



Beyond The Archetype: New Frontiers In The Study Of Masculinity In The Marvel Cinematic Universe

Ramkishore MR and Dr. Geetha Bhasker
Research Scholar, Professor
Department of English,
Bangalore University, Bangalore. India

Abstract : This paper synthesizes the established critical landscape surrounding the representation of masculinity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), one of the most influential cultural phenomena of the twenty-first century. Drawing on a wide range of scholarly perspectives, it traces the dominant critical paradigms that have emerged in the study of MCU masculinities, revealing a field both rich and circumscribed. Existing scholarship, shaped primarily around the analysis of the franchise's foundational white male heroes—Tony Stark, Steve Rogers, and Thor—has coalesced around four major thematic pillars: the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity, the centrality of the male body as a marker of control and power, the depiction of trauma and mental health through masculine frameworks, and the interpretation of MCU narratives as modern mythological and archetypal structures. These studies collectively underscore the MCU's negotiation between traditional and evolving ideals of manhood, charting the heroes' movement from dominance and emotional repression toward vulnerability and self-awareness. However, this paper identifies a critical imbalance within the existing discourse: the persistent focus on the "Big Three" has resulted in the marginalization of other masculinities represented across the franchise—particularly those of supporting characters, characters of colour, villains, and newer protagonists. By mapping this concentration of scholarship, the study establishes the necessity for broader and more inclusive analyses that attend to the diverse, intersectional, and subversive performances of masculinity that continue to redefine the MCU's narrative and cultural significance.

IndexTerms - Marvel Cinema , Masculinity & Popular culture.

The Established Critical Landscape: A Synthesis of Current Scholarship

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) has, since its inception, become one of the most significant and far-reaching cultural producers of the 21st century (Maxim). Its narratives, characters, and ideologies have permeated the global consciousness, making the franchise a critical site for the analysis of contemporary cultural values. Within this vast narrative landscape, the representation of masculinity has emerged as a particularly fertile ground for academic inquiry. The superhero genre, historically rooted in the assertion of white male superiority and patriarchal norms, relies heavily on specific constructions of manhood to drive its stories (Hefner 197; Garcia). Consequently, a robust body of scholarly work has developed to interrogate how the MCU constructs, reinforces, and occasionally challenges dominant masculine ideals. However, a comprehensive review of this literature reveals a critical landscape that, while rich, is also highly concentrated. The academic conversation has been overwhelmingly shaped by the analysis of the franchise's foundational

white male protagonists from its initial phases, creating a scholarly consensus that, while valuable, leaves vast areas of this cinematic universe underexplored. This section will synthesize the primary pillars of existing MCU masculinity studies to map this established terrain, thereby identifying the critical lacunae that necessitate new avenues of research.

The Hegemonic Hero: Deconstructing the "Big Three"

The most dominant and well-established thread within the academic discourse on masculinity in the MCU is the critical deconstruction of its three foundational heroes: Tony Stark (Iron Man), Steve Rogers (Captain America), and Thor. These characters, who form the narrative and ideological core of the "Infinity Saga," have been extensively analysed through the theoretical lens of hegemonic masculinity, a concept that describes the culturally dominant and idealized form of manhood that subordinates other masculinities and femininity (Walsh 102; Korencik 10). Scholars argue that these heroes embody, struggle with, and in some cases, transcend the problematic tenets of this ideal, often termed "toxic masculinity" (Sari et al. 2; Else). Their individual and collective journeys are frequently framed as a process of overcoming internal masculine "borders"—such as arrogance, emotional suppression, and impulsive violence—in order to achieve a more complete and emotionally mature form of heroism (Walsh 101).

Tony Stark is consistently identified as the franchise's most explicit embodiment of a flawed, toxic masculinity (Korencik 7; Her Campus). His initial characterization as a self-proclaimed "genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist" is marked by extreme arrogance, unchecked narcissism, and a pattern of womanizing that objectifies female characters (Her Campus; Else). This behavior is not merely a personality quirk but the direct catalyst for major conflicts, most notably the creation of the genocidal artificial intelligence, Ultron (Else; Her Campus). His character arc across nine films is thus read as a long and arduous process of redemption, wherein he must dismantle this toxic public image and confront the insecurities that fuel it (Walsh 101). Some analyses, however, offer a more complex reading, suggesting that Stark also exhibits traits of gender nonconformity by expressing his emotions, asking for help, and ultimately ceding control of his company and leadership of the Avengers, thereby challenging the masculine norms of dominance and restrictive emotionality (Else).

Thor's narrative follows a similar, if more mythic, trajectory. Introduced as an impulsive and arrogant prince, his primary motivation is the desire to be seen as a fierce warrior and worthy king, leading him to acts of reckless violence that endanger his entire kingdom (Walsh 101). His journey is one of being humbled, stripped of his power, and forced to learn a masculinity based not on dominance and birth right but on sacrifice and service. His arc is presented as a clear struggle against the hypermasculine tendencies of needing to assert dominance and resorting to impulsive violence (Walsh 101). Even in his later appearances, his character continues to be a site for exploring masculine crisis, as seen in his struggle with failure, grief, and depression following the events of *Avengers: Infinity War* (Walsh 101).

Captain America presents a more nuanced case. While not an obvious depiction of toxic masculinity, Steve Rogers is nonetheless a product of a specific, traditional masculine ideal rooted in the World War II era (Hefner 197; Farmer). His character is defined by a relentless drive to fulfill the hero role, a desperation that stems from his pre-serum life as the "little guy" (Walsh 101). This manifests as a constant need to prove himself by starting fights he cannot win and repeatedly attempting to enlist despite his physical limitations (Walsh 101; Sari et al. 5). His masculinity is one of unwavering moral conviction, but it is also one that often defaults to violence as the primary solution to conflict and identifies self-worth with the ability to fight (Hefner 197). The "hero's journey" for all three characters, therefore, is not just about defeating external villains but about an internal struggle for emotional growth, requiring them to overcome the limitations imposed by these hegemonic masculine values to become true heroes (Walsh 101).

The Body as Battleground: Muscularity, Control, and Physicality

A second major pillar of MCU scholarship centres on the male body as a primary signifier of masculine identity and power. The superhero genre relies to an extraordinary degree on the physical form to communicate heroic potential and gendered superiority (Hefner 197). Within the MCU, this is most evident in the consistent presentation of the hyper muscular male physique as the normative state for a male hero. This "visible muscularity" is not merely aesthetic but performative; it functions as a visual shorthand for strength, discipline, and control, presenting the male body itself as the source of heroic capability—the hero "does what he does because he physically can" (Hefner 198). Superhero costumes are designed to highlight

this muscularity, drawing the viewer's attention to the body's actions and the engagement of its muscles (Hefner 198; Sari et al. 4).

This idealized and often unrealistic male body type has been linked to negative real-world consequences. Research indicates that exposure to superhero media is positively associated with the internalization of harmful masculinity norms, male appearance ideals, and a drive for muscularity that can contribute to eating disorders, steroid abuse, and body dysmorphia among male viewers (Maxim). The glorification of these unattainable physiques serves as a powerful form of gender socialization, communicating specific and narrow ideals of what a powerful male body should look like (Maxim).

Conversely, academic analysis has explored how deviations from this hyper muscular norm are often coded as a failure of masculinity. The muscular body carries connotations of control, discipline, and hardness. In contrast, fatness is culturally associated with a lack of control, softness, and "letting oneself go" (Hefner 198). These associations are deeply gendered, with normative masculinity being constructed as an expression of bodily control. Consequently, the fat male body is often positioned as being outside of, and oppositional to, normative masculinity (Hefner 197). The depiction of Thor in *Avengers: Endgame* serves as a key example. His weight gain is presented as a physical manifestation of his depression and failure, and while treated with some pathos, it is also a consistent source of humor. This framing reinforces the idea that a non-muscular male body is a demasculinized one, standing in stark contrast to the expected superhero ideal (Hefner 197).

The Traumatized Hero: Masculinity and Mental Health

A growing and increasingly sophisticated area of research investigates the intersection of masculinity, trauma, and mental health within the MCU. While superhero narratives have always been predicated on origin stories involving loss, recent scholarship has moved toward more clinically informed analyses of how male characters process—or fail to process—psychological trauma. This work often critiques how traditional masculine norms, such as self-reliance, toughness, and emotional control, act as barriers to healing and help-seeking behaviors (Harriger et al. 106).

Tony Stark's character arc is again a central case study, with many scholars analyzing his experiences through the lens of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Wincherauk 41; The Xtime Project). His capture in the first *Iron Man* film, his near-death experience in *The Avengers*, and the constant threat of global annihilation trigger clear symptoms, including anxiety attacks, nightmares, and invasive memories. His response to this trauma is filtered through a masculine lens of self-reliance; rather than seeking support, he pours his anxiety into his work, creating an "addiction" to building and improving his Iron Man suits. The suits become both a source of his trauma and his primary, yet dysfunctional, coping mechanism (Wincherauk 41). This narrative powerfully illustrates how the masculine injunction to solve problems alone can prevent genuine recovery from mental illness (Harriger et al. 106).

Another key figure in this discourse is Bucky Barnes, the Winter Soldier. His story represents a case of complex and prolonged trauma, involving decades of torture, brainwashing, memory erasure, and moral injury from being used as a weapon (Sage Therapy; Frisina; Caliper Wellness). Analyses of his journey in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, *Captain America: Civil War*, and *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* focus on the slow and arduous process of recovery. His narrative explores the lasting psychological scars of abuse, the struggle to reclaim a coherent identity, and the difficulty of making amends for actions committed without agency (Frisina; Caliper Wellness). Bucky's story provides a powerful counter-narrative to the quick-fix redemptions common in action media, instead depicting recovery as a long-term process that requires confronting the past and, crucially, accepting help from others—a direct challenge to the masculine ideal of stoic self-sufficiency (Sage Therapy). These character studies are part of a broader scholarly conversation about how media representations can either reinforce or challenge real-world stigmas surrounding men's mental health, where the pressure to conform to masculine norms is a significant factor in men's resistance to seeking psychological help (Cooke; Maxim).

The Modern Myth: Archetypes and Intertextuality

A final significant area of established scholarship approaches the MCU not as a self-contained entity, but as a modern manifestation of ancient storytelling traditions. This line of inquiry frequently employs theoretical frameworks from mythology, folklore, and Jungian psychology to analyze MCU characters and narratives as contemporary iterations of timeless archetypes (Gantt; Plencner). This perspective argues that the franchise's

immense popularity stems from its ability to tap into the "collective unconscious," presenting stories that resonate with universal human motivations and developmental patterns (Fleming; Farkas).

Within this framework, characters are often read as embodying one of Carl Jung's twelve primary archetypes, such as the Hero, the Trickster, or the Wise Old Man (Farkas). Captain America, for example, is frequently analyzed as the quintessential "Hero" archetype, a character who begins as an ordinary person and is transformed into a symbol of ideal virtue (Farkas). His journey is often mapped onto Joseph Campbell's concept of the monomyth, or "hero's journey," following the stages of departure, initiation, and return (Fleming; Farkas).

This mythological lens also extends to direct comparisons with figures from classical pantheons, suggesting the MCU functions as a modern-day mythology where science and technology have replaced divine power as the source of the extraordinary (Farkas). Tony Stark, the brilliant inventor who forges weapons and armor for his fellow heroes, is compared to Hephaestus, the Greek god of the forge (Farkas). The Hulk, a creation of scientific hubris with devastating power, is read as a modern Prometheus, a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked ambition (Farkas). More broadly, the original Avengers team is often viewed as a pantheon of modern gods, each with unique powers and domains (Farkas). This approach also allows for the analysis of characters through the archetype of the "tragic hero," as defined by Aristotle. The foundational Avengers—Stark, Rogers, and Thor—are seen as noble figures whose falls are brought about by a tragic flaw (*hamartia*), such as Stark's hubris or Rogers's inflexibility, leading them through reversals of fortune and moments of painful realization (Sharma and Patel 109). This line of inquiry positions the MCU as a significant cultural text that continues the age-old human practice of using larger-than-life stories to explore fundamental questions of morality, identity, and sacrifice.

The cumulative effect of these well-developed scholarly conversations is the establishment of a clear, yet circumscribed, critical paradigm. The academic understanding of "masculinity in the MCU" has been profoundly shaped by this sustained focus on a small cohort of its most prominent white male heroes from the franchise's first decade. The deconstruction of their hegemonic traits, the analysis of their idealized bodies, the exploration of their specific traumas, and their mapping onto classical archetypes have provided a rich foundation. However, this very concentration has resulted in a significant critical imbalance. The diverse, contradictory, and often more complex masculinities performed by the franchise's vast roster of supporting characters, characters of colour, villains, and newer protagonists remain largely in the scholarly shadows. This analytical preference for the centre has left the margins—where some of the most innovative and challenging representations of manhood may reside—critically unexamined. It is in these underexplored territories that the most promising and novel research on the topic now lies.

Works Cited

1. Caballero, Nathan Christopher. "The Queer God of Stories: Liminal Queerness and Identity in Loki." Bachelor's Thesis, Texas Christian University, 2020.
2. Caliper Wellness. "The Winter Soldier: A Case Study in Complex Trauma and Dissociative Identity Disorder." *Caliper Wellness*, 2024, www.caliperwellness.com/the-winter-soldier-a-case-study-in-complex-trauma-and-dissociative-identity-disorder/.
3. Centr. "Chris Hemsworth's Stuntman Reveals How He Got a Body Like Thor." *Centr*, 2021, centr.com/blog/show/14084/chris-hemsworths-stuntman-reveals-how-he-got-a-body-like-thor.
4. Chiat, Kevin Lee. "Being a Superhero is Amazing, Everyone Should Try It: Relationality and Masculinity in Superhero Narratives." PhD Dissertation, The University of Western Australia, 2021.
5. Child, Ben. "Is the Marvel Cinematic Universe an Indictment of Toxic Masculinity?" *The Guardian*, 12 Nov. 2021, www.theguardian.com/film/2021/nov/12/marvel-cinematic-universe-toxic-masculinity-doctor-strange-spider-man-no-way-home.
6. Cinema Therapy. "How to Heal from Trauma & Abuse (Bucky's Journey)." *YouTube*, 15 July 2022, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcTBjZ_za_M.
7. Complex, Valerie. "'Spider-Man: No Way Home' Rejects Rugged Individualism in the Face of Mass Catastrophe." *The Nerds of Colour*, 18 Jan. 2022, thenerdsofcolour.org/2022/01/18/spider-man-no-way-home-rejects-rugged-individualism-in-the-face-of-mass-catastrophe/.

8. Cooke, Nia. "Onscreen and Unseen: An Analysis of Masculinity in Marvel Superhero Movies." Senior Project, Bard College, 2018.
9. Costello, Lisa. "'If She Be Worthy': Performance of Female Masculinity and Toxic Geek Masculinity in Jason Aaron's Thor: The Goddess of Thunder." *Superheroes and Masculinity: Unmasking the Gender Performance of Heroism*, edited by Katrina Hill and Forrest C. Helvie, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, pp. 29-46.
10. Dawes, Dorian. "Ethics in Character Development: The Asshole Manchild." *Medium*, 10 May 2018, medium.com/@RealDorianDawes/ethics-in-character-development-the-asshole-manchild-ac056a2c3b0b.
11. Diaz, Eric. "The Marvel Comics History of Sam Wilson, from Falcon to Captain America." *Nerdist*, 23 Apr. 2021, nerdist.com/article/captain-america-sam-wilson-marvel-comics-history-falcon/.
12. "Drax (Marvel Cinematic Universe)." *Wikipedia*, 2024, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drax_\(Marvel_Cinematic_Universe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drax_(Marvel_Cinematic_Universe)).
13. "Drax the Destroyer." *Wikipedia*, 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drax_the_Destroyer.
14. Else, Michael Anthony. "Toxic Masculinity? There's More to Tony Stark." *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 1 Nov. 2022, brightlightsfilm.com/toxic-masculinity-theres-more-to-tony-stark/.
15. English Fun. "Masculinity Analysis of Peter Parker in Spider-Man No Way Home Movie." *Efi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2022.
16. Farkas, Dániel. "The Pantheon of Modern Gods: Archetypes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." *AMERICANA E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2020.
17. Farmer, Ashley. "Captain America as the Blueprint for American Masculinity." Honors Thesis, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2023.
18. Fitz, Avery. "Loki Series Confirms God of Mischief's Gender Fluidity." *The Delphi*, 10 July 2021, sno.dvrhs.org/6715/arts-entertainment/loki-series-confirms-the-god-of-mischiefs-gender-fluidity/.
19. Fleming, Matthew James. "The Avengers Disassembled: Deconstructing Gender & Hegemonic Masculinity in Superhero Culture." *Social Justice and Community Engagement*, vol. 8, 2015.
20. Frank, Victoria. "Critical Analysis: Hero Archetypes in Comic Books." *WordPress*, 2014, frankvictoria.wordpress.com/critical-analysis-hero-archetypes-in-comic-books/.
21. Frisina, M. "Internal War: The Psychological Damage of the Winter Soldier." *Medium*, 2 May 2018, medium.com/@mfrisina/internal-war-the-psychological-damage-of-the-winter-soldier-fa80b4295103.
22. Gantt, Michael. "The Hero Archetype in Today's Digital Era: Marvel Superheroes." *ResearchGate*, 2015.
23. Garcia, Hector. "Captain America as Propaganda: An Analysis of Militarism and Hyper-Masculinity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." Master's Thesis, The University of Texas at El Paso, 2016.
24. "Guardians of the Galaxy movie vs. comic." *Reddit*, 2015, www.reddit.com/r/Marvel/comments/6siyks/guardians_of_the_galaxy_movie_vs_comic/.
25. Harris, Imani. "Captain America and Non-Toxic Masculinity." *Doctor NerdLove*, 2016, www.doctornerdlove.com/nerd-role-models-captain-america-and-non-toxic-masculinity/.
26. Harriger, Jennifer A., et al. "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility: A Content Analysis of Masculinity Themes in Superhero Movies." *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2023, pp. 105-115.
27. Hefner, Valentin. "Fat Masculinity and the Superhero: An Analysis of Peter B. Parker and Thor." *Continuum*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2023, pp. 197-208.
28. Her Campus. "The Marvel Cinematic Universe and Toxic Masculinity." *Her Campus*, 2021, www.hercampus.com/school/uc-riverside/marvel-cinematic-universe-and-toxic-masculinity/.
29. "I think that phase 4 is potentially the darkest phase of the MCU so far." *Reddit*, 2022, www.reddit.com/r/marvelstudios/comments/wq7lho/i_think_that_phase_4_is_potentially_the_darkest/.

30. Jordan, Valerie, and Leticia Hernandez. "Masculinity and Race in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2022, pp. 45-62.
31. Kaufman, Michael. "Galaxy Guardians Guard Harmful Ideals of Manhood." *Michael Kaufman*, 2014, michaelkaufman.com/2014/08/galaxy-guardians-guard-harmful-ideals-of-manhood/.
32. Kawada, Hidetaka. "The Representation of Asian American Masculinities in Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings." *Keio University*, 2020.
33. Korencik, David. "Toxic Masculinity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." Bachelor's Thesis, Masaryk University, 2022.
34. Looper. "The Untold Truth of Drax the Destroyer." *YouTube*, 18 Feb. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUXrX9oz7bU.
35. Mabrouk, Dalia M. M. "Toxic Masculinity in Michael Rohrbach's American Male." *Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2022, pp. 123-135.
36. Martinelli, Alice. "Loki's Gender Fluidity and Bisexuality in Norse Mythology and in Modern Adaptations." Bachelor's Thesis, University of Padua, 2022.
37. MasculinityU. "Superheroic Masculinity: The Incredible Hulk." *MasculinityU*, 28 Sept. 2011, masculinityu.wordpress.com/2011/09/28/superheroic-masculinity-the-incredible-hulk/.
38. Maxim, Ryan. "With Great Power: A Content Analysis of Masculinities and Appearance-Related Themes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." *The Undergraduate Review*, vol. 18, 2024, article 10.
39. Nunan, Frank. "Multidimensional Masculinities Theory." *UNLV Law*, 2011, scholars.law.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1784&context=facpub.
40. O'Carroll, Dillon. "For the Boys." *Medium*, 20 May 2018, dillonocarroll.medium.com/for-the-boys-78b7c58aed1d.
41. "Phase Five." *Wikipedia*, 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvel_Cinematic_Universe:_Phase_Five.
42. Plencner, A. "The Superhero Archetype in Media Production." *Communication Today*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2018, pp. 58-71.
43. Quora. "How different is Bucky Barnes AKA the Winter Soldier in the Marvel Comics compared to his counterpart in the MCU?" *Quora*, 2015, www.quora.com/How-different-is-Bucky-Barnes-AKA-the-Winter-Soldier-in-the-Marvel-Comics-compared-to-his-counterpart-in-the-MCU-What-are-the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-the-changes-made.
44. Ray, Kristen. "Gender Portrayal in Marvel Cinematic Universe Films: Gender Representation, Moral Alignment, and Rewards for Violence." Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2020.
45. Sage Therapy. "What Marvel's Antiheroes Can Teach Us About Men's Mental Health." *Sage Therapy*, 2024, www.sagetherapy.com/post/what-marvels-antiheroes-can-teach-us-about-mens-mental-health.
46. Salvador, Xiomara. "An Analysis of Season 1 of Loki Using Critical Feminist Lens Theory." *Medium*, 2021, medium.com/@xiomarasalv73/an-analysis-of-season-1-of-loki-using-critical-feminist-lens-theory-abea28f55a14.
47. Sánchez-Asenjo, Ana. "WandaVision through the Sitcoms: A Study of the Series' Narrative Construction." *REDEN*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2023, pp. 60-77.
48. Sari, R. P., et al. "Representation of Toxic Masculinity in Steve Rogers' Captain America: The First Avenger." *Transformatika: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2024, pp. 1-11.
49. Schneider, Kyle. "Toxic Masculinity and The Hulk." *Medium*, 28 Oct. 2020, medium.com/@KyleSchneiderWorks/toxic-masculinity-and-the-hulk-160d8b4ac222.
50. Screen Rant. "Unmistakable Peter Quill Traits That The MCU Nailed." *Screen Rant*, 2022, screenrant.com/unmistakable-peter-quill-traits-mcu-films/.
51. "Shang-Chi (Marvel Cinematic Universe)." *Wikipedia*, 2024, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shang-Chi_\(Marvel_Cinematic_Universe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shang-Chi_(Marvel_Cinematic_Universe)).
52. Sharma, Priya, and Raj Patel. "Tragic Heroes in the Marvel Cinematic Universe: A Comparative Study of Captain America, Thor, and Iron Man." *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2024, pp. 108-16.

53. snoochie-boochies. "I love the Vision's take on masculinity." *Reddit*, 2024, www.reddit.com/r/WANDAVISION/comments/1j2z748/i_love_the_visions_take_on_masculinity/.
54. The Wild Hunt. "The Mighty Thor and the Failure of Masculinity." *The Wild Hunt*, 2025, wildhunt.org/2025/02/the-mighty-thor-and-the-failure-of-masculinity.html.
55. The Xtine Project. "Tony Stark, PTSD, and the Problem with 'Problem Solving'." *The Xtine Project*, 2020, thextineproject.com/tony-stark-ptsd/.
56. Walsh, C. "Borders of Masculinity: The Hero's Journey in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." *Digital Literature Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2022, pp. 101-111.
57. White, Mark D. "How Sam Wilson Represents as Captain America." *Psychology Today*, 1 Feb. 2025, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/maybe-its-just-me-but/202502/how-sam-wilson-represents-as-captain-america.
58. Williams, Jordan. "Shang-Chi's Father Issues Are Deeper Than Any Other Marvel Hero's." *Screen Rant*, 10 Sept. 2021, screenrant.com/shang-chi-marvel-father-issues-mother/.
59. Wincherauk, Matthew. "A Foe Abstract: An Analysis of Tony Stark's PTSD and Addiction in the Marvel Cinematic Universe." *Panic! Discourse*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2019, pp. 41-50.
60. Wong, Heidi. "Breaking Intergenerational Pain and Burdens: A Reflection of 'Shang-Chi'." *SOLA Network*, 15 Sept. 2021, sola.network/article/breaking-intergenerational-pain-and-burdens-reflection-shang-chi/.
61. Woodward, K. "Military Deployment, Masculinity and Trauma: Reviewing the Connections." *Journal of Men's Health*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2014, pp. 16-25.

