characters, 18 (1.1%) appearances by Egyptian characters, 5 (0.3%) appearances by Indian characters, and 1 (0.1%) appearance by an Afro-Latina character.

While in the Claremont era the characters became more international, this period sees a higher number of characters and appearances by American characters. Of the heroes, villains, and guest stars the heroes has the highest concentration of American characters and appearances, while the villains have the smallest percentage of American characters and appearances.

Of the 26 characters to appear as members of the X-Men, 15 (57.7%) are American characters, 2 (7.7%) are German characters, 1 (3.8%) is an Irish character, 1 (3.8%) is a Russian character, 1 (3.8%) is a Kenyan character, 1 (3.8%) is a Canadian, 1 (3.8%) is a British character, 1 is a Cheyenne character, 1 is a South African character, 1 is a Puerto Rican character, and 1 is an Indian character. There are 765 appearances by members of the X-Men in this period. Of these, 520 (68.0%)

are by American characters, 80 (10.5%) are by a Kenyan character, 48 (6.3%) are by a Canadian character, 43 (45.6%) are by a Russian character, 35 (4.6%) are by German characters, 21 (2.7%) are by a British character, 8 (1.0%) are by a Cheyenne character, 4 (0.5%) are by a South African character, 3 (0.4%) is by a an Indian character, 2 (0.3%) are by an Irish character, and 1 (0.1%) is by a Puerto Rican character.

Of the 163 villains to appear, 78 (47.9%) are American characters. 12 (7.4%) are alien characters, 3 (1.8%) are demonic characters, 6 (1.6%) are of a fictional group called "The Inhumans" with their own nation found on the moon, 14 (8.6%) belong to a fictional group called "The Neo" who have their own nation, 16 (9.8%) of the characters have unknown nationality, and 4 (2.5%) of the villains have no applicable nationality. In the earthly nationalities of the villains, 6 (3.7%) are Japanese characters, 4 (2.5%) are French characters, 4 (2.5%) are Egyptian characters, 2 (1.2%) are Russian characters, 2 (1.2%) are British characters, 1 (0.6%) is an Irish character, 1 (0.6%) is a German character, 1 (0.6%) is a Canadian character, 1 (0.6%) is an Italian character, 1 (0.6%) is an Australian character, 1 (0.6%) is an Indian character, 1 (0.6%) is a Moroccan character, 1 (0.6%) is a Castillan character, 1 (0.6%) is an Inuit character, 1 (0.6%) is a Sri Lankan character, 1 (0.6%) is a Swedish character, 1 (0.6%) is an Eskimo character.

The villains make 391 appearances in these issues. Of these, 206 (52.7%) of the appearances are by white characters. In terms of fictional and non-earthly nationalities, 14 (3.6%) are by Neo characters, 3 (1.8%) are demonic, and 6 (1.5%)

are by Inhuman characters. Eleven (2.8%) appearances are by characters to whom ethnicity does not apply, and 39 (10.0%) are by characters with unknown ethnicity. In addition to those listed above, there were 18 (4.6%) appearances by Egyptian villains, 10 (2.6%) appearances by Japanese villains, 9 (2.3%) appearances by a German villain, 9 (2.3%) appearances by French villains, 7 (1.8%) appearances by an Italian villain, 5 (1.3%) appearances by a Castillan character, 4 (1.0%) appearances by a Swedish character, 3 (0.8%) appearances by an Irish character, 3 (0.8%) appearances by Russian characters, 3 (0.8%) appearances by British characters, 2 (0.5%) appearances by an Australian character, 2 (0.5%) appearances by an Indian character, 2 (0.5%) appearances by a Sri Lankan character, 1 (0.3%) appearance by a Moroccan character, 1 (0.3%) appearance by a Canadian character, and 1 (0.3%) appearance by an Inuit character.

Of the 126 guest stars to make an appearance in this period the majority, 69 (54.8%) are American. Of those from fictional lands, 7 (5.6%) are alien, 1 (0,8%) are demonic, 1 (0.8%) is Inhuman, 2 (0.6%) are Genoshan, 1 (0.3%) is Asgardian, and 1 (0.8%) is from a mythical group called the Eternals. In addition, 2 (0,6%) have no known country of origin. Of the remaining guest stars 9 (7.1%) are Canadian, 6 (4.8%) are British, (3.2%) are Japanese, 4 (3.2%) are Russian, 3 (2.4%) are German, 2 (1.6%) are Irish, 2 (1.6%) are Cheyenne, 2 are Monacan, 1 (0.8%) is Apache, 1 (0.8%) is Italian, 1 (0.8%) is Scottish, 1 (0.8%) is Australian, 1 (0.8%) is Mexican, 1 (0,8%) is Brazilian, 1 (0.8%) is South African, 1 (0.8%) is Puerto Rican, 1 (0.8%) is Greek, and 1 (0.8%) is Israeli.

Of the 315 characters to appear in this period, 162 (51.4%) are American. 19 (6.0%) are alien characters, 14 (4.4%) are Neo characters, 7 (2.2%) are Inhuman characters, 4 (1.3%) are demonic characters, 2 (0.6%) are Genoshan characters, 1 (0.3%) is an Asgardian character, 1 (0.8) is an Eternal character. Eighteen (5.7%) characters have no known or identifiable country of origin and 4 (1.2%) characters have no applicable country of origin.

Chapter 7: 2001-2008: Ensuring the Minority Metaphor

The Creators and Storylines

The comic book industry had experiences incredible success in the early 1990s, but in the late 1990s and early 2000s the industry suffered a crash that left publishers with dwindling readerships. While the X-Men had been one of the premiere superhero franchises throughout Claremont's run and into the 1990s, it was not immune to the market downturn. The X-Men titles saw their sales drop and soon the series was no longer the top selling title in the industry.

In 2000 Bill Jemas was hired as President of publishing for Marvel. He soon fired the company's editor-in-chief, Bob Harras, and brought Joe Quesada into that position. These two men were put in charge of changing the sales trends Marvel found its comic book titles producing. According to Dirk Deppey in an article for *The Comics Journal*:

> Jemas and Quesada wasted no time in transforming Marvel's publishing philosophy from a conservative, formulaic reliance on established superhero tropes to a more adventurous, whatever-sticks-to-the-walls approach, but from the beginning their experiments were conducted in the shadow of ironclad market reality. Both men made clear in interviews that they clearly understood that growth in Marvel's publishing division meant walking a fine line between two seemingly incompatible constituencies -- on the one hand, the company needed to maintain its existing base of lifelong superhero fans, while on the other, it also needed to experiment with new genres and

storytelling techniques, in order to appeal to potential readers who might not

be interested in what the existing fan base craved. ("X-Men...Retreat!")

One successful part of Jemas and Quesada's efforts was what became known as the

"Ultimate" line of comics. Titles such as *Ultimate Spider-Man* and *Ultimate X-Men*

were launched in a new narrative universe so that the characters could be

introduced to new readers without 30 years of intimidating continuity. Each title

started out as though the series was launching for the first time in 2000, with

modern art, themes, and dialogue, but characters that matched the existing versions

in the mainstream Marvel universe.

While all of Marvel's comic book series were struggling in the changing

market place, the X-Men, which had been so consistently a high seller, were of

particular concern. Marvel had two significant plans to revitalize the X-Men

franchises in the new millennium. One, was to bring in Grant Morrison, a popular

writer, to boldly revision the X-Men. The second, which would take longer to

implement, was to make the minority metaphor a higher concern for the series by

reducing the number of mutants in the Marvel universe.

Deppey explains the significance of bringing Morrison on as a writer of the X-

Men:

The most pointed manifestation of this willingness to experiment can be

found in Marvel's retooling of its X-Men franchise, and most especially in the

decision to give the flagship X-title to cult-favorite comics author Grant

Morrison. The X-Men had long been the crown jewel in Marvel's publishing

portfolio. While other titles' sales figures rose and fell based upon the appeal

of their content and the cachet of their creators from book to book, the X-Men's adventures in various books were almost always guaranteed to sell well, although over the years Marvel had managed to abuse even this phenomenon to the point of diminishing returns [...]. Because of its cash-cow status, the X-Men franchise had become one of the most conservative family of titles on the shelves, governed by a slavish devotion to the formula first established by Chris Claremont over twenty years ago. ("X-Men...Retreat!")

Morrison wrote a manifesto detailing his vision for the X-Men series. Among the points in "Morrison's Manifesto," as Marvel termed it when it was reprinted in a collection of X-Men comics, was the following:

In the last decade or so, the tendency at Marvel has been intensely conservative; comics like the X-MEN have gone from freewheeling, overdriven pop to cautious, dodgy retro. What was dynamic becomes static - dead characters always return, nothing that happens really matters ultimately. The stage is never cleared for new creations to develop and grow. The comic has turned inwards and gone septic like a toenail. The only people reading are fan boys who don't count. The X-MEN, for all it was still Marvel's bestseller, had become a watchword for undiluted geekery before the movie gave us another electroshock jolt. And in the last decade, sales fell from millions to hundreds of thousands. ("X-Men...Retreat!")

In the end, Morrison was assigned to write the *X-Men*, not *Uncanny X-Men*. To signify the new direction the franchise was taking, *X-Men* was renamed *New X-Men* for all

the issues when Morrison was writer, but was renamed to *X-Men* after his

departure.

While Morrison was receiving praise from fans and the media for his work on

New X-Men, Joe Casey and Chuck Austen were writing *Uncanny X-Men* to mixed

reviews. Casey's run is considered good, but not classic, while Austen is one of the

most controversial writers to have worked on the series. Austen's stories have been

called both misogynistic and anti-religious, though he denies both charges. The

frequent criticisms online from fans and reviewers resulted in Austen giving several

interviews in which he openly criticized the online community and fans of X-Men

comic booksAlthough sales did not diminish during his tenure as writer, it remains

one of the more debated runs on the series in online circles to this day.

In one interview, titled "Chuck Austen, The Last Interview" because he soon

stopped giving interviews, Austen was asked "When you see so much bile and

hatred thrown in your direction, do you ever want to just stop making comics or get

out of the industry?" His response recognized that his work was receiving more-

than-average criticism:

> It's reaching legendary status, isn't it? [...] **Everyone's** amazed by it. By the
>
> level and frequency and ferocity. You must be, or you wouldn't have asked
>
> this question, right Jen? I've never seen you or anyone else **ever** ask any
>
> other creator this question. What the hell is going on? [...]I mean, this is
>
> unprecedented, isn't it? I've never seen so much anger directed toward a
>
> single creator, anywhere, in my life. For someone who supposedly writes
>
> "unoriginal, unimaginative, rehash stories" I sure generate a lot of intense

emotions, don't I? So much so that it seems to be the buzz of the industry, at

the moment. I'm the most hated man in comics, to hear it from some. But

sales are up? How is this inequity possible? Maybe because the trolls are in

the **minority**? A loud and angry, but still small minority? [...] So, the answer

is, "yes" sometimes it affects me. I'm human, after all. So I stay offline and

avoid it as much as possible, and since the rest of the world doesn't revolve

around comics, it's somewhat easy to avoid. But most of the time, it's

honestly amusing, now that I really understand that these people are truly in

the minority, and generally unhinged. ("Chuck Austen, The Last Interview")

Though he claims to find the criticism amusing, those were excerpts from an almost

7,000 word response to questions about fan criticism of his work. In his answer,

Austen criticized retailers, other professionals, and fans in a rambling fashion. The

criticism of Austen's work, as noted, reached unprecedented heights even for

notoriously fickle online fans. Undoubtedly not all of this criticism was valid, and

Austen became an easy target of the "trolls" he identified in the interview. But some

of the criticism, especially claims that his stories have an anti-religious theme, can

be verified from even a simple plot description, as will be provided later.

While the quality of Austen's work is debated by his fans and detractors, it is

clear that the subsequent writers were not as controversial. Certainly they did not

receive universal praise, but the response from fans and critics was not as heated as

when was seen during Austen's run. Austen was immediately followed by

Claremont, in what was perhaps a move by Marvel editorial to appease upset fans

by bringing back a fan favorite. Dirk Deppey of *The Comics Journal* feels this was a move by Marvel to give old fans of the X-Men what they wanted:

> The end of Grant Morrison's run on *New X-Men* marked the final stage of an experiment first begun at the behest of Marvel executives Bill Jemas and Joe Quesada some four years ago, an attempt to make the company's flagship line more attractive to newer readers. Morrison in particular performed some amazing transformations upon the X-Men: abandoning the traditional Spandex superhero costumes, outing Professor Xavier as mentor of X-Men (and his school as their headquarters), providing said school with a full 200+ member student body, and generally giving the series a new, more science-fiction-oriented emphasis.
>
> Alas, [...] the new market for X-Men comics and graphic novels apparently never arrived, which means it's time to hit the reboot button and return things to the way they were. [...] Nostalgia is the name of the game, here: The primary Direct Market readership is between 25 and 35 years of age, and is looking for the same junkie thrill they first experienced as teenagers reading comics. Now that Marvel has finally decided which side of the fence it needs to be on, the company is clearly bound and determined to give the readership what it wants. The end result is "X-Men Reload," a marketing campaign centered around the Big Reboot [which includes Claremont's return]. ("X-Men Reload")

Claremont's return received mix reviews, but nowhere near the levels of negative reaction Austen had.

It was during Claremont's run that the second goal of Quesada and Jemas for the X-Men franchise was implemented. Quesada felt that the minority metaphor was what drove the X-men, but creators had added so many mutants to the Marvel Universe, that the metaphor no long functioned properly. In a mini-series called "The House of M," which was written by Brian Michael Bendis but crossed over with the X-Men titles, Magneto's daughter, Scarlet Witch, creates an alternate reality using her rather undefined powers in which her father's dreams of mutant dominance are a reality. As the heroes who have discovered that this new reality is false confront the Scarlet Witch, she uses her powers to reset the universe to its proper order. But as she resets the Marvel universe back to normal, she is more convinced than ever that the battle between humans and mutants will never cease, and she whispers, "No more mutants" just as reality is being restored. As a result, over 90 percent of the mutants in the Marvel universe lose their mutations, leaving only 198 identified mutants in the world. Mutantkind is closer to extinction than ever before, and the remaining X-Men will serve as their protectors

Claremont's run is followed by Tony Bedard, for two issues, and then Ed Brubaker for a significant

Writer	Issues
Joe Casey	*#394-409*
Chuck Austen	*#410-43*
Chris Claremont	*#444-72*
Tony Bedard	*#473-3*
Ed Brubaker	*#475-500*
Matt Fraction	*#500*
Table 19: Writers and co-plotters of *The Uncanny X-Men* from 2001-08	

run. A breakdown of all the writers and the issues they wrote between *The Uncanny X-Men #394* (Jul. 2001) through *Uncanny X-Men #500* (Sep. 2008) is found in Table 19.

In this period, the artists on the title tended to work for much shorter runs than the writers. There notably are more artists than writers in this period. The artists with the most issues include Phillip Tan, Salvador Larroca, Alan Davis, and Billy Tan. A list of all the artists to work on *Uncanny X-Men* in this period is found in Table 20.

This period begins with a storyline in which a singing pop star dates Chamber, a severely disfigured mutant. The singer is only dating Chamber because he is a mutant, and that gives her "street cred" and

Artist	Issue #
Ian Churchill	*#393-6*
Sean Phillips	*#397-8, 400, 404-5, 407-9, 413-5*
Mel Rubi	*#397*
Ashley Wood	*#398, 400*
Tom Raney	*#399, 460-1*
Cully Hamner	*#400*
Eddie Campbell	*#400*
Javier Pulido	*#400*
Matt Smith	*#400*
Ron Garney	*#401-2, 410-2, 421, 435-6*
Aaron Lopresti	*#403, 406*
Kia Asamiya	*#416-20*
Philip Tan	*#422-34*
Salvador Larroca	*#437-43, 487-91*
Alan Davis	*#444-7, 450-1, 455-9, 462-3*
Oliver Coipel	*#448-9*
Andy Park	*#452-4*
Chris Bachalo	*#464-8, 472*
Billy Tan	*#469-71, 475-6, 478-9, 481-2, 484-6, 492-4*
Roger Cruz	*#473-4*
Clayton Henry	*#477, 480, 483*
Michael Choi	*#495-99*
Greg Land	*#500*
Terry Dodson	*#500*
Table 20: Writers and co-plotters of *The Uncanny X-Men* from 2001-08	

helps her to shed her good girl image with the public. The X-Men also battle a group called The Church of Humanity which is committing genocide against mutants. The X-Men rescue a mutant woman named Stacy X from a mutant brothel, and she joins the team.

The story continues with the X-Men discovering a Catholic church serving as a drug house, with the Cardinal being an addict as well. The drugs are being made

and peddled by mutants, so the Church of Humanity attacks the church and kills

those within, including the Cardinal. The Juggernaut asks for the X-Men's help and

then accepts Professor Xavier's offer to stay at the mansion. Havok, who had been in

an alternate dimension for some time, is found in a coma being cared for by a nurse,

named Annie, who has fallen in love with him as she cares for him. Northstar, the

first homosexual character in mainstream superhero comics, is added to the X-Men's

roster. He had previously been a member of the Canadian superhero team Alpha

Flight. Nightcrawler, who had always been a deeply religious character and was

even ordained as a Catholic priest, begins to struggle with his faith.

The X-Men battle a group of werewolf-like mutants, as the soap opera

elements of the book become more of a focus. The interrelationships of characters

are what led some to criticize Austen as misogynistic, as the women on the team are

often portrayed as either seductresses who cannot restrain their impulses or

literally insane due to their raging emotions. One of the creepier relationships that is

explored is between Angel, who was one of the first members of the X-Men, and the

teenaged mutant who goes by the codename Husk, who is eighteen in these issues.

She had previously been a member of Generation X, the team of teenaged mutants

being trained in their powers, though it is mentioned in the series that she is now of

legal age. The age difference, while not as troubling as that between Xavier and Jean

Grey when she first came to the school and his thoughts revealed his attraction to

her, is still significant.

Havok awakes from his coma, and he and Polaris renew their relationship as

Havok's nurse, Annie, wonders about her feelings for him. Juggernaut is allowed to

join the X-Men. A storyline called "Holy War" followed, which is one of the more controversial of Austen's run. The X-Men are again battling The Church of Humanity, which has crucified mutants and left them on the lawn of the X-Men's mansion as a warning at the beginning of the story. What follows is a bizarre and convoluted story which, frankly, makes little sense. In their battle and subsequent interrogation of the leader of the Church of Humanity (who in his only previous appearance was a male, but is here, inexplicably now a female), it is revealed that she was a nun who was sexually abused by a Priest. Now, she has a goal of either taking over the Catholic Church or destroying it, depending on which line of dialogue has been spoken most recently. To do so, the Church of Humanity plans to install Nightcrawler as Pope, there is no explanation of how this will be accomplished, while he is using an image transducer to appear to be a normal human. Then, once he is the Pope they will turn off the image transducer due to his mutant appearance it will appear as if a demonic anti-Christ is leading the Catholic Church. Simultaneously, the Church of Humanity will activate a poison they have been lacing communion wafers with that will cause those who have consumed them to disintegrate, thus simulating the rapture. It is unclear what the simulation of the rapture is meant to accomplish, especially since this is not a Catholic belief, but a tenant Protestant theology.

In a review of this issue Paul O'Brien writes:

This story is so bad that it deserves to be immortalized in derision for years to come. Even as a hardcore atheist, I have little sympathy for Austen's bizarrely twisted idea of the Catholic Church, which seems to revolve

exclusively around the twin concepts of sexual abuse and bigotry. Granted

that those may be the Church's most prominent flaws, in Austen's stories

they seem to be the Church's only features.

The idea of a plan to install Nightcrawler as Pope - never previously

mentioned prior to this issue - is comically over the top. The idea that the

world's Catholics are going to react to a simulated Rapture in anything like

the manner described is little short of ludicrous and suggests that Austen still

thinks ordinary Catholics are little more than dogmatic slaves of their church.

I rather suspect the average Catholic in the street would continue their

existing policy of generally acting much like everyone else. ("X-Men, how far

you have fallen")

The storyline also retcons Nightcrawler's ordination to the priesthood, revealing

that it never happened and that it was all a hallucination induced by the Church of

Humanity.

The next storyline involves Nightcrawler meeting his father, Azrael. Azrael is

an ancient mutant who has been trapped in a hell dimension, but has periodically

escaped and sired children on Earth. After returning from this hell dimension,

where the X-Men thwart Azrael's plans to return permanently to Earth to conquer it,

they go to Kentucky to where a family with multiple mutant children is experience a

Romeo and Juliet situation when their son begins dating the daughter of an anti-

mutant bigot.

The X-Men have adventures in England and the Savage Land, adventures

which see the line up of the team change considerably. The story with the largest

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impact on the X-Men franchise in this period is "House of M," most of which takes place in a separate mini-series. The ramifications of House of M, which removed most mutants' powers and cut down the total number of empowered mutants in the Marvel universe to 198, had effects on all the X-Men family of comic books Marvel published. Following "The House of M" the X-Men's mansion becomes a refugee camp for all surviving mutants. Rachel Summers, who grew up in the dystopian future depicted in "The Days of Future Past" finds the refugee camp uncomfortably similar to the world she grew up in, and decides to try and connect with the relations she may have in this timeline. Recently, in *New X-Men*, Jean Grey was killed, and Rachel Summers visits the Grey household as they are still in mourning.

While Rachel is visiting the Grey family a Shi'ar Death Squad attacks. The Shi'ar have determined that because of the Grey's close links to the Phoenix force, anyone carrying Grey DNA cannot live. The Grey genome is declared a threat to the universe and is to be exterminated. Rachel survives the attack, but every other member of the Grey family is murdered in front of her eyes.

This sets the series off into a more interstellar tone, after being more Earth-centric for many years. One of the last storylines in this period is a twelve-issue epic entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Shi'ar Empire," in which a third Summers brother, who Cyclops and Havok had never known, rises to power as a villain and after many issues of intrigue becomes the new Emperor of the Shi'ar empire. Following this storyline the X-Men return to Earth and relocate from New York to San Francisco, which is a city they feel has always embraced minorities.

The New Members of the X-Men

There is only one wholly original characters introduced to the team in this period. Eight other characters become members of the X-men for the first time, but they had all been introduced in other X-Men related titles, as villains in the series, or as guest stars.

The new character that is introduced is a female mutant named Miranda Leevald who goes by the codename Stacy X. Stacy X has somewhat scaly or reptilian skin and also has the ability to produce pheromones which can alter the emotions of those around her. She used her pheromone powers working as a prostitute at the X-Ranch, a brothel where the prostitutes were exclusively mutants. The brothel was attacked and destroyed, with many of the mutants murdered by the Church of Humanity.

Stacy X's tenure as a member of the X-Men is short. She caused a great deal of friction among the member of the team, and in the end left because she knew her attempts to seduce other X-Men were not being well-received. In her short time she attempted to seduce Wolverine, Angel, and Nightcrawler. Nightcrawler was a priest at the time, so her advances were particularly unwelcome in that case. There is not much that is added to the character beyond her overt sexuality. Her mutant ability is to give men pleasure, she worked as a prostitute, and in her time with the team she was most noted for her attempts to seduce the men. Her final act before leaving is to make a video recording of herself jump-roping nude to leave for Angel, even though she knows he is not interested in a relationship with her.

Chamber and Husk are two mutants who were both regular characters in *Generation X*, a series about young mutants being trained in their powers. Jonothon

Starsmore is a British mutant who blew a massive cavity into his chest and lower face when his mutant powers first manifested. He goes by the codename Chamber and has a constant furnace of energy is burning in the cavity where his chest once was.

Paige Guthrie is the younger sister of Cannonball. Her mutant power is to shed the outer layer of her skin off and reveal a body made of a new material underneath. Most often would use her powers to create a new layer of stone or metal which would be stronger in battle. Husk's time with the X-Men is mostly marked by her attraction to the older Angel, and the subsequent consummation of that relationship.

Juggernaut and Mystique are both reformed villains who joined the team for their own causes. Juggernaut was shown as genuinely hoping to reform after years of being unhappy as a villain, while Mystique's motives were more self-serving and mercenary. Juggernaut is Professor Xavier's step-brother, and is a white American. Raven Darkholme, or Mystique, is a shapeshifting mutant who can take on any appearance. However, due to her mutation, her normal appearance is with blue skin and yellow eyesAlthough she could have any appearance she wanted, she chooses to appear with blue skin most often.

Jean-Paul Beaubier, or Northstar, is a French-Canadian mutant who possesses super speed. He was the first character in mainstream superhero comics who was openly identified as homosexual, though other characters had been hinted to be homosexual previously. He was a member of Canadian superhero team Alpha Flight prior to joining the X-Men.

Tessa, or Sage, has a computer-like mind that process and store information with superhuman speed and accuracy. She also has telepathy. Sage was used as an Professor Xavier as a spy in the Hellfire Club. In a story that presented a retcon to both Xavier's and Sage's past, when forming the original X-Men Xavier also met Sage, and instead of bringing her to the school had her enter the Hellfire Club.

John Proudstar is the younger brother of Thunderbird, the first X-Man to die on a mission. Proudstar takes the name Warpath and is another reformed villain. He originally joined the villainous group of young mutants called the Hellions to take his revenge on the X-Men, who he blamed for his brother's death. He eventually reformed and joined X-Force and then the X-Men. During "The Rise and Fall of the Shi'ar Empire he begins to date the Hepzibah.

Hepzibah is the second non-mutant to appear as an official member of the X-Men. A female alien with cat-like features, Hepzibah was a member of the interstellar pirate group called the Starjammers, who frequently aided the X-Men. When the leader of the Starjammers, Cyclops and Havok's father Corsair, is killed in battle, Hepzibah decides to explore a different path in her life and returns to Earth with the X-Men.

Gender

After a significant period when the gender representation on the team has been almost equal between men and women, *Uncanny X-Men #394* (Jul. 2001) begins a run of almost thirty issues when the core team appearing in the series is either entirely male, or all men except for Stacy X, a former prostitute who spends much of her time attempting to seduce the various men on the team. Not only has

Stacy X been working as a prostitute, her superpower is literally to manipulate men's emotions. The previous times the X-Men have only had one female member included when Marvel Girl was a token female early in the series and when Storm was a strong leader of the team.

There have been many online criticisms of the portrayal of women during Chuck Austen's run on the series. The criticism primarily focus on his use of an original character, Nurse Annie, who is taking care of the comatose Havok and develops a strong attraction to him, on his portrayal of Polaris, and on the relationship between Husk and Angel. Annie falls in love with a man she has never known other than as a comatose patient. Polaris literally goes insane with jealousy when she finds out Annie is in love with Havok. And Husk, who had previously been shown as a shy and reserved girl when it came to relationships and sexuality, openly pursues the much older Angel. It is even implied, when Angel finally admits he is also attracted to her that she has sex with Angel in the sky with the knowledge that her teammates and family are on the ground below them. After Angel hugs Husk and takes flies her into the air Husk's clothing slowly fall to the ground as her mother walks away muttering, "I do not want to see this…"

While these three women are shown to be very emotionally needy, there is little in his writing that displays a hatred of women. This criticism was so prevalent that he was asked about it directly in an interview. In a 2006 interview with Comic Book Resources, the following exchange occurred:

CBR: But more seriously, some people think you're a misogynist, you hate women, you're obsessed with sex…

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Austen: Aren't we all obsessed with sex? And misogynist? Who says that? Some guy trying to pick up on a feminist? "Hey, baby. Wanna go out with me? I can use the word misogynist in a sentence." [...]. Why do people say that? What makes them think I have an issue with women?

CBR: Maybe...I know a lot of it came out of the soap opera feel of your work, the whole thing with Nurse Annie in "Uncanny X-Men" and the claim that your women are too needy for men.

Austen: But I also write men who need women. And men who need men. [laughs] I'm writing for Marvel Comics: these guys made their reputation on soap operas. [...] People are always picking on Annie. I asked for a women with small breasts, who was funny and independent, raised a child on her own, with no powers who stands up to a super heroine for her son's life, and because she -- I mean, you're a soap opera fan, right? Can you write a soap opera without men and women wanting each other? [...] I've only known one woman in my life who didn't want a relationship, who was very involved with her work and wanted to get her career going. We just went to dinner with her a few months ago and she asked if we knew any good men. Everyone wants a relationship. I don't see how you can write characters who don't have one or want one. And why is it "hating women" to write a character that wants love? It wasn't the be all and end all for Annie. She walked away from Havok at the end of my run because she was concerned more about her son and she felt she didn't need the X-Men or Havok in her

life. She very happily walked away from the whole thing. ("In Depth With

Chuck Austen)

While Austen's run was problematic and controversial, many of the criticisms

seemed to snowball together, as often happens online. The more extreme

accusations of misogyny are difficult to find in the stories. When the readers did not

like the way the women were acting they leapt to the accusation of misogyny, when

more likely they simply did not like the stories being told. A dislike of a story does

not mean misogyny on the part of the creator.

One of the most important stories in terms of the direction of the series as a

whole was the mini-series *House of M*. Marvel's Editor-in-Chief at the time, Joe

Quesada, has been upfront in admitting that when he came into his job, one of his

goals was to make the minority metaphor matter in the X-Men again. The solution

that Marvel found, and that came about in *House of M*, was to remove the majority of

the mutants from the Marvel universe.

In the story, Scarlet Witch, the second female mutant to appear in Marvel

Comics, goes insane and demonstrates new unheard levels of power that threaten

all creation. This is similar to previous events in which a previously good character

becomes evil and loses control of their powers, including "The Dark Phoenix Saga,"

"Inferno," and "Onslaught." Scarlet Witch recreates the world into a reality in which

mutants are the majority and normal humans the minority. Her father, Magneto, is

one of the most powerful men on the planet, the leader of the so-called House of M.

When the Marvel universe is put back to "normal" she causes almost all the mutants

to lose their powers. The mutants are not killed, but their DNA is changed so that they no longer have powers.

Concerning the storyline, Quesada has said, "Part of what is inherently important about the metaphor of the X-Men is that they are a minority. The reason in the past that fans have been able to relate to these characters is that we all see a part of ourselves within them, whether it be that you were the lonely kid in school, the gay kid in school…or the kid who got beaten up in school because you were different. Whatever it is, we all have that. Part of it is that there aren't supposed to be a lot of these guys…they never really should've been in the forefront. That kind of message got lost over the years, to the point where we ended up with a mutant island where there were over six million of them, and every time you'd turn a page, you'd see a mutant on every corner. We even had 'Mutant Town.' So, one of the things that we wanted to do was put the genie back in the bottle. ("Stuff")

In the years since the X-Men were created the number of mutants increased dramatically. Even after the 1975 relaunch it was the start of a major storyline when two new mutants were detected, but as Quesada noted, but 2005 there was an entire mutant nation and New York City had it's own region call Mutant Town. Quesada felt that the prevalence of mutants in the Marvel universe diluted what made the X-Men special.

The decision to make the X-Men special again by removing the majority of mutants has not gone without criticism. Andrew Wheeler writes a column about social issues in superhero comic books called "No More Mutants," quoting the

phrase used by Scarlet Witch at the conclusion of *House of M*. In his first article, Wheeler wrote:

> Faced with a problem minority, Marvel's response was a fictional genocide.
> In the story House of M it was presented as the Scarlet Witch's way to undo
> the miseries of her life, which included a failed marriage, a monstrous father,
> two dead children, a nervous breakdown and a spiral into villainy. Faced
> with those problems, wiping out an entire race seems like a baffling and
> inelegant solution. Seen as a solution to editorial concerns that mutants were
> overrunning the Marvel universe, it makes a lot more sense. (It certainly
> wouldn't be the first or last time that a character behaved strangely in order
> to serve an editorial agenda.) (Wheeler).

Wheeler goes on to criticize Quesada's expressed reasoning behind the decision to decimate the mutant population of the Marvel universe. Quesada argued that the result of the *House of M* would make mutants unique, and indeed a minority again. Wheeler countered:

> Such rhetoric suggests a misunderstanding of the challenges faced by real
> minorities. The invention of a mutant nation and a mutant neighbourhood
> really enhanced the metaphor, rather than undermined it. After all, the
> existence of almost four billion Asians in the world doesn't make life easier
> for one Asian kid in a town in rural America. The existence of gay
> neighbourhoods in almost every major city in the Western world has not
> made coming out to one's parents any easier. More than half the world is
> female, but women still don't have full equality in the first world, let alone in

the developing world. The claim that "there aren't supposed to be a lot of these guys" is not likely to be well received by anyone who has ever been a victim of prejudice. (Wheeler).

Following *The House of M* Marvel moved the X-Men to San Francisco, identifying that city as one that embraces social minorities.

Statistical Analysis

The Uncanny X-Men #394 (Jul. 2001) – *The Uncanny X-Men #500* (Sep. 2008) sees the most balance in terms of gender representation for the team members of any period in the history of *The Uncanny X-Men.* However, in terms of appearances, this is one of the most male-dominated periods in the history of the X-Men. Additionally, this is the least diverse group of X-Men for any

period other than the original run, when the team was 100% white. This is a rather significant regression in terms of gender and minority representation from what has been occurring in previous periods.

There were thirty characters who appeared as member of the X-Men in this period. These included Professor X, Cyclops, Iceman, Beast, Angel, Phoenix (Jean Grey), Havok, Polaris, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Storm, Wolverine, Shadowcat, Rogue, Marvel Girl (Rachel Summers), Psylocke, Jubilee, Gambit, Bishop, White Queen, Cannonball, Chamber, Stacy X, Northstar, Husk, Juggernaut, Mystique, Sage, Warpath, and Hepzibah. The only new original character in this period is Stacy X, all the other characters had either previously been X-Men or had previously appeared in *The Uncanny X-Men* or other Marvel titles.

There were 30 characters who appeared as members of the team, and 16 (53.3%) were male and 14 (46.7%) were female. But in terms of appearances, of 650 appearances by team members in these 106 issues, 463 (71.2%) were by men while only 187 (28.8%) were by female characters.

The were 123 villains who appeared in this period. Of these, 94 (76.4%) were male, 26 (21.1%), and 3 (2.4%) had no applicable gender. There

Character	Number of appearances (Percentage of issues)	Character	Number of appearances (Percentage of issues)
Nightcrawler	91 (85.0%)	Warpath	16 (15.0%)
Wolverine	56 (52.3%)	Juggernaut	15 (14.0%)
Angel	53 (49.5%)	Psylocke	14 (14.0%)
Iceman	45 (42.1%)	Cannonball	13 (12.1%)
Rachel Summers	41 (38.3%)	Chamber	13 (12.1%)
Professor X	40 (37.4%)	Colossus	12 (11.2%)
Cyclops	32 (29.9%)	Northstar	12 (11.2%)
Bishop	27 (25.2%)	Sage	8 (7.5%)
Polaris	23 (21.5%)	Jean Grey	8 (7.5%)
White Queen	23 (21.5%)	Hepzibah	6 (5.6%)
Havok	19 (17.8%)	Kitty Pryde	6 (5.6%)
Stacy X	18 (16.8%)	Rogue	3 (2.8%)
Beast	17 (15.9%)	Gambit	2 (1.9%)
Storm	17 (15.9%)	Jubilee	1 (0.9%)
Husk	17 (15.9%)	Mystique	1 (0.9%)
Table 21: Appearances by characters as members of the X-Men between 2001-08.			

were 321 appearances by villains, of these 234 (72.9%) were by male characters, 81 (25.2%) were female, and 6 (1.9%) had no applicable gender.

As has been the general trend for guest stars, there were more males than females, but the number of appearances were much more balanced in the number of appearances. There were 120 guest stars and of these 185 (67.8%) were male and 45 (37.5%) were female. Guest stars made 373 appearances. Of these 207 (55.5%) were male and 166 (44.5%) were female.

In total, there were 273 characters who appeared in the series between *The Uncanny X-Men #394-The Uncanny X-Men #500*. Of these, 185 (67.8%) were male characters, 85 (31.3%) were female, and 3 (1.1%) had no applicable gender. Characters made 1344 appearances. Of these, 904 (67.3%) were male, 434 (32.3%) were female, and 6 (0.4%) had no applicable gender.

Of the 30 characters to appear on the X-Men , 23 (76.7%) were white, 2 (6.7%) were Black, 2 (6.7%) were Asian, 1 (3.3%) was Jewish, 1 (3.3%) were by an Alien character, and 1 (3.3%) was Native American. These 30 characters made 650 appearances. Of these, 562 (86.5%) were by white characters, 44 (6.8%) were by Black characters, 16 (2.5%) were by Asian characters, 16 (2.5%) were by a Native American character, 6 (0.9%) were by a Jewish character, and 6 (0.9%) were by an alien character. These 30 characters made 650 appearances. Of these 562 (86.5%) were by white characters

Of the 30 members of the X-Men in this period, 21 (70.0%) were American, 2 (6.7%) were Canadian, 2 (6.7%) were British, 1 (3.3%) was Russian, 1 (3.3%) was German, 1 (3.3%) was Kenyan, 1 (3.3%) was Apache, and 1 (3.3%) was an alien. There were 650 appearances by members of the X-Men in this period. Of these 412 (63.4%) were by American characters, 91 (14.0%) were by a German character, 68 (6.7%) were by a Canadian character, 28 (4.3%) were by British characters, 17 (2.6%) were by a Kenyan character, 16 (2,5%) were by an Apache character, 12 (1.8%) were by a Russian character, and 6 (0.9%) were by an alien character.

There were 123 characters who appeared as villains in this period of the *Uncanny X-men*. Of these, 48 (39.0%) were American. In descending order, the other

characters were as follows: 28 (22.8%) were alien characters, 12 (9.8%) were

characters from the Savage Land, 7 (5.7%) were British, 5 (4.1%) had no known

nationality, 5 (4.1%) were from a fictional group called the Neyaphem, 3 (2.4%)

were German, 2 (1.6%) were Russian, 2 (1.6%) were Irish, 2 (1.6%) were Japanese,

2 (1.6%) had no applicable nationality, 1 (0.8%) was Kenyan, 1 (0.8%) was

Canadian, 1 (0.8%) was Italian, 1 (0.8%) was French, 1 (0.8%) was Chinese, 1

(0.8%) was Indian, and 1 (0.8%) was Swedish.

Of the 321 appearances by villains, 124 (38.6%) were by American

characters, 77 (24.0%) were by alien characters, 37 (11.5%) were by characters

from the Savage Land, 25 (7.8%) were by Neyaphem, 14 (4.4%) were by British

characters, 8 (2.5%) were by characters with no know nationalities, 6 (1.9%) were

by Irish characters, 6 (1.9%) were by Japanese characters, 6 (1.9%) were by

characters with no applicable nationality, 5 (1.6%) were by Russian characters, 3

(0.9%) were by German characters, 3 (0.9%) were by a Canadian character, 2

(0.6%) were by a Chinese character, 1 (0.3%) was by a Kenyan character, 1 (0.3%)

was by an Italian character, 1 (0.3%) was by a French character, 1 (0.3%) was by an

Indian character, 1 (0.3%) was by a Swedish character,

There were 120 characters who guest starred in the *Uncanny X-Men* in this

period. Of these, 58 (48.3%) were by American characters, 27 (22.5%) were alien

characters, 7 (5.8%) were by Canadian characters, 6 (5.0%) were British characters,

3 (2.5%) were Japanese characters, 2 (1.7%) were Cheyenne characters, 2 (1.7%)

were Armenian characters, 2 (1.7%) were characters from the Savage Land, 1

(0.8%) was an Irish character, 1 (0.8%) was a German character, 1 (0.8%) was a

Kenyan character), 1 (0.8%) was an Apache character, 1 (0.8%) was a character

from the fictional African nation of Wakanda, 1 (0.8%) was a Scottish character, 1

(0.8%) was a Mexican character, 1 (0.8%) was a Brazilian character, 1 (0.8%) was

by a Vietnamese character, 1 (0.8%) was an Indian character, 1 (0.8%) was a

Monacan character, 1 (0.8%) was Welsh, and 1 (0.8%) was an Afghani character.

There were 373 appearances by guest stars in this period of *Uncanny X-Men*.

Of these, 197 (52.8%) were by American characters, 50 (13.4%) were by alien

characters, 25 (7.8%) were by Armenian characters, 18 (4.8%) were by British

characters, 14 (3.8%) were by Canadian characters, 8 (2.1%) were by a Monacan

character, 6 (1.9%) were by an Irish character, 6 (1.6%) were by Japanese

characters, 6 (1.6%) were by Cheyenne characters, 4 (1.1%) were by characters

from the Savage Land, 3 (0.8%) were by Scottish characters, 2 (0.5%) were by an

Apache character, 2 (0.5%) were by a Brazilian character, 2 (0.5%) were by a Welsh

character, 2 (0.5%) were by an Afghani character, 2 (0.5%) were by a Vietnamese,

character, 1 (0.3%) were by a German character, 1 (0.3%) were by a Kenyan

character, 1 (0.3%) were by a Wakandan character, 1 (0.3%) was by a Mexican

character, and 1 (0.3%) was by an Indian character.

In total there were 273 characters who appeared in this period. Of these, 127

(46.5%) were American, 56 (20.5%) were aliens, 15 (5.5%) were British, 14 (5.1%)

were from the fictional Savage Land, 10 (3.7%) were Canadian, 5 (1.8%) were

Japanese, 5 (1.8%) had no identified nationality, 5 (1.8%) were fictional Neyaphem,

5 (1.8%) were German, 3 (1.1%) were Russian, 3 (1.1%) were Kenyan, 3 (1.1%)

were Irish, 2 (0.7%) had no applicable nationality, 2 (0.7%) were Indian characters,

2 (0.7%) were Armenian, 2 (0.7%) were Cheyenne, 2 (0.7%) were Apache, 1 (0.4%) was Italian, 1 (0.4%) was French, 1 (0.4%) was Scottish, 1 (0.4%) was Chinese, 1 (0.4%) was Mexican, 1 (0.4%) was Brazilian, 1 (0.4%) was Vietnamese, 1 (0.4%) was Swedish, 1 (0.4%) was Monacan, 1 (0.4%) was an Afghani, and 1 (0.4%) was Welsh.

In total there were 1,344 appearances by characters in this period. Of these, 733 (54.5%) were by American characters, 133 (9.9%) were by aliens, 95 (7.1%) were by German characters, 85 (6.3%) were by Canadian characters, 34 (2.5%) were by Armenian characters, 60 (4.5%) were by British characters, 41 (3.1%) were from the fictional Savage Land, 31 (2.3%) were by Kenyan characters, 25 (1.9%) were by fictional Neyaphem characters, 18 (1.3%) were by Apache characters, 17 (1.3%) were by Russian characters, 12 (0.9%) were by Irish characters, 12 (0.9%) were by Japanese characters, 8 (0.6%) were by characters with no identified nationality, 8 (0.6%) were by a Monacan character, 6 (0.4%) had no applicable nationality, 6 (0.4%) were by Cheyenne characters, 3 (0.2%) were by a Scottish character, 2 (0.1%) were by a Chinese character, 2 (0.1%) were by a Brazilian character, 2 (0.1%) were by a Vietnamese character, 2 (0.1%) were by Indian characters, 2 (0.1%) were by a Afghani character, 2 (0.1%) were by a Welsh character, 1(0.1%) was by an Italian character, 1 (0.1%) was by a French character, 1 (0.1%) was by a Mexican character, and 1 (0.1%) was by a Swedish character.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

As seen in this analysis, the X-Men do explore the mutant metaphor overtly within the series. The X-Men, as a franchise, is one of the most diverse in all of superhero comics. Also, the number of strong female characters who have appeared in the series is significant in a genre and industry that is dominate by male characters. This willingness to actively embrace a socially relevant metaphor is significant especially within the comic book industry. As Andrew Wheeler explains:

> Minorities in general do not have the best time of things in comics' superhero mainstream. The superhero genre is dominated by the straight, white, male majority, and so is the creative community. Convention has it that this is true of the audience is as well, but there are plenty of readers who don't fit that model, and these readers are used to the idea that they won't see themselves reflected in the media they consume. That's not something that we should be complacent about, in comics or in any other medium. (Wheeler)

However, despite actively embracing the mutant metaphor, as demonstrated in the numbers analysis this is a series that has largely been dominated by white male characters. Also, problematically, the most diverse group of characters in the series in relation to ethnicities has been the villains, though the villains also were always the group with the least number of women.

The statistical representation of the heroes, villains, and guest stars varied in each period, with a few general identifiable trends. Figure 1 shows how the percentage of male members in the X-Men, among the villains, among the guest stars, and combining the total all characters changed through the periods. These

numbers are slightly different than those previously presented in that these represent the average percentage of characters who were male in each category in a an issue in the applicable time period.
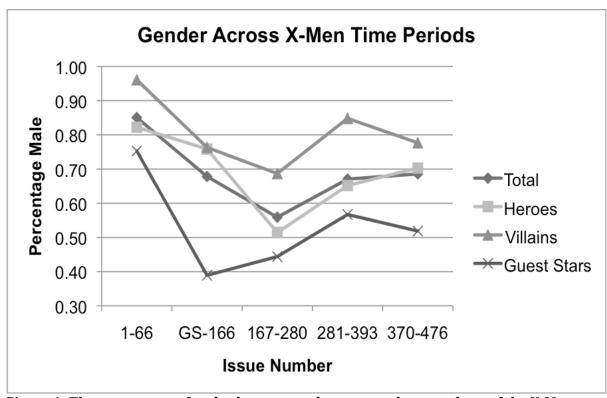
Figure 1: The percentage of male characters who appeared as members of the X-Men, as villains, or as guest-stars in each time period.

As can be seen the percentage of male characters was very high in all the categories in the first period, fell in ever category in period two and three, and mostly rose again in period four before dropping period five. In each period the villains are either have the highest percentage of males of any group, or they are tied for the highest percentage males. The guest stars have the smallest percentage of male characters of any category in all five periods. Guest stars are also the only group to ever have less than 50% male representation in any period, with periods two and

three have more females on average than males guest-starring. The heroes begin the

series with over 80% male representation but drop to almost 50% by the third time

period before spiking in the fourth and fifth time periods to almost 70% male
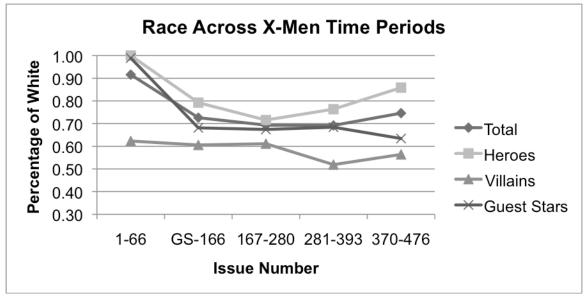
Figure 2: The percentage of white characters who appeared as members of the X-Men, as villains, or as guest-stars in each time period.

representation.

Because white characters represented the majority of every category in

every time period, Figure 2 represents the percentage of white characters through

all the time periods. The heroes are have the highest percentage of white characters

of any group in every time period, while the villains have the lowest percentage of

white characters in every single time period.

Figure 23 presents the average number of characters who appeared in each

group in each time period.Looking at the data in these two charts, as well as

analyzing how many characters appeared in each issue we can deduce the most

common make up of characters in every time period.
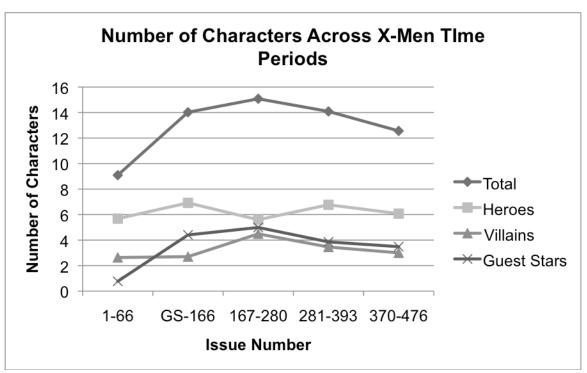
Figure 3: The number of characters who appeared as members of the X-Men, as villains, or as guest-stars in each time period.

From these numbers we can conclude that in the first time period the average X-Men comic book featured 5.6 heroes, 85% of whom were male and 100% of whom were white. In the same period, an average comic book featured 2.7 villains, 96% of whom were male and 62% of whom were white. In this same period and average comic book feature 0.7 guest stars, 75% of whom were male and 99% of whom were white.

From these numbers we can conclude that in the second time period the average X-Men comic book featured 6.9 heroes, 76% of whom were male and 79% of whom were white. In the same period, an average comic book featured 2.7 villains, 76% of whom were male and 61% of whom were white. In this same period

and average comic book feature 4.4 guest stars, 39% of whom were male and 68% of whom were white.

From these numbers we can conclude that in the third time period the average X-Men comic book featured 5.5 heroes, 51% of whom were male and 72% of whom were white. In the same period, an average comic book featured 4.5 villains, 69% of whom were male and 61% of whom were white. In this same period and average comic book feature 5 guest stars, 44% of whom were male and 67% of whom were white.

From these numbers we can conclude that in the fourth time period the average X-Men comic book featured 6.7 heroes, 65% of whom were male and 76% of whom were white. In the same period, an average comic book featured 3.5 villains, 85% of whom were male and 52% of whom were white. In this same period and average comic book feature 3.8 guest stars, 57% of whom were male and 68% of whom were white.

From these numbers we can conclude that in the third time period the average X-Men comic book featured 6 heroes, 70% of whom were male and 86% of whom were white. In the same period, an average comic book featured 3 villains,78% of whom were male and 56% of whom were white. In this same period and average comic book feature 3.5 guest stars, 52% of whom were male and 63% of whom were white.

The following will be a summation of the data collected from the first 500 issues of *Uncanny X-Men*, exempting the issues from *X-Men #67* (Dec. 1970)-*X-Men #93* (Apr. 1975). In total there were 45 characters who appeared as members of the

X-Men in these 474 issues. On average, each member of the team made an average of 65 appearances in the series, though this number is skewed on the low end by 11 characters who made fewer than 10 appearances and on the high end by five character who made over 200 appearances. Surprisingly, four of the five characters with over 200 appearances first appeared in 1975, not 1963. Wolverine has the most appearances in *Uncanny X-Men* with 256, followed by Storm with 254, Nightcrawler with 226, Professor Xavier with 216, and Colossus with 201. A full listing of all the team members who appeared in the series

Character	# of appearances (% of issues)	Character	# of appearances (% of issues)
Wolverine	256 (54.01%)	Jubilee	27 (5.70%)
Storm	254 (53.39%)	White Queen	25 (5.27%)
Nightcrawler	226 (47.68%)	Forge	24 (5.06%)
Professor Xavier	216 (45.57%)	Marrow	24 (5.06%)
Colossus	201 (42.41%)	Stacy X	18 (3.80%)
Cyclops	192 (40.51%)	Husk	17 (3.59%)
Angel	174 (36.71%)	Warpath	16 (3.38%)
Iceman	157 (33.12%)	Juggernaut	15 (3.16%)
Jean Grey	150 (31.65%)	Joseph	14 (2.95%)
Beast	135 (28.48%)	Chamber	13 (2.74%)
Rogue	127 (26.79%)	Northstar	12 (2.53%)
Kitty Pryde	81 (17.09%)	Magneto	9 (1.90%)
Gambit	75 (15.81%)	Cable	8 (1.69%)
Bishop	72 (15.19%)	Sage	8 (1.69%)
Banshee	54 (11.39%)	Hepzibah	6 (1.24%)
Rachel Summers	54 (11.39%)	Maggot	4 (0.84%)
Havok	53 (11.18%)	Mimic	3 (0.63%)
Psylocke (Asian)	49 (10.34%)	Thunderbird	3 (0.63%)
Psylocke (white)	37 (7.81%)	Thunderbird II	3 (0.63%)
Dazzler	37 (7.81%)	Sunfire	2 (0.42%)
Longshot	31 (6.45%)	Cecilia Reyes	1 (0.21%)
Cannonball	29 (6.12%)	Mystique	1 (0.21%)
Polaris	27 (5.70%)	-	-

Table 22: The total number appearances by members of the X-Men through between 1963-2008

along with the number of appearances and percentage of all issues they appeared in is found in Figure X.

Of the 45 members of the team, 31 (68.9%) were white, 3 (6.7%) were Black, 3 (10.0%) were Asian, 3 (10.0%) were Native American, 2 (4.4%) were Jewish, 1 (3.3%) was extra terrestrial, 1 (3.3%) was Indian, 1 (3.3%) was Afro-Latina. The characters on the X-Men made 2,940 in these 474 issues. Of these, 2,389 (81.26%) appearances were by white characters, 330 (11.22%) were by Black characters, 90 (3.06%) were by Jewish characters, 78 (2.65%) were by Asian characters, 43 (1.46%) were by Native American characters, 6 (0.20%) were by an extra terrestrial character, 3 (0.10%) were by an Indian character, and 1 (0.03) was by an Afro-Latina character. These numbers indicate that despite it's reputation for diversity, the X-Men remain largely a group of white heroes.

Nationality	# of characters (% of total)
American	25 (55.6%)
German	3 (6.7%)
British	3 (6.7%)
Apache	2 (4.4%)
Canadian	2 (4.4%)
Alien	2 (4.4%)
Irish	1 (2.2%)
Russian	1 (2.2%)
Kenyan	1 (2.2%)
Japanese	1 (2.2%)
Cheyenne	1 (2.2%)
South African	1 (2.2%)
Puerto Rican	1 (2.2%)
Indian	1 (2.2%)
Table 23: The nationality of members of the X-Men that appeared between 1963-2008	

In total, 45 characters appeared as X-Men in the first 500 issues of *Uncanny X-Men*. Of these, 25 (55.6%) were American, 3 (6.7%) were German, 3 (6.7%) were British, 2 (4.4%) were Apache, 2 (4.4%) were Canadian, 2 (4.4%) were alien, 1 (2.2%) were Irish, 1 (2.2%) were Russian, 1 (2.2%) was Kenyan, 1 (2.2%) was

Japanese, 1 (2.2%) was Cheyenne, 1 (2.2%) was South African, 1 (2.2%) was Puerto

Rican, and 1 (2.2%) was Indian.

There were 2,940
appearances by members of the X-
Men in the first 500 issues of
Uncanny X-Men. Of these, 1,725
(58.67%) were by American
characters, 268 (9.12%) were by
Canadian characters, 254 (8.64%)
were by Kenyan characters, 249
(8.47%) were by German characters,
201 (6.84%) were by a Russian
character, 99 (3.37%) were by

Nationality	# of appearances (% of total)
American	1,725 (58.67%)
Canadian	268 (9.12%)
Kenyan	254 (8.64%)
German	249 (8.47%)
Russian	201 (6.84%)
British	99 (3.37%)
Irish	54 (1.84%)
Alien	37 (1.26%)
Cheyenne	24 (0.82%)
Apache	19 (0.64%)
South African	4 (0.14%)
Indian	3 (0.10%)
Japanese	2 (0.07%)
Puerto Rican	1 (0.03%)
Table 24: The nationality and number of appearances by members of the X-Men that appeared between 1963-2008	

British characters, 54 (1.84%) were by an Irish character, 37

 (1.26%) were by alien characters, 24 (0.82%) were by a Cheyenne character, 19

(0.65%) were by Apache characters, 4 (0.14%) were by a South African character, 3

(0.10%) were by an Indian character, 2 (0.07%) were by Japanese characters, and 1

(0.03%) were by a Puerto Rican character.

In total, 448 characters appeared as villains in the first 500 issues of the

Uncanny X-Men. Of these, 195 (43.5%) were American, 73 (16.3%) were aliens, 22

(4.9%) were characters with no known nationality, 19 (4.2%) were by characters

from the fictional Savage Land, 14 (3.1%) were from a fictional group called the Neo,

11 (2.5%) were Japanese, 11 (2.5%) were demonic characters, 11 (2.5%) were by

characters with no applicable nationality, 9 (2.0%) were British characters, 9 (2.0%)

were by characters from the fictional nation of Genosha, 8 (1.8%) were by Canadian

characters, 6 (1.3%) were German, 6 (1.3%) were French, 6 (1.3%) were Egyptian, 6

(1.3%) were from the fictional group called the Inhumans, 5 (1.1%) were from a

fictional group called the Neyaphem, 4 (0.4%) were Russian, 4 (0.9%) were

characters from the fictional Central American nation of San Rico, 3 (0.7%) were

Italian, 3 (0.7%) were Chinese, 2 (0.4%) were Irish, 2 (0.4%) were Cheyenne, 2

(0.4%) were by characters from subterranean realms, 1 (0.2%) was Kenyan, 1

(0.2%) was Apache, 1 (0.2%) was Ethiopian, 1 (0.2%) was Scottish, 1 (0.2%) was

Australian, 1 (0.2%) was from the fictional character of Latveria, 1 (0.2%) was

Nationality	# of characters (% of total)	Nationality	# of characters (% of total)	Nationality	# of characters (% of total)
American	195 (43.5%)	Inhumans	6 (1.3%)	Latverian	1 (0.2%)
Alien	73 (16.3%)	Neyaphem	5 (1.1%)	Transylvanian	1 (0.2%)
Unknown	22 (4.9%)	Russian	4 (0.4%)	Living Island	1 (0.2%)
Savage Land	19 (4.2%)	San Rican	4 (0.9%)	Korean	1 (0.2%)
Neo	14 (3.1%)	Italian	3 (0.7%)	Cimmerian	1 (0.2%)
Japanese	11 (2.5%)	Chinese	3 (0.7%)	Indian	1 (0.2%)
Demonic	11 (2.5%)	Irish	2 (0.4%)	Moroccan	1 (0.2%)
Not Applicable	11 (2.5%)	Cheyenne	2 (0.4%)	Castilian	1 (0.2%)
British	9 (2.0%)	Subterranean	2 (0.4%)	Inuit	1 (0.2%)
Genoshan	9 (2.0%)	Kenyan	1 (0.2%)	Sri Lankan	1 (0.2%)
Canadian	8 (1.8%)	Apache	1 (0.2%)	Swedish	1 (0.2%)
German	6 (1.3%)	Ethiopian	1 (0.2%)	Eskimo	1 (0.2%)
French	6 (1.3%)	Scottish	1 (0.2%)	-	-
Egyptian	6 (1.3%)	Australian	1 (0.2%)	-	-
Table 25: The nationality of villains the X-Men battled between 1963-2008					

Transylvanian, 1 (0.2%) was a living island, 1 (0.2%) was Korean, 1 (0.2%) was from the fictional nation of Cimmeria, 1 (0.2%) was Indian, 1 (0.2%) were Moroccan, 1 (0.2%) were Castilian, 1 (0.2%) was Inuit, 1 (0.2%) was Sri Lankan, 1 (0.2%) was Swedish, and 1 (0.2%) was Eskimo.

There were 1,598 appearances by villains in the first 500 issues of *Uncanny X-Men*. Of these, 815 (51.00%) were by American characters, 224 (14.02%) were by aliens, 90 (5.63%) were by characters from the fictional Savage Land, 67 (4.19%) were by characters with no known nationality, 41 (2.57%) were by German characters, 39 (2.44%) were by Japanese characters, 37 (2.32%) were Genoshan characters, 36 (2.25%) were by Egyptian characters, 25 (1.56%) were Neyaphem characters, 24 (1.50%) were by British characters, 22 (1.38%) were by characters with no applicable nationality, 19 (1.19%) were by Canadian characters, 17 (1.06%) were by demonic characters, 15 (0.94%) were by Irish characters, 14 (0.88%) were by Neo characters, 12 (0.75%) were by Italian characters, 12 (0.75%) were by French characters, 10 (0.63%) were by Australian characters, 9 (0.56%) were by Russian characters, 9 (0.56%) were by Cheyenne characters, 7 (0.44%) were by characters from the fictional Central American nation of San Rico, 6 (0.38%) were by Inhuman characters, 6 (0.38%) were by Chinese characters, 5 (0.31%) were by a Castilian character, 5 (0.31%) were by a Swedish character, 4 (0.25%) were by a Korean character, 4 (0.25%) were by a Cimmerian character, 3 (0.19%) were by characters from subterranean realms, 3 (0.19%) were by a Scottish character, 3 (0.19%) was a Latverian character, 3 (0.19%) was by an Indian character, 2 (0.13%) was by an Ethiopian character, 2 (0.13%) were by a Sri Lankan character, 2 (0.13%)

were by an Eskimo character, 1 (0.06%) was by a Kenyan character, 1 (0.06%) was

by an Apache character, 1 (0.2%) was a Transylvanian character, 1 (0.2%) was by a

Castilian character, 1 (0.06%) was by a living island, and 1 (0.2%) was by an Inuit

character.

Nationality	# of appearances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appearances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appearances (% of total)
American	195 (43.5%)	Inhumans	6 (1.3%)	Latverian	1 (0.2%)
Alien	73 (16.3%)	Neyaphem	5 (1.1%)	Transylvanian	1 (0.2%)
Unknown	22 (4.9%)	Russian	4 (0.4%)	Living Island	1 (0.2%)
Savage Land	19 (4.2%)	San Rican	4 (0.9%)	Korean	1 (0.2%)
Neo	14 (3.1%)	Italian	3 (0.7%)	Cimmerian	1 (0.2%)
Japanese	11 (2.5%)	Chinese	3 (0.7%)	Indian	1 (0.2%)
Demonic	11 (2.5%)	Irish	2 (0.4%)	Moroccan	1 (0.2%)
Not Applicable	11 (2.5%)	Cheyenne	2 (0.4%)	Castilian	1 (0.2%)
British	9 (2.0%)	Subterranean	2 (0.4%)	Inuit	1 (0.2%)
Genoshan	9 (2.0%)	Kenyan	1 (0.2%)	Sri Lankan	1 (0.2%)
Canadian	8 (1.8%)	Apache	1 (0.2%)	Swedish	1 (0.2%)
German	6 (1.3%)	Ethiopian	1 (0.2%)	Eskimo	1 (0.2%)
French	6 (1.3%)	Scottish	1 (0.2%)	-	-
Egyptian	6 (1.3%)	Australian	1 (0.2%)	-	-
Table 26: The nationality and number of appearances of villains the X-Men battled between 1963-2008					

In total, 252 characters guest starred in the first 500 issues of the *Uncanny X-*

Men. Of these, 135 (53.6%) were American, 40 (15.9%) were aliens, 13 (5.2%) were

Canadian, 10 (4.0%) were British, 7 (2.8%) were Japanese, 4 (1.6%) were Russian, 3

(1.2%) were Irish, 3 (1.3%) were German, 3 (1.2%) were Cheyenne, 2 (0.8%) were

by characters from the fictional Savage Land, 2 (0.8%) were from the fictional

African nation of Wakanda, 2 (0.8%) were Scottish, 2 (0.8%) were Australian, 2

(0.8%) were Monacan, 2 (0.8%) were Armenian, 2 (0.8%) were by characters with

no known nationality, 2 (0.8%) were by characters from the fictional nation of

Genosha, 1 (0.4%) was Kenyan, 1 (0.4%) was Apache, 1 (0.4%) was Italian, 1 (0.4%)

were demonic, 1 (0.4%) were by characters from the fictional nation of Atlantis, 1

(0.4%) were by characters from the fictional group called the Inhumans, 1 (0.4%)

was Mexican, 1 (0.4%) was Brazilian, 1 (0.4%) was Vietnamese, 1 (0.4%) were

South African, 1 (0.4%) was Puerto Rican, 1 (0.4%) was Indian, 1 (0.4%) was by a

character from the fictional realm of Asgard, 1 (0.4%) was Greek, 1 (0.4%) was from

a fictional group called the Eternals, 1 (0.4%) was Israeli, 1 (0.4%) was Afghani, and

1 (0.4%) was Welsh.

Nationality	# of characters (% of total)	Nationality	# of characters (% of total)	Nationality	# of characters (% of total)
American	135 (53.6%)	Armenian	2 (0.8%)	Indian	1 (0.4%)
Alien	40 (15.9%)	Unknown	2 (0.8%)	Asgard	1 (0.4%)
Canadian	13 (5.2%)	Genoshan	2 (0.8%)	Greek	1 (0.4%)
British	10 (4.0%)	Kenyan	1 (0.4%	Eternals	1 (0.4%)
Japanese	7 (2.8%)	Apache	1 (0.4%)	Israeli	1 (0.4%)
Russian	4 (1.6%)	Italian	1 (0.4%)	Afghani	1 (0.4%)
Irish	3 (1.2%)	Demonic	1 (0.4%)	Welsh	1 (0.4%)
German	4 (1.3%)	Atlantean	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Cheyenne	3 (1.2%)	Inhumans	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Savage Land	2 (0.8%)	Mexican	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Wakandan	2 (0.8%)	Brazilian	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Scottish	2 (0.8%)	Vietnamese	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Australian	2 (0.8%)	South African	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Monacan	2 (0.8%)	Puerto Rican	1 (0.4%)	-	-
Table 27: The nationality of guest stars who appeared between 1963-2008					

There were 1,755 appearances by guest stars in the first 500 issues of

Uncanny X-Men. Of these, 976 (55.61%) were by American characters, 263 (14.99%)

were by alien characters, 68 (3.87%) were by Scottish characters, 44 (2.51%) were

by Irish characters, 43 (2.45%) were by British characters, 42 (2.39%) were by

Russian characters, 42 (2.39%) were by Cheyenne characters, 37 (2.11%) were by

Japanese characters, 34 (1.94%) were Armenian, 33 (1.88%) were by Canadian

characters, 20 (1.14%) were by a Brazilian character, 19 (1.08%) were by German

characters, 19 (1.08%) were by Australian characters, 17 (0.97%) were by a Kenyan

character, 14 (0.80%) were by Monacan characters, 13 (0.74%) were by characters

from the Savage land, 12 (0.68%) were by characters with no known nationality, 8

(0.46%) were by a Mexican character, 8 (0.46%) were by Apache characters, 6

(0.34%) were by a Vietnamese character, 6 (0.34%) were by a South African

characters, 4 (0.23%) were by Puerto Rican characters, 3 (0.17%) were by

Wakandan characters, 3 (0.17%) were by an Asgardian character, 3 (0.17%) were

by an Israeli character, 2 (0.11%) were by Italian characters, 2 (0.11%) were by

Genoshan characters, 2 (0.11%) were by an Afghani character, 2 (0.11%) were by a

Welsh character, 2 (0.11%) were by an Inhuman character, 2 (0.11%) were by

demonic characters, 1 (0.06%) were by an Atlantean character, 1 (0.06%) was by an

Indian character, 1 (0.06%) was by a Greek character, and 1 (0.06%) were by

characters from the fictional group called the Eternals.

Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)
American	976 (55.61%)	Australian	19 (1.08%)	Genoshan	2 (0.11%)
Alien	263 (14.99%)	Kenyan	17 (0.97%)	Afghani	2 (0.11%)
Scottish	68 (3.87%)	Monacan	14 (1.08%)	Welsh	2 (0.11%)
Irish	44 (2.51%)	Savage Land	13 (0.74%)	Inhuman	2 (0.11%)
British	43 (2.45%)	Unknown	12 (0.68%)	Demonic	2 (0.11%)
Russian	42 (2.39%)	Mexican	8 (0.46%)	Atlantean	1 (0.6%)
Cheyenne	42 (2.39%)	Apache	8 (0.46%)	Indian	1 (0.6%)
Japanese	37 (2.11%)	Vietnamese	6 (0.34%)	Greek	1 (0.6%)
Armenian	34 (1.94%)	South African	6 (0.34%)	Eternals	1 (0.6%)
Canadian	33 (1.88%)	Puerto Rican	4 (0.23%)	-	-
Brazilian	20 (1.14%)	Wakandan	3 (0.17%)	-	-
German	19 (1.08%)	Asgardian	3 (0.17%)	-	-
Australian	17 (0.97%)	Israeli	2 (0.11%)	-	-
German	19 (0.97%)	Italian	2 (0.11%)	-	-
Table 28: The nationality and number of appearances of guest stars who appeared between 1963-2008					

In total, 745 characters who appeared in the first 500 issues of the *Uncanny X-Men*. Of these, 355 (47.7%) were American, 115 (15.4%) were extra-terrestrials, 24 (3.2%) were by characters with no known nationality, 23 (3.1%) were Canadian, 22 (3.0%) were British, 21 (2.8%) were characters from the fictional Savage Land, 19 (2.6%) were Japanese, 14 (1.9%) were by characters from a fictional group called the Neo, 12 (1.6%) were German, 12 (1.6%) were demonic, 11 (1.5%) were characters with no applicable nationality, 11 (1.5%) were from the fictional nation of Genosha, 9 (1.2%) were Russian, 7(0.9%) were from a fictional group called the inhumans, 6 (0.8%) were Irish, 6 (0.8%) were French, 6 (0.8%) were Egyptian, 6 (0.8%) were Cheyenne, 5 (0.7%) were from the fictional group called the

Neyaphem, 4 (0.5%) were Apache, 4 (0.5%) were Italian, 4 (0.5%) were from the

fictional nation of San Rico, 3 (0.4%) were Kenyan, 3 (0.4%) were Scottish, 3 (0.4%)

were Australian, 3 (0.4%) were Chinese, 3 (0.4%) were Indian, 2 (0.3%) were from

fictional subterranean lands, 2 (0.3%) were by characters from the fictional African

of Wakanda, 2 (0.3%) were South African, 2 (0.3%) were Puerto Rican, 2 (0.3%)

Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)
American	355 (47.7%)	Neyaphem	5 (0.7%)	Transylvanian	1 (0.1%)
Alien	115 (15.4%)	Apache	4 (0.5%)	Living island	1 (0.1%)
Unknown	24 (3.2%)	Scottish	3 (0.4%)	Korean	1 (0.1%)
Canadian	23 (3.1%)	Australian	3 (0.4%)	Cimmeria	1 (0.1%)
British	22 (3.0%)	Chinese	3 (0.4%)	Mexican	1 (0.1%)
Savage Land	21 (2.8%)	Indian	3 (0.4%)	Brazilian	1 (0.1%)
Japanese	19 (2.6%)	Subterranean	2 (0.3%)	Vietnamese	1 (0.1%)
Neo	14 (1.9%)	Wakandan	2 (0.3%)	Moroccan	1 (0.1%)
German	12 (1.6%)	South African	2 (0.3%)	Castilian	1 (0.1%)
Demonic	12 (1.6%)	Puerto Rican	2 (0.3%)	Inuit	1 (0.1%)
Not Applicable	11 (1.5%)	Monacan	2 (0.3%)	Sri Lankan	1 (0.1%)
Genoshan	11 (1.5%)	Armenian	1 (0.1%)	Eskimo	1 (0.1%)
Russian	9 (1.2%)	Atlantean	1 (0.1%)	Asgard	1 (0.1%)
Inhuman	7 (0.9%)	Inhuman	1 (0.1%)	Greek	1 (0.1%)
Irish	6 (0.8%)	Demonic	1 (0.1%)	Eternal	1 (0.1%)
French	6 (0.8%)	Atlantean	1 (0.1%)	Israeli	1 (0.1%)
Egyptian	6 (0.8%)	Ethopian	1 (0.1%)	Afghani	1 (0.1%)
Cheyenne	6 (0.8%)	Latverian	1 (0.1%)	Welsh	1 (0.1%)
Table 29: The nationality of all characters who appeared in the X-Men between 1963-2008					

were Monacan, 2 (0.3%) were Armenian, 1 (0.1%) were by characters from the fictional land of Atlantis, 1 (0.1%) were by Ethiopians, 1 (0.1%) was Latverian, 1 (0.1%) was Transylvanian, 1 (0.1%) was a living island, 1 (0.4%) was Korean, 1 (0.1%) was a character from the fictional nation of Cimmeria, 1 (0.1%) was Mexican, 1 (0.1%) was Brazilian, 1 (0.1%) was Vietnamese, 1 (0.1%) was Moroccan, 1 (0.08%) was Castilian, 1 (0.1%) was Inuit, 1 (0.1%) was Sri Lankan, 1 (0.1%) was an Eskimo, 1 (0.01%) were by a character from the fictional realm of Asgard, 1 (0.1%) was Greek, 1 (0.1%) was by a character from the fictional group called the Eternals, 1 (0.1%) was Israeli, 1 (0.1%) was Afghani, and 1 (0.1%) was Welsh.

There were 6,293 appearances by either members of the X-Men, the villains, and guest stars in the first 500 issues of *Uncanny X-Men*. In total, 3,516 (55.87%) were by American characters, 524 (8.33%) were by extra-terrestrial characters, 320 (5.09%) were by Canadian characters, 309 (4.91%) were by German characters, 272 (4.32%) were by Kenyan characters, 252 (4.00%) were by Russian characters, 166 (2.64%) were by British characters, 113 (1.80%) were by Irish characters, 103 (1.64%) were by characters from the Savage Land, 79 (1.26%) were by characters with no known nationality, 78 (1.24%) were by Japanese characters, 75 (1.19%) were by Cheyenne characters, 71 (1.13%) were by Scottish characters, 39 (0.64%) were by Genoshan characters, 36 (0.57%) were by Egyptian characters, 34 (0.54%) were by Armenian characters, 29 (0.46%) were by Australian characters, 28 (0.44%) were by Apache characters, 25 (0.40%) were by Neyaphem, 22 (0.35%) were by characters with no applicable nationality, 21 (0.33%) were demonic, 20

(0.32%) were by a Brazilian character, 14 (0.22%) were by Italian characters, 14 (0.22%) were by characters from the fictional group called the Neo, 14 (0.22%) were by Monacan characters, 12 (0.19%) were by French characters, 10 (0.16%) were by South African characters, 8 (0.13%) were by characters from the fictional group called the inhumans, 8 (0.13%) were by a Mexican character, 7 (0.11%) were by characters from the fictional nation of San Rico, 7 (0.11%) were by Indian characters, 7 (0.11%) was by a Castilian character, 6 (0.10%) were by Chinese characters, 6 (0.10%) were by Vietnamese characters, 5 (0.08%) were Puerto Rican, 4 (0.06%) were by Korean characters, 4 (0.06%) were by Cimmerian characters, 3 (0.05%) were by a character from the fictional realm of Asgard, 3 (0.05%) were by characters from subterranean lands, 3 (0.05%) were by Wakandan characters, 3 (0.05%) were by a Latverian character, 3 (0.05%) were by an Israeli character, 2 (0.03%) were by Ethiopian characters, 2 (0.03%) were by a Sri Lankan character, 2 (0.03%) were by an Eskimo character, 2 (0.03%) were by an Afghani character, 2 (0.03%) were by a Welsh character, 1 (0.02%) were by Atlantean characters, 1 (0.02%) were by Transylvanian characters, 1 (0.02%) was by a living island, 1 (0.02%) was by a Moroccan, 1 (0.02%) was by an Inuit, 1 (0.2%) was by a Greek character, and 1 (0.02%) was by a character from the fictional group called the Eternals.

Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)	Nationality	# of appear-ances (% of total)
American	3,516 (55.87%)	Neyaphem	25 (0.40%)	Cimmerian	4 (0.06%)
Alien	524 (8.33%)	Not applicable	22 (0.35%)	Asgardian	3 (0.05%)
Canadian	320 (5.09%)	Demonic	21 (0.33%)	Subterranean	3 (0.05%)
German	309 (4.91%)	Brazilian	20 (0.32%)	Wakandan	3 (0.05%)
Kenyan	272 (4.32%)	Italian	14 (0.22%)	Latverian	3 (0.05%)
Russian	252 (4.00%)	Neo	14 (0.22%)	Israeli	3 (0.05%)
British	166 (2.64%)	Monacan	14 (0.22%)	Ethiopian	2 (0.03%)
Irish	113 (1.80%)	French	12 (0.19%)	Sri Lankan	2 (0.03%)
Savage Land	103 (1.64%)	South African	10 (0.16%)	Eskimo	2 (0.03%)
Unknown	79 (1.26%)	Inhumans	8 (0.13%)	Afghani	2 (0.03%)
Japanese	78 (1.24%)	Mexican	8 (0.13%)	Welsh	2 (0.03%)
Cheyenne	75 (1.19%)	San Rico	7 (0.11%)	Atlantean	1 (0.02%)
Scottish	71 (1.13%)	Indian	7 (0.11%)	Transylvanian	1 (0.02%)
Genoshan	39 (0.62%)	Castilian	7 (0.11%)	Living island	1 (0.02%)
Egyptian	36 (0.57%)	Chinese	6 (0.10%)	Moroccan	1 (0.02%)
Armenian	34 (0.54%)	Vietnamese	6 (0.10%)	Inuit	1 (0.02%)
Australian	29 (0.46%)	Puerto Rican	5 (0.08%)	Greek	1 (0.02%)
Apache	28 (0.44%)	Korean	4 (0.06%)	Eternal	1 (0.02%)

Table 30: The nationality and appearances of all characters who appeared in the X-Men between 1963-2008

What these numbers reveal is that while the X-Men do openly and often deal with the issues of prejudice and discrimination in the storylines, the characters that

appear most frequently are white men. Following this, fictional groups such as aliens make the most appearances. Thus, while on the one hand the series does deal with issues facing real world minorities, on the other it remains a series dominated by social minorities. However, because so much of the prejudice is rooted in the idea of being a mutant, the metaphor inherently allows interpretation by the reader that does not limit the meaning to the race and gender of the characters on the page. As was pointed out by writers such as Scott Lobdell and Fabian Nicieza, everyone at some point can associate with the alienation the X-Men endure, even if the source of their alienation has nothing to do with the larger social concerns of race and gender.

It is surprising when considering the general perception of the series that it is in fact so dominated by white male characters. This certainly fits the tradition of superhero comic books, which began by featuring the adventures of white male protagonists, a formula that has seen unfortunately little derivation. While other titles in the X-Men franchise such as *New Mutants* or *Generation X* may have greater diversity, the original core X-Men title has had some very compelling and strong minority characters, but has largely continued the industry tradition of publishing the adventures of heroic white males.

The most diverse group in the series as a whole are the villains the X-Men battle. Much as the white male protagonist is a trend within the industry from its earliest periods, the threat of a minority "other" extends back to American literary traditions that predate the comic book industry. The dime novel was dominated by tales of the savage Native American that threatened the white settlers, and the pulp magazines often detailed the threat of Asian villains. The superhero genre has

picked up many of the narrative threads from dime novel adventures and pulp magazine heroes, and the X-Men are no exception.

In the end, the numbers analysis only tell a part of the story. The general themes and tone of the stories in the series align with the reputation the X-Men have, but it is interesting how the raw numbers in terms of ethnic and gender representation tell a different story. Without doing a similar analysis on other titles published in the industry it is difficult to conclusively state whether the X-Men is more or less diverse, more or less male-centric than the average title. A cursory familiarity with other superhero titles such as The Justice League and The Avengers would indicate that *The Uncanny X-Men* is more diverse, but after looking at the numbers for *The Uncanny X-Men* it is startling how close those numbers may actually be.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The X-Men Citations

The X-Men #1 (Sep. 1963). "X-Men." Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 8-31. Print.

The X-Men #2 (Nov. 1963), "No One Can Stop the Vanisher!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 32-54. Print.

The X-Men #3 (Jan. 1964), "Beware of the Blob!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 55-79. Print.

The X-Men #4 (Mar. 1964), "The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 80-103. Print.

The X-Men #5 (May 1964), "Trapped: One X-Man!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 104-129. Print.

The X-Men #6 (Jul. 1964), "Sub-Mariner! Joins the Evil Mutants." Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 130-54. Print.

The X-Men #7 (Sep. 1964), "The Return of the Blob." Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 155-78. Print.

The X-Men #8 (Nov. 1964), Unus, the Untouchable!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 179-202. Print.

The X-Men #9 (Jan. 1965), "Enter, the Avengers!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 203-26. Print.

The X-Men #10 (Mar. 1965), "The Coming of…Ka-Zar!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 227-49. Print.

The X-Men #11 (May 1965), "The Triumph of Magneto!" Lee, Stan (w) and Jack Kirby (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 252-74. Print.

The X-Men #12 (Jul. 1965), "The Origin of Professor X!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Alex Toth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 275-97. Print.

The X-Men #13 (Sep. 1965), "Where Walks the Juggernaut!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 298-320. Print.

The X-Men #14 (Nov. 1965), "Among Us Stalk…the Sentinels!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 321-343. Print.

The X-Men #15 (Dec. 1965), "Prisoners of the Mysterious Master Mold!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 344-366. Print.

The X-Men #16 (Jan. 1966), "The Supreme Sacrifice!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 367-89. Print.

The X-Men #17 (Feb. 1966), "…and None Shall Survive!" Lee, Stan (w), Jack Kirby and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 390-412. Print.

The X-Men #18 (Mar. 1966), "If Iceman Should Fail--!" Lee, Stan (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 413-435. Print.

The X-Men #19 (Apr. 1966), "Lo! Now Shall Appear—The Mimic!" Lee, Stan (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 436-458. Print.

The X-Men #20 (May 1966), "I, Lucifer…" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 459-81. Print.

The X-Men #21 (Jun. 1966), "From Whence Comes…Dominus?" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 482-507. Print.

The X-Men #22 (Jul. 1966), "Divided—We Fall!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 508-530. Print.

The X-Men #23 (Aug. 1966), "To Save a City." Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 531-553. Print.

The X-Men #24 (Sep. 1966), "The Plague of…the Locust!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 554-576 Print.

The X-Men #25 (Oct. 1966), "The Power and the Pendant." Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 577-599. Print.

The X-Men #26 (Nov. 1966), "Holocaust!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 600-622. Print.

The X-Men #27 (Dec. 1966), "Re-Enter: The Mimic!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 623-645. Print.

The X-Men #28 (Jan. 1967), "The Wail of the Banshee!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 646-68. Print.

The X-Men #29 (Feb. 1967), "When Titans Clash!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 669-691. Print.

The X-Men #30 (Mar. 1967), "The Warlock Wakes!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Jack Sparling (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 692-714. Print.

The X-Men #31 (Apr. 1967), "We Must Destroy...the Cobalt Man!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *The X-Men Omnibus Volume 1: Collecting The X-Men Nos. 1-31*. Ed. Cory Sedlmeier. NY: Marvel Comics, 2009. 715-737. Print.

The X-Men #32 (May 1967), "Beware the Juggernaut, My Son!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 12 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #33 (Jun. 1967), "Into the Crimson Cosmos." Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 12 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #34 (Jul. 1967), "War—In a World of Darkness!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Dan Adkins (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 12 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #35 (Aug. 1967), "Along Came a Spider..." Thomas, Roy (w) and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 12 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #36 (Sep. 1967), "Mekano Lives!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Ross Andru (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 13 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #37 (Oct. 1967), "We, the Jury..." Thomas, Roy (w) and Ross Andru (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 13 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #38 (Nov. 1967), "The Sinister Shadow of...Doomsday!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Don Heck (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 13 Jan. 2010. Online.
The X-Men #39 (Dec. 1967), "The Fateful Finale!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Don Heck (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 14 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #40 (Jan. 1968), "The Mark of the Monster!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Don Heck (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 14 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #41 (Feb. 1968), "Now Strikes…the Sub-Human!" Thomas, Roy (w) and
Don Heck (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 14 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #42 (Mar. 1968), "If I Should Die…!" Thomas, Roy (w) and Don Heck (a).
Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited. 15 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #43 (Mar. 1968), "The Torch is Passed…!" Thomas, Roy (w) and George
Tuska (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 15 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #44 (May 1968), "Red Raven, Red Raven…!" Thomas, Roy and Gary
Friedrich (w) and Don Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics
Unlimited*. 18 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #45 (Jun. 1968), "When Mutants Clash!" Friedrich, Gary (w) and Don
Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited.* 18 Jan. 2010.
Online.

The X-Men #46 (Jul. 1968), "The End of the X-Men!" Friedrich, Gary (w) and Don
Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 18 Jan. 2010.
Online.

The X-Men #47 (Aug. 1968), "The Warlock Wears Three Faces!" Friedrich, Gary (w)
and Don Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 18 Jan.
2010. Online.

The X-Men #48 (Sep. 1968), "Beware Computo, Commander of the Robot Hive!"
Drake, Arnold (w) and Don Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics
Unlimited*. 19 Jan. 2010. Online.

The X-Men #49 (Oct. 1968), "Who Dares Defy…the Demi-Men?" Drake, Arnold (w)
and Don Heck and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 19 Jan.
2010. Online.

The X-Men #50 (Nov. 1968), "City of Mutants." Drake, Arnold (w) and Jim Steranko
(a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 20 Jan. 2010. Online.

X-Men #51 (Dec. 1968), "The Devil had a Daughter!" Drake, Arnold (w) and Jim
Steranko (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 21 Jan. 2010. Online.

X-Men #52 (Jan. 1969), "Twilight of the Mutants!" Drake, Arnold (w) and Don Jeck
and Werner Roth (a). *Marvel Digital Comics Unlimited*. 21 Jan. 2010. Online.

X-Men #53 (Feb. 1969), "The Rage of Blastarr!" Drake, Arnold (w) and Barry
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The Uncanny X-Men #205 (May 1986), "Wounded Wolf." Claremont, Chris and Barry Windsor-Smith (w) and Barry Windsor-Smith (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1986. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #207 (Jul. 1986), "Ghosts." Claremont, Chris (w) and John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1986. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #210 (Oct. 1986), "The Morning After." Claremont, Chris (w) and John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1986. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #213 (Jan. 1987), "Psylocke." Claremont, Chris (w) and Alan Davis (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1987. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #215 (Mar. 1987), "Old Soldiers." Claremont, Chris (w) and Barry Windsor-Smith (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1987. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #222 (Oct. 1987), "Heartbreak!" Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1987. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #223 (Nov. 1987), "Omens and Portents" Claremont, Chris (w) and Kerry Gammill (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1987. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #226 (Feb. 1988), "Go Tell the Spartans." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1988. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #229 (May 1988), "Down Under." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1988. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #230 (Jun. 1988), "Twas the Night..." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1988. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #231 (Jul. 1988), "...Dressed for Dinner!" Claremont, Chris (w) and Rick Leonardi (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1988. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #242 (Mar. 1989), "Burn!" Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #243 (Apr. 1989), "Ashes!" Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #251 (Early Nov. 1989), "Fever Dream." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #253 (Late Nov. 1989), "Storm Warnings!." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #254 (Early Dec. 1989), "All-New, All-Different—Here We Go Again!" Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #255 (Mid Dec. 1989), "Crash & Burn." Claremont, Chris (w) and Marc Silvestri (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1989. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #265 (Early Aug. 1990), "Storm." Claremont, Chris (w) and Bill Jaaska (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1990. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #266 (Late Aug. 1990), "Gambit: Out of the Frying Pan." Claremont, Chris (w) and Mike Collins (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1990. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #273 (Feb. 1991), "Too Many Mutants! (or Whose House Is This, Anyway?)." Claremont, Chris (w) and Whilce Portacio, Klaus Janson, John Byrne, Rick Leonardi, Marc Silvestri, Michael Golden, Larry Stroman, and Jim Lee (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1991. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #274 (Mar. 1991), "Crossroads." Claremont, Chris and Jim Lee (w) and Jim Lee (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1991. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #275 (Apr. 1991), "The Path Not Taken." Claremont, Chris (w) and Jim Lee (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1991. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #280 (Sep. 1991), "One Step Back—Two Steps Forward." Nicieza, Fabian (w) and Andy Kubert and Steven Butler (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1991. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #282 (Nov. 1991), "Payback." Portacio, Whilce and John Byrne (w) and Whilce Portacio (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1991. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #297 (Feb. 1993), "Up and Around." Lobdell, Scott (w) and
  Brandon Peterson (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Brandon Peterson (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #299 (Apr. 1993), "Nightlines." Lobdell, Scott (w) and Brandon
  Peterson (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #303 (Aug. 1993), "Province." Lobdell, Scott (w) and Richard
  Bennet (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  and John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  and Jan Duuresema (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1993. Print.

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  Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1994. Print.

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  Scott (w) and John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1994. Print.

The Uncanny X-Men #310 (Mar. 1994), "...Show Me the Way to Go Home..." Lobdell,
  Scott (w) and John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1994. Print.

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  John Romita Jr. (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1994. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #317 (Oct. 1994), "The Phalanx Covenant: Book Three of Generation Next—Enter Freely and of Your Own Free Will." Lobdell, Scott (w) and Roger Cruz (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1994. Print.

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The Uncanny X-Men #366 (Mar. 1999), "The Shot Heard Round the World." Davis, Alan and Fabian Nicieza (w) and Leinil Francis Yu (a). NY: Marvel Comics, 1999. Print.

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