

About

Ms. Marvel: No Normal collects the first five issues of the 2015 hit series that garnered praise from critics and comic book fans alike, winning a Hugo award for Best Graphic Story in 2015. G. Willow Wilson's *Ms. Marvel* presents a thoughtful reboot to a well-known superhero. Kamala Khan is a Muslim-American teenager who must navigate pressures at home and high school, all while fighting crime on the streets. Her polymorph powers, the ability to change her body into anything, are a perfect metaphor for Kamala's real need to constantly shift and change to meet the expectations of the people around her.

Ms. Marvel: No Normal delves into traditional comic book themes like the meaning of heroism and sacrifice but it also explores issues of identity, culture, and the experiences of first-generation Americans. As a One Book Text, *Ms. Marvel* offers a unique opportunity to connect to the [Mosaics: Muslim Voices in America](#) program organized by the Moraine Valley Fine and Performing Arts Center. Through this program, author G. Willow Wilson visits MVCC. Wilson is an award-winning writer who is a convert to Islam. She has written a memoir about her religious conversion, as well as novels and comic books. Wilson's visit to campus would present an opportunity for a range of discussions on pop culture, diversity, religion, and the American experience.

First-Generation Americans: Kamala Khan, like many first-generation Americans, lives between different worlds each with different expectations. She is a daughter with parents who have traditional expectations, she has a school life with pressures of American teenagers, and she has a social life with friends who offer their own set of pressures. Kamala's experience represents that of many first-generation Americans who have to come to terms with the many different roles they are expected to take on. How do first-generation Americans see things differently from their parents? How do first-generation Americans see things differently from second or third-generation Americans?

Pop Culture and Social Change: *Ms. Marvel* is part of a long history of popular culture

advocating for social change. From the first televised inter-racial kiss on Star Trek, the use of pop music as protest music, or Charlie Chaplin's satirical film, the Great Dictator, condemning fascism, pop culture has pushed new ideas and asked society to be responsive. How does pop culture enable social change? Does it ever hold back social change?

Muslim-American Experience: Kamala Khan represents an important Muslim-American character within the comic book world. As Ms. Marvel, she has become a popular character who represents the Arab-American and Muslim-American experience. Muslims have contributed to American society for hundreds of years, but following 9/11, they have faced discrimination as their American identities are called into question. Kamala's story opens up conversations about American identity broadly and about Arab-American and Muslim-American identity specifically.

Responsibility to Others: Perhaps the best known comic book philosophy comes from Spider-Man in the saying "with great power there must also come--great responsibility." Ms. Marvel continues the exploration of this idea as Kamala considers the responsibilities she holds to her friends, family, and larger community. One of the great themes of superhero comics is that of responsibility. What responsibilities do people with special gifts or places of privilege hold to the larger community?

Science Fiction & Speculative Fiction: The rebirth of modern superhero comics in the late 1950s and early 1960s closely tied to Cold War era perspectives on science, the space race, and worldview. Comic books speculated about going to the moon, using computers, having mobile phones, and a range of other technologies long before these technologies were common. Ms. Marvel continues this tradition of using science fiction to explore ideas about the impact of technology, along with the potential benefits and threats of scientific advancement.

Religion & Spirituality

G. Willow Wilson's memoir *The Butterfly Mosque* is a powerful personal exploration of spirituality. Wilson shares her experience traveling through the middle east as a recent convert to Islam. Feeling torn by Western secularism and call of her new faith, she seeks out a way to encompass her values without compromising the friends and family that stretch across a cultural divide. This book is an honest exploration that opens up conversation around faith, values, and identity.

About the One Book Program

For thousands of years, humans have used stories to communicate knowledge about the world. Stories provide contexts for our understanding of facts, emotions, discoveries, history, relationships, and all kinds of human interaction. For this reason, the Moraine Valley Library and the Moraine Valley Bookstore invite all members of the community to come together to discuss a selected story in the One Book, One College program. Join us as we share knowledge across disciplines, exchange new ideas on useful topics, and enrich our curriculum in new ways. For more information, contact us at (708) 974-5709 or swanson[at]morainevalley.edu.

Previous One Book, One College Selections:

- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (2004)
- Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the NightTime* (2005-2006)
- George Orwell's *1984* (2006-2007)
- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley* (2007-2008)
- Elizabeth Royte's *Garbage Land* (2008-2009)
- Studs Terkel's *Working* (2009-2010)
- Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010-2011)
- Roxanna Saberi's *Between Two Worlds* (2011-2012)
- Tony Horwitz's *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (2012-2013)
- Max Brooks' *World War Z: The Oral History of the Zombie War* (2013-2014)
- Jame Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* (2014-2015)
- José Angel N.'s *Illegal: Reflections of an Undocumented Immigrant* (2015-2016)
- Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: the Musical* (2016-2017)
- Andea L. Pino & Annie E. Clark, *We Believe You; Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out* (2017-2018)