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Weaving Narratives: Exploring Character Dynamics and Developments in the Venom Arc of Spectacular Spiderman

“The Spectacular Spider-man” is an American animated Television show produced by Sony Pictures Television and Culver Entertainment, based on the Marvel comics of Spiderman created by Stan Lee. The Spectacular Spider-Man animated superhero television show was developed by Greg Weisman and Victor Cook and Dong Woo Animation and Moi Animation Studios handled the animation. The show aired from March 8, 2008, through November 18, 2009. The series was praised for their unique art style and animation which generated a big fanbase for the Television Show. The characters were influenced and based on the original source material Spiderman Marvel comics. The story of Peter Parker in the TV show was depicted similarly to the comics. Peter lives his high school life while being a teenage superhero who protects his neighborhood and his real identity. The TV show stayed true to the source material and provided a great unique Spiderman storyline that is still remembered by the fans today.

Despite its acclaim, "The Spectacular Spider-Man" faced an untimely cancellation after its second season, leaving fans disappointed and eager for more content. The focus of this research is to analyze the character dynamics and development within the Venom arc of 'The Spectacular Spider-Man.' We will explore how Spider-Man/Peter Parker changes and evolves throughout the arc, as well as understand why the Venom arc stands out and was praised by fans. Examining character changes, conflicts, interactions, and final transformations will help us understand why the Venom arc is special. By analyzing Spider-Man and his development in the Venom arc, we can grasp how character development shapes the story and enhances its intrigue. Understanding Spider-Man's evolution also sheds light on his impact on the audience and answers questions about why Spider-Man is beloved.

Spiderman is one of the most memorable and iconic superheroes. Created by Stan Lee and the artist Steve Ditko, Spider-Man was first introduced in the last edition of Amazing Fantasy in 1962. Initially depicted as Peter Parker, a high school student who resided with his Uncle Ben and Aunt May following the tragic death of his parents.During a school excursion, Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider, resulting in him gaining superhuman strength, agility, and the ability to cling to surfaces (Hall 245).

Spider-Man is a widely recognized fictional character because of his unique mixture of relatable traits, gripping stories, and timeless themes. After the creation of Spiderman, and the character immediately attracted fans with his everyday beginnings and incredible powers. In contrast to other superheroes of the day, Spider-Man, also known as Peter Parker, struggled with common issues like relationships, finances, and schooling, which made him incredibly approachable to viewers. “He has a special appeal for young people since his counterpart, Peter Parker, is himself a teenager who is still subject to adult authority” (Green 257). Furthermore, the readers were deeply moved by Spider-Man's moral decisions and ethical problems, which were expressed by his catchphrase, "With great power comes great responsibility," and which reflected universal themes of bravery, sacrifice, and charity.

Moreover, the superhero genre as a whole has been greatly impacted by Spider-Man's existence in popular culture. Spider-Man had a huge impact on comics, particularly in terms of how people saw superheroes and narrative. Before the advent of Spider-Man, the majority of superheroes had established careers and lives as adults. They didn't deal with daily obstacles or numerous personal issues. "Teenagers had always been sidekicks. Making Spider-Man a teenager, with all the problems and insecurities that come with that, allowed the character to speak to readers in a way no other superhero ever had" (Hall 246). But Spider-Man broke the stereotype as a teenager resolving normal teenage problems like love, school, and family disputes. This shift from the usual was revolutionary because it gave superheroes a more realistic and relatable tone, especially for younger viewers.

In the critical essay "American Dreams: Geoff Dyer on how the comic-strip superhero has become a metaphor for self-transformation," Dyer explores the development of comic book superheroes and how they are portrayed in different media. Dyer explores the crossover from comic book pages to the big screen for superheroes like Spiderman, examining the effects of technical developments on visual representation and storytelling. Through Dyer's investigation into the mutually beneficial interaction between comic books and other forms of art, such as film, new perspectives on the cultural relevance of superhero stories and their capacity to mirror society values of self-transformation become apparent. By combining Dyer's views with the analysis of "The Spectacular Spiderman," one can better comprehend how character dynamics and growth are portrayed in the series in relation to modern superhero media.

Many different professions have long been interested in the psychological effects that fictional characters have on people, especially children. In the instance of Spider-Man, a well-known superhero with a lengthy backstory that dates to his creation in 1962, his impact goes beyond simple amusement and into the field of therapeutic investigation. Yeo's essay delves into the fascinating story of Jack, a young adopted child, whose obsession with Spider-Man became a central theme in his psychotherapy sessions.

Yeo (2016)'s documentation of Jack's journey highlights the striking similarities between his experiences and those of Spider-Man from the original animated series. The author notes how Jack's omnipotence identification with Spider-Man functioned as a psychological development stimulus in addition to a coping method. Yeo illustrates how fantasy and reality interact in a complex way as Jack uses his superhero alter ego to help him overcome both internal and external obstacles through detailed accounts of his therapy sessions.

A noteworthy feature that is examined in the piece is Jack's imitative of Spider-Man's superhuman abilities and valiant exploits in the treatment setting. Jack's displays of omnipotence, which range from scaling walls to playing fierce superhero roles, reflect his underlying desire for autonomy and empowerment in the face of pain and misfortune. Jack finds a way to express himself and find catharsis by taking on the character of Spider-Man while he works through the complexity of his past experiences and present emotional challenges.

Furthermore, Yeo also explores the developmental importance of Jack's Spider-Man identification, especially with regard to his changing self-concept and social interactions. The author reveals the transformational power of superhero symbolism by analyzing Jack's relationships with his therapist and his interest in Spider-Man stories. With his unique combination of power and fragility, Spider-Man serves as a mirror for Jack as he examines his own feelings, goals, and anxieties, helping him to gain a better understanding of who he is and where he fits in the world.

Overall, the paper provides insightful information about the healing potential of superhero stories, especially when it comes to psychological development and trauma healing. Yeo emphasizes the tremendous influence that fictional characters have on people's psyches by contrasting Jack's journey with the ageless adventures of Spider-Man. A great example of the impact fictional characters like Spiderman, have on their audience. This highlights the enduring power of storytelling as a tool for resilience, self-discovery, and healing.

The Venom arc of “The Spectacular Spider-Man” is introduced in the 9th episode of the first season “The Uncertainty Principle”. In the last scene of the episode, we get a glimpse of a dark, oily spot on the shuttle of John James, hinting at the sinister forces to come. Venom, depicted as a sentient alien symbiote, requires a bond with a host, typically humans, to survive. Once bonded, the host gains superhuman abilities but also falls under the control of the symbiote (Orcutt 1245). As the Venom storyline progresses, viewers are introduced to Eddie Brock, a guy whose symbiotic relationship with the alien known as Venom leads up a dramatic confrontation between Spider-Man and Venom. The story arc explores into the complicated relationship between Venom and Spider-Man, uncovering their intertwined pasts and the enduring hostility that drives their battle. Spider-Man has to overcome several obstacles during the story arc, including the psychological effects of fighting a villain that is so intimately associated with his own identity in addition to Venom's physical threat. The Venom arc features intense action scenes, poignant confrontations, and thought-provoking concepts that spectators connect with as the stakes rise and tensions build.

During the Venom arc of "The Spectacular Spider-Man," Spider-Man/Peter Parker's motivations and demeanor undergo a significant change. As the episodes progress, a noticeable transformation takes place, changing not just his behavior but also his moral compass. “Maybe it's okay that I sort of unintentionally stole the slime from the Connor's lab and maybe it's better for everyone if I don't return it, of course it's not really my call. Obviously, it was the right call” ("Persona" 00:10:41-00:11:02). What starts out as a valiant attempt to preserve justice and safeguard his area gradually turns into a trip characterized by arrogance and, occasionally, narcissistic characteristics. When the symbiote attaches itself to Peter, it intensifies his darker tendencies and pushes him toward self-indulgence and moral uncertainty.

This change reflects the arc's subtle examination of character dynamics, which digs into the finer points of identity and the attraction of power.

There is an evident shift in Spider-Man's demeanor towards assertiveness while he is in the symbiotic relationship with Venom. His aggressiveness and confidence are increased by the symbiote, which results in a more forceful personality. In this mode, Spider-Man demonstrates more confidence and decisiveness, frequently acting more assertively and directly to accomplish his objectives. He shows a stronger readiness to express his will and pursue his goals without hesitation as he becomes less hesitant and more proactive while facing problems. He interacts with both allies and opponents with greater boldness and assertiveness, demonstrating his increasing ability to stand up for his convictions and express his authority. Although, this newfound assertiveness has its own risk. The influence of the symbiote does lead Spiderman in a darker path, to a point where he can’t be considered a hero.

Comprehending the process of assertiveness growth in teenagers is essential to understanding the character dynamics in the Venom arc of Spectacular Spiderman. People negotiate their social environment and forge their identities throughout the delicate time of adolescence, which is dedicated to self-determination and self-development. Characters like Peter Parker in the series experience deep moral quandaries and internal conflicts, which are a reflection of the difficulties that real-life teenagers encounter. Assertiveness is defined by autonomy, self-assurance, and the capacity to articulate one's wishes; these traits are consistent with Peter's development over the course of the narrative arc (Nikolaiev et al. 211-213).

The article “What is Narcissism” written by Diana Kwon, highlights the remarkable similarities between the behavioral changes displayed by those suffering from narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and Spider-Man's transformation while possessed by the Venom symbiote. In both cases, there is a strong obsession with the self; people with NPD are engrossed in their own demands and desires, which is similar to Spider-Man's increased attention to his own strength and desires when he is attached to Venom (Kwon 52-57). Furthermore, Spider-Man's swings between greater confidence and aggression and times of self-doubt and weakness while wearing the symbiote costume are similar of the emotional and behavioral swings seen in people with NPD, which range from grandiosity to fragility (Kwon 52-57). In addition, Spider-Man's internal battle between his attraction of the symbiote's strength and the moral boundaries of his heroic status is mirrored by the difficulty that people with NPD often have reconciling fantasy with reality (Kwon 52-57).

"The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," a terrifying story by Robert Louis Stevenson, became well-known as soon as it was published in 1886 in both America and Great Britain. Admired by academics for its creative flair and deep psychological investigation, Stevenson's dream of a man transforming into a terrible creature after consuming an enigmatic elixir and Edinburgh's notorious Deacon Brodie served as inspiration for the novella. Stevenson's wife's severe critique, which prompted him to write quickly, led to a rewritten version that explores the complexity of human nature and the conflict between good and evil. (Thomson 195).

The stories of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "The Spectacular Spider-Man"'s Venom storyline overlap to examine human nature's duality and the consequences that result from giving in to darker impulses. The characters in both stories experience profound changes as they deal with outside influences that amplify their innate desires and flaws. The Venom arc of "The Spectacular Spider-Man" and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" both imply that the characters' darker transformations are mostly brought on by outside factors like the surroundings and social pressures. As Spadoni points out, the movie version of Stevenson's novel suggests that the real enemy is not Hyde but rather the social norms that first suppressed him, with disastrous results when those norms are broken (Spadoni 354). The harsh Victorian society that Dr. Jekyll lives in and his experiments with it serve as the encouragement for his change into Mr. Hyde. In the same way, Spider-Man's difficulties are exacerbated by the ongoing need to defend a city that frequently ignores him. In this situation, Peter Parker is easily manipulated by the symbiote, who takes advantage of his weaknesses and contributes to his internal turmoil.

Spider-Man's vulnerability to the symbiote's manipulation can be linked to a number of things, such as his lack of recognition as a hero, the trauma of losing both his parents and his uncle Ben, and the numerous setbacks he has had throughout his life. As a hero, Spider-Man gives his all to defend the people of New York City, yet he frequently encounters resistance and even contempt from the people he tries to save. Spider-Man's resilience may be weakened by this ongoing rejection and lack of recognition, leaving him emotionally exposed and a prime candidate for manipulation by outside forces such as the symbiote.

Furthermore, Spider-Man's vulnerability is worsened by the emotional scars left by the deaths of his parents and uncle Ben. Due to the untimely death of his uncle and the absence of his parents from an early age, Spider-Man struggles with intense feelings of loneliness, sadness, and abandonment. Because of these unresolved emotional scars, the symbiote can more easily take advantage of Spider-Man's internal fears and needs for approval and connection.

In addition, Spider-Man's long history of overcoming hardship as Peter Parker and his superhero counterpart reduces his emotional fortitude even further. Spider-Man has faced several hardships that have negatively impacted his mental and emotional health, from juggling his personal life with his superhero duties to dealing with personal tragedies and unrelenting enemies. As a result of all of these setbacks, Spider-Man is emotionally worn out and more vulnerable to the symbiote's manipulation.

This arc in particular is special because spiderman does give into the darks side. In the episode “Intervention”, it’s revealed that the symboite feeds off of negative emotions. "you feed off of negative emotions, but right now I'm starving you out"(Intervention” 00:19:41-00:19:46). This revelation not only highlights the extent of Spider-Man's inner turmoil but also the lasting psychological effects of his misfortunes and failings. The story dives into Spider-Man's complexity, examining the complex relationship between hardship, resiliency, and the attraction of darkness as he battles his inner demons.

Ultimately, Spider-Man gains a valuable insight into self-awareness and the significance of controlling one's feelings and impulses. He encounters the repercussions of giving in to his darker impulses and the significant influence it has on both himself and everyone around him during his terrifying voyage in the Venom arc. He understands that although misfortune and suffering may try to test his resolve, in the end, his decisions and deeds are what make him a hero. Spider-Man becomes stronger and more resilient as a result of facing his inner demons and admitting his flaws. He also gains a renewed appreciation for the virtue of self-control and a steadfast will to follow his moral principles in the face of hardship.

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