

Gender and Power: The Phoenix/Jean Grey across Time and Media

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Films based on comic books have been box-office successes in recent years, particularly the *X-Men* franchise, which is comprised of a trilogy and two prequels,¹ and the *X-Men* trilogy. Through the characters of Jean Grey and Rogue these films represent women as largely unable to control their powers, and subsequently as significantly dangerous to men.² Unfortunately, these problematic representations of women are often explained, or even justified, by audience members who tacitly assume, given these films are based on comics of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, that these films will feature more conservative representations of gender. Even bloggers and journalists familiar with comic books offhandedly argue that the sexism in the movies is based on the sexism in the original comics. Journalist Jeff Alexander, for example, argues that the inclusion of strong women in comic book movies is “an uphill battle,” because “so much of the original comic-book source material is inherently sexist and objectifying to begin with.”³ Similarly, blogger Wraith24, in a discussion of promotional poster for *The Avengers*, concludes “that even in 2012, the influences of old sexist comics is still quite prevalent.”⁴ Indeed, it would not, for example, be readily acceptable to name a group of men and women “X-Men” in the year 2001, as is the case with the first movie, because using “man” to describe a group that is partly comprised of women does not make sense as it did in the

1960s when the comic was first released. The title is accepted so readily because of the earlier and familiar comic. The comic books provide a largely unspoken alibi for the gender politics of the much more recent films, that is they excuse, justify, or naturalise the sexism of the comic book movies. This article's purpose, in its discussion of the differences between the representation of Jean Grey in the film trilogy, the comic books, and the cartoon series, is to challenge that alibi. I ask: Do the tensions around women having power latent in the comic books and cartoons form a justification for the tensions around powerful women in the movies? Does it exonerate the films of responsibility for their sexist representation of gender? Based on the constructions of the Phoenix, and the concurrent disempowerment of Rogue, I argue that the movies adapt the most problematic representations of women in the comics while simultaneously downplaying the struggles that male characters go through in order to control their powers. The changes made to the comic book narrative by the film amount to a series of suspicious coincidences, which foreground stories about women losing control of their powers while eliding stories about men losing control of their powers; the films thus exhibit an anxiety about women's capabilities and construct their power as inherently dangerous.

While in this article I am quite critical of the gender politics of the *X-Men* films, I do not wish to imply that there is nothing good about the *X-Men* narratives in whatever form they appear: the second movie was released in 2003 and offered a rather powerful critique of the "war on terror" by depicting the response of the (fictional) President of the United States to an attack on humanity by mutants with understanding rather than fear-mongering. The series as a whole also provides a powerful critique of discrimination—the prejudice against mutants serves as a metaphor for racism and homophobia. Indeed, Gerde and Foster argue that the *X-Men* can aid students in learning business ethics, for "[t]he *X-Men* storylines allow readers to explore the concept of discrimination not among humans but between humans (*homo sapiens*) and mutant humans (*homo superior*). A classic us-versus-them conflict exists in another universe where students can explore the manifestations of discrimination without the attached emotional and political weight."⁵ Notably, Gerde and Foster also argue that the issues are rarely as well-articulated in the films, suggesting that they can be "more violent and less reflective" than the comic books.⁶ Ultimately, it is important to acknowledge the limits of the metaphor of discrimination against mutants as coterminous with discrimination against other groups, and of the ways that this metaphor is played out in different mediums.

Indeed, while the discrimination against mutants by humans is explored at length in all iterations of the *X-Men's* stories, this can obscure the

marginalisations at work *within* the mutant group. That is, mutant women and mutant men are portrayed differently.⁷ Wendy Brown argues, in her book about the masculinist power of the State, that “dominant discourses render their others silent or freakish in speech by inscribing point-of-viewlessness in their terms of analysis and adjudications of value. The powerful are in this way discursively normalized, naturalized, while the dominated appear as mutants, disabled. In this light, Aristotle’s characterization of women as ‘deformed males’ makes perfect sense.”⁸ In a story focalised through mutant people with “deformed” and strange bodies and in which the mutants’ consequent experience of discrimination is a key part of the plot, it is nevertheless the case that women’s mutant powers are represented differently. In the first section of this article, “Power and Control,” I demonstrate that mutant women’s powers are overwhelmingly represented as out of control, particularly in the recent films, which reiterates pernicious assumptions about women’s supposed (in)abilities. In the second section, “Constructing Women’s Sexuality as Dangerous,” I argue that the powers of Jean Grey and Rogue are sexualised and that this is an essential part of the construction of their powers as out-of-control and particularly dangerous to men.

Power and Control

Comic books generally, and *X-Men* specifically, are often concerned with issues relating to power and control, power and responsibility. Superheroes eventually have to deal with the ethics of using powers which give them an advantage over others. Unfortunately, in the *X-Men* trilogy of films the main characters through which the issues of power and control are explored are women. Representing women as incapable of handling power has a long history in many discourses; much has been made of women’s supposed inability to handle power. An obvious example of this is the sentiment that women’s hormones, particularly while experiencing PMS or pregnancy, render her incapable of reason. Note that, by contrast, men’s “indiscretions” are explained away as “just testosterone.” While the representation of women in the comic books certainly included stories about women being unable to control their power, they also had stories about male characters unable to control their powers. Ultimately, it was possible to read the comic books as representing *humanity* and the difficulty that human beings have when given access to power. The movies make such an interpretation difficult to sustain because this tension about power out of control is played out largely through female characters.

The story of the Phoenix and Jean Grey is one of transformation: in all

of the texts I discuss here Jean Grey is a demure and stereotypically feminine character of moderate power, devoted to her partner Scott Summers (Cyclops), who becomes the Dark Phoenix. The Dark Phoenix is everything Jean Grey is not: demanding, extremely powerful, and does not care about anything but herself and her own pleasure. The comics, cartoons, and films all represent this transition, and the meaning of it, differently. In the third film of the *X-Men* trilogy, *The Last Stand*, the murderous Dark Phoenix is constructed as part of Jean Grey's mind: a result of Professor Xavier (the leader of the X-Men) trying to restrain what he believes to be her uncontrollable power. He explains to Wolverine:

Her mutation is located in the unconscious part of her mind, and therein lay the danger. When she was a girl I created a series of psychic barriers to isolate her powers from her conscious mind. And as a result Jean developed a dual personality.⁹

He goes on to say that there were two personalities:

The conscious Jean whose powers were always within her control. And the dormant side, a personality that in our sessions came to call itself the Phoenix. A purely instinctual creature, all desire and joy and rage.¹⁰

Wolverine asks whether Jean knew about Xavier's psychic blocks, raising the issue of consent. Xavier replies that "[i]t's unclear how much she knew" and insists it is a less important question, because "[f]ar more critical is whether the woman in front of us is the Jean Grey we know or the Phoenix, furiously struggling to be free." He adds: "... I'm trying to restore the psychic blocks and cage the beast again. She has to be controlled."¹¹ Wolverine notes astutely: "It sounds to me like Jean had no choice at all." He is initially angry at Xavier for meddling with Jean's identity and powers—Wolverine feels strongly that caging people is wrong. While Wolverine's response to the Professor denying a woman access to power is heartening, unfortunately much of the action of *The Last Stand* revolves around Wolverine coming to terms with the fact that the Phoenix must be killed, even if it means killing Jean (the demure and feminine personality) in the process—and the problem of the Dark Phoenix and her uncontrollable and destructive power is resolved when Wolverine murders her. In the movie, therefore, Professor Xavier is presented as right to deny Jean access to her powers, without her consent, and to make judgements about what kind of power a young girl can handle, given that she will, apparently, kill people she cares about.

Inherent to the process of adapting lengthy comic book series, in mov-

ies and even in cartoon series, is the chance to pick and choose, recombine, and rewrite stories from the original series. Moreover, exactly which stories they choose to include, and which things they rewrite and/or combine, are telling. The Dark Phoenix Saga is, in the comic book, wonderfully ambiguous about exactly what the Phoenix is: it is called a force, and distinctions between it and Jean Grey are blurred in parts and clear in others.¹² She was never schizophrenic, nor did she suffer dual personality disorder in the way we understand it—the Phoenix came into being when Jean piloted a shuttle back to earth while the rest of the X-men were safe in a better-protected part of the shuttle, braving the same kind of radiation that gave the Famous Four their superpowers.¹³ Afterwards, Jean muses (in a thought bubble) that she brought herself back to life; that she died and was reborn as the Phoenix. In contrast to the films, where Jean Grey transforms directly into the Dark Phoenix—her first act after awakening is to kill her lover, Scott Summers—in the comics the Phoenix is, to begin with, a force for good. She becomes the Dark Phoenix only after an illusionist from the Hellfire Club attacks her psychically.¹⁴ It is significant that in *The Last Stand* the catalyst for Jean's transformation into the Dark Phoenix is that she steps out of the jet to save her friends, and that the catalyst for Jean's transformation in the comics and cartoons is that she is attacked by a group of villains. The former explanation and catalyst locates the Phoenix's darkness entirely within Jean—it is her inability to control her power that creates a murderous monster. In the latter explanation, Jean is struggling to control a power that she was not born with and that did not develop naturally: instead, it was a new power that she was *reborn* with. Jean describes the Phoenix of the comics as “a cosmic power. It can neither be contained nor controlled—especially by a human vessel.”¹⁵ And even given the extraordinary challenge of dealing with this, she manages to control this new and enormous psychic energy until an illusionist, of the type who manages to fool Professor Xavier in the second movie, *X-Men 2*, preys on her and deliberately brings out her darker desires, “freeing that negative part of her ‘self’ from its moral cage”¹⁶ *which may have otherwise stayed within her control.*

In the comic books, Jean's initial transformation into the Phoenix is a positive one; the Phoenix is not inherently bad. Jean Grey/The Phoenix is slowly corrupted by power thanks to the machinations of the Hellfire Club, and this narrative closely follows a storyline of Professor Xavier losing control of his dark side. Weakened by a telepathic communication with an alien being, Professor Xavier creates an astral projection of himself that attacks the people he loves: namely the X-Men.¹⁷ This dark version of Professor Xavier, particularly given his appearance alongside the Phoenix, stresses

the vulnerabilities associated with being psychic, and goes some way to diffusing the implications of solely telling stories about women misusing or losing control of power.¹⁸ In fact, Professor Xavier's psychic break is remarkably similar to that of the Phoenix in *The Last Stand*, where Jean Grey splits into two personalities. Thus this story of a man who is always in control and cares greatly for others, whose dark side embodies the opposite of what he stands for, is displaced onto the female character of Jean—the challenges a male character faces in controlling his power are erased and added to the narrative of a woman's difficulties with controlling power.

Furthermore, in the comic Professor Xavier does not section off Jean's mind in the way it is described in the movies. *After* the Phoenix became the Dark Phoenix—the Professor has a psychic battle with the Phoenix and seals her off in Jean's mind *with Jean's help*. Professor Xavier thinks, after the Dark Phoenix becomes Jean again: "Would ... have lost—but I sensed Jean ... fighting her Phoenix-self ... **helping** me...."¹⁹ So the problematic narrative in the films, whereby the patriarchal expert seals a woman off from her power for her own good without caring about her consent, is not a narrative supported by the *X-Men* comics. Indeed, Professor Xavier would not be able to seal off Jean's powers without her help, and she gives such help as an adult with full knowledge of the consequences of her actions.

There is a controversial "retcon" issue,²⁰ which continues the Dark Phoenix Saga, where it is revealed that the Phoenix is actually an alien force that took on Jean's form, memories, and feelings after the shuttle crash—Jean Grey was revived sometime later when she was found by the Famous Four in a cocoon underwater where the Phoenix force had left her to heal. In this version, the alien Phoenix's loss of control is due to taking on a human form, which had both "good and bad" implications, according to Captain America.²¹ In fact its appropriation of Jean's humanity was what led it to destroy itself out of fear that it may continue to harm others. Captain America argues that her human spirit, replicated by the Phoenix, was "what made the difference" in those final moments.²² Ultimately, in the comic series Jean is not painted simply as a mutant woman who cannot control her powers.

When the women in the films lose control of their powers, it is because of something inherent to their powers rather than because villains exploit their weaknesses. Indeed, whereas Jean Grey cannot retain control over her powerful psychic abilities, the male characters' loss of control is always due to an attack from an outside force. Charles Xavier, for example, nearly kills all mutants and then all humans in *X-Men 2* because an illusionist infiltrates his mind and convinces him to do so. Jean Grey and Rogue, central female characters in the *X-Men* trilogy, both threaten to hurt others with

powers they cannot control. Rogue's power allows her to absorb another's energy by simply touching them with any part of her skin. In the films, neither of these characters faces an enemy, an encounter which would provide a catalyst for a loss of control over their power—their own decisions and bodies are the source for this loss of control. While it is certainly the case that some male characters face challenges to their control over their powers—for example, Rogue has a parallel in Scott Summers given that he has no control over his optic blasts and indeed “gives the train station a new sun roof” as Wolverine points out²³—but again, his power is unleashed only when others attack him and take away his protective glasses. Rogue's powers, by contrast, are related to touching her skin—when others touch her she has no choice but to absorb their powers (and a sense of their minds as well). She does not have the option of closing her eyes. And of course Rogue has a trade-off for the drawbacks of her power in the comic books—she has superhuman strength and the ability to fly, which offsets her inability to touch other people. This is similar to the character Professor Xavier, who is one of the most mentally powerful people in the *Marvel* universe but is physically weak—he is balanced out by this. However, the films disempower Rogue and leave her with a version of her power that leaves her utterly vulnerable.

Constructing Women's Sexuality as Dangerous

The representation of women as unable to control their own power is inextricably linked to anxiety about women's sexuality in all of the iterations of the Phoenix story, albeit to varying degrees. Women's sexuality has for a very long time been represented as either non-existent or deviant—the famous Madonna/whore dichotomy. In *The Last Stand*, Jean, under the influence of the Phoenix part of her persona, tries to force herself on Wolverine—in sharp contrast to the earlier Jean who stops kissing Wolverine in *X-Men 2* because she wants to remain faithful to her fiancée. And one of the first things she does as the Phoenix is rip her fiancée apart after kissing him. Thus the Phoenix's lack of control over power is linked to her expressions of sexuality; the former literally follows the latter. In the films, the threat of female sexuality combined with mutant power is a terrifying one. While there is still tension about this in the comic books and cartoons, the trend is more oblique or subtextual.

In a series of troubling “coincidences,” the main narratives about mutants losing control of their powers involve women hurting their partners. Rogue's and Jean's powers, and their lack of control over them, threaten and hurt men specifically. For example, Rogue puts a human boy she likes

into a coma with her first kiss,²⁴ a sort of reverse sleeping-beauty story. Similarly, Jean expresses her desire for Cyclops in the film by using her power to suppress his optic blasts before kissing him passionately. Jean, in other words, takes over control of his power as part of a scene of sexual and emotional bonding.

This is significant given the nature of Cyclops's power, a powerful and explosive beam that comes from his eyes, which, I argue, is linked to the phallic. Eyes, of course, have been understood as phallic—one only has to think about how blindness or the removal of the eyes as a process, whereby one renders their opponent impotent, to understand the imagery. The name Cyclops too, refers to a one-eyed monster. Scott Bukatman is one of the few scholars who have discussed the *X-Men* comics at length, with particular reference to how the mutant body is constructed. His arguments do not support my analysis of Cyclops's optic blast as phallic, arguing instead that Cyclops's visor holds a "deadly secret" that "evokes such figures of the monstrous feminine as Medusa and Pandora's box. But the struggle of Cyclops involves holding back his energy, containing it within himself; to release it would be to destroy his own sense of being (the woman he loves can never see his eyes, he realizes)."²⁵ Bukatman's explanation of Cyclops's power as another instance of the monstrous feminine demonstrates a misunderstanding of the gendered nature of phallic power. Scott Summers is male and men's use of a phallic power is constructed as rightfully theirs. The terror of Medusa is that she is a *woman* with multiple phalluses in the form of snakes and that she has the ability to turn men to stone with her gaze, to immobilise men, and to take away their rightful agency. As Barbara Creed argues in her landmark book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, Medusa is "a particularly nasty version of the *vagina dentate*," she is a castrating woman who threatens to take power away from men.²⁶ It is no coincidence that whereas Scott Summers, with his destructive male gaze, is a hero who uses his power wisely, the woman Medusa is a villain who demonstrates no desire to blinker her gaze. Bukatman's characterisation of Cyclops's power as an instance of the monstrous-feminine erases the sexism at work in the representation of women as monstrous when they appropriate masculine powers. Further, Bukatman's analysis of Cyclops's struggle conflates Cyclops's "sense of being" with "the woman he loves" being able to see his eyes. His interpretation locates woman as man's other, as man's identity-consolidating mirror. While I agree that Cyclops cannot see his eyes mirrored in those of his partner, and that this is part of the pathos of his power, I contend that this is a sexist understanding of women as a function of men's identity rather than as people with their own identities. In *The Last Stand*, Jean makes it possi-

ble for her to look into Cyclops's eyes: she takes off Scott's glasses and tells him "I can control it now,"²⁷ referring to his optic blast. She does indeed control his phallic power, she *usurps it* in the same way the monstrous Medusa usurps phallic power, and then the Phoenix kills Cyclops because she cannot actually control *herself*, or the phallic power she usurps. Put another way, she castrates him before killing him—and these are part of a trajectory of stealing his agency and of her demonstrating her newly villainous nature. She does not reflect Cyclops's identity back to him, affirming it, but in *The Last Stand* she takes his identity away, not turning him to stone but tearing him apart.

This representation of the mutant woman as monstrously feminine is not unique to the narrative of Jean Grey's transformation into the Dark Phoenix. Rogue also steals her teenaged boyfriend's life force when she kisses him. Neither of these women can control *herself*, particularly when acting on her sexual desires. Furthermore, Jean Grey's losses of control are repeatedly linked to her appropriation of masculine power in the films: she becomes more powerful than the Professor Xavier, usurping his all-knowing and powerful role as a patriarch, a man who was her teacher and Father figure. But she cannot control her greater power: when Professor Xavier tries to help Jean bring her powers under control, she kills him in a fit of rage. In order to stop her, Wolverine must stab her—she must surrender to his phallic claws in order to be violently reconstituted in her proper, feminine place. Indeed, Wolverine is only able to stab the Dark Phoenix because Jean Grey's personality reasserts itself, and she begs him to kill her. The scene ends with a shot of Jean Grey leaning backwards, helpless and peaceful in Wolverine's arms. The monstrous feminine is brought into control through an iteration of Jean Grey's traditional femininity alongside Wolverine's assertion of his masculine power.

Notably, the comics and cartoons represent the darkness of the Dark Phoenix very differently, and in less sexual terms, which are not always linked so concretely to stealing and usurping men's powers. Indeed, in the comic Jean Grey controls Cyclops's eye beams so that she can see his face during a romantic picnic, and her transformation into the Dark Phoenix is not directly linked to her control of his phallic eye beams.²⁸ Rather than her evil manifesting itself in the murder of her lover, the Dark Phoenix of the comics flies to a different galaxy and, once there, realises she is running low on power. She consumes a star, killing all of the beings living on a planet orbiting this star. The Dark Phoenix does not care—her search for sustenance and sensation is all-encompassing. In the cartoons, her crime is far less egregious—she does destroy a star and its system of planets, but these were uninhabited.²⁹ In this version of the narrative, the emphasis

is on the Phoenix's power and the possible harm it could do. However, I do not claim that either the comic book or the cartoon series is completely free of tensions around powerful sexual women who cannot control themselves. When Jean first becomes the Phoenix (and fights alongside the X-Men), in the comics she is in "ecstasy" and describes her power as "like a drug"³⁰ when she fights. It is thus described in terms that are almost orgasmic and purely about bodily pleasure. When she becomes Dark Phoenix, this is even more evident: as she fights the X-Men Colossus thinks: "Jean's enjoying this! Using her power is turning her on—acting like the ultimate physical emotional stimulant!"³¹ Indeed, when she destroys the star and commits an unthinking genocide of incredible proportions, she "thrills to the absolute power that is hers. She is in ecstasy."³² The combination of women's bodily pleasures and power is represented negatively in all of the versions of the Phoenix narrative. However, this is diffused somewhat in the comics and cartoons by the Professor's ongoing battles with the dark version of himself. Moreover, in the cartoons the Phoenix is a foreign spirit that inhabits Jean's body, and it is that female body with its sensations that subverts the Phoenix: Beast argues that "through Jean's keen human senses the Phoenix has experienced exhilarating new sensations and emotions. I doubt she wants to give them up."³³ Nevertheless, these references are far more subtextual, and alternative readings are more readily available, and certainly more convincing.

Conclusion

The problematic representation of gender in the comic books does not justify, or form an alibi for, the representation of gender in the movies. Through a series of "coincidences" that are included through the process of revising and combining storylines, the *X-Men* films perpetuate and more overtly represent some of the worst constructions of gender offered by the comics, systematically erasing the more positive or balanced elements.

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NOTES

¹ X-Men Film Trilogy: Bryan Singer (dir.), *X-Men 1.5*, DVD (Moore Park, NSW: Twentieth Century Fox, 2003); Bryan Singer (dir.), *X-Men 2*, DVD (Moore Park, NSW: Twentieth Century Fox, 2003); Brett Ratner (dir.), *The Last Stand*, DVD

- (Moore Park, NSW: Twentieth Century Fox, 2006). X-Men prequels: Gavin Hood (dir.), *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, DVD (Moore Park, NSW: Twentieth Century Fox, 2009) and Matthew Vaughn (dir.), *X-Men: First Class* (2011).
- ² As this article focuses on the shifting representations of Jean Grey's transformation into the Phoenix, my discussion revolves around the trilogy of *X-Men* films: Singer, *X-Men*; Singer, *X-Men 2*; and Ratner, *The Last Stand*.
- ³ Jeff Alexander, "Where Are All the (Good) Female Superhero Movies?," *Time Ideas*, <http://ideas.time.com/2012/08/31/where-are-all-the-good-female-superhero-movies/#ixzz29nSuB53X>
- ⁴ Wraith24, "Comic Book Movies Inherit Sexism," *Barbaric Poetries*, <http://barbaricpoetries.blogspot.com.au/2012/03/comic-book-movies-inherit-sexism.html> (accessed 20/10/2012). See also Francesca Nicols, "Is 'The Avengers' Combating Sexism?," *Fem Magazine*, <http://www.femmagazine.com/2012/08/08/is-the-avengers-combating-sexism/> (accessed October 10, 2012). In this article Nicols similarly suggests that the sexism in superhero films is related to the sexism in comic books, writing: "[s]uperhero films, and their roots in the comic book world, have historically been a realm of struggle for female representation."
- ⁵ Virginia Gerde and W. Foster, "X-Men Ethics: Using Comic Books to Teach Business Ethics," *Journal of Business Ethics* 77, no. 3 (February 2008): 247.
- ⁶ Gerde and Foster, "X-Men Ethics," 249
- ⁷ Mutants of colour are also portrayed differently to white mutants, but unfortunately an extended analysis of this is beyond the scope of this article. It is worth noting, however, that the story of the Phoenix is one of the main instances in the *X-Men* where women's stories are central and the women involved are almost all white.
- ⁸ Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 167.
- ⁹ Ratner, *The Last Stand*.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Chris Claremont and John Byrne, *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga* (New York: Marvel Publishing, 2006).
- ¹³ Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and John Byrne, "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes!," *The X-Men*, Issue 101 (October 1976).
- ¹⁴ Claremont and Byrne, *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*. The cartoon series follows the comic books in this narrative; the Hellfire Club begins attacking and subverting Jean Grey in "The Dark Phoenix Saga (Part 1)," in *X-Men: The Animated Series Volume 3*, DVD (South Yarra, Victoria: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2009).
- ¹⁵ Chris Claremont and Jason Byrne, "The Fate of the Phoenix!," Issue 137 (September 1980), in *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*, 182.
- ¹⁶ Claremont and Byrne, "God Spare the Child..." Issue 129 (January 1979), in *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*, 7.

- ¹⁷ Claremont, Cockrum and Byrne, "Dark Shroud of the Past!" *The X-Men*, Issue 106 (August 1977), in *Marvel Masterworks: The Uncanny X-Men Volume 2* (Marvel Publishing; New York, 2009), 105–7.
- ¹⁸ This story of Professor Xavier's dark side runs parallel to the introduction of the Phoenix in the animated series: "The Phoenix Saga (Part Two)," in *X-Men: The Animated Series*, DVD (California: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2009).
- ¹⁹ Claremont and Byrne, "Child of Light and Darkness!," in *The Uncanny X-Men*, Issue 136 (August 1980), in *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*, 146.
- ²⁰ A "retcon" issue of a comic book rewrites, or provides an alternative explanation for, an earlier storyline.
- ²¹ Byrne, "Like a Phoenix!" *Fantastic Four*, Issue 286 (January 1986), in *X-Men: Phoenix Rising* (New York: Marvel Publishers, 2001).
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Singer, *X-Men*.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Scott Bukatman, "X-bodies," in *Uncontrollable Bodies*, ed. Rodney Sappington and Tyler Stallings (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994), 115.
- ²⁶ Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 111.
- ²⁷ Ratner, *The Last Stand*.
- ²⁸ Claremont and Byrne, "And Hellfire is Their Name!," in *The Uncanny X-Men*, Issue 132 (April 1980), in *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*, 63.
- ²⁹ "The Dark Phoenix Saga (Part Three)," in *X-Men: The Animated Series*, DVD (California: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2009).
- ³⁰ Claremont, Cockrum and Byrne, "Phoenix Unleashed!," *The X-Men*, Issue 105 (June 1977), in *Marvel Masterworks: The Uncanny X-Men Volume 2*, 86.
- ³¹ Claremont and Byrne, "Dark Phoenix," in *The Uncanny X-Men*, Issue 135 (July 1980), in *X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga* (Marvel Publishers, New York, 2006), 116.
- ³² Claremont and Byrne, "Dark Phoenix," 124–5.
- ³³ See "The Dark Phoenix (Part Three)," in *X-Men: The Animated Series DVD* (California: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, 2009).