

IS *Y: THE LAST MAN* A FEMINIST COMIC?

Joyce C. Havstad

Consider the hallmarks of feminist works: female authors, female protagonists, and a focus on issues of femininity, female gender, and female sexuality, as well as on both male and female oppression by the patriarchy. The dystopian sci-fi comic book series *Y: The Last Man* has none of these hallmarks. It is written by a man, Brian K. Vaughan, and it features a male lead in a world where all of the major and minor governmental and social institutions are now run by women.

But despite lacking many of the classic marks of a feminist work, *Y: The Last Man* might rightfully be considered a major feminist work among comics of the contemporary era. The series, which spanned 60 issues, is about the last man surviving on Earth after an unexplained apocalypse wipes out almost every other male mammal on the planet. The series explores the relationship between femininity and power in the context of a major human disaster; it also explores the concept of masculinity in a radically redefined, predominantly feminist world.

This poster explores what it means to be a major feminist work, in order to evaluate whether *Y: The Last Man* ought rightfully to be considered one—and if so, whether it is a successful one. As the comic industry strives to present a more equitable face to the (still patriarchal) world, this project seeks to widen the scope of what might be considered a major feminist work—in order that anyone might author one.

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