

ABSTRACT

Title: Superheroes and Society: Tracing the socio-cultural trajectory of American mainstream superheroes

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This dissertation analyses the trajectory of superheroes within American mainstream comics. The tested research hypothesises purported that American mainstream superheroes can be traced according to the socio-cultural environment within which they were conceived. This paper will demonstrate how the role of women in society can be traced through the portrayal of Wonder Woman during WWII and Lois Lane in the workplace during the 1970s. The analysis will then suggest how the consistently increasing size of the physiques of today's superheroes has been mirrored in the arenas of professional sport and cinema. Finally this paper demonstrates how the early lack of representation, and subsequent coverage of gay and lesbian themes within comics has been telling of the socio-cultural perceptions of homosexuality within the United States since the introduction of the Comics Code Authority in 1954.