FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA
DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOXÍA INGLESA E ALEMÁ

People Like Us

Postmodernism and Otherness in Grant Morrison's *Doom Patrol*

Marta Pastoriza González | Superviado por Noemí Pereira Ares | Grao en lingua e literatura inglesas
Liña temática: Literatura e cultura en lingua inglesa

2022/2023

FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

CUBRIR ESTE FORMULARIO ELECTRONICAMENTE

Formulario de delimitación do título e resumo

Traballo de Fin de Grao curso 2022/2023

APELIDOS E NOME:	Pastoriza González, Roque
GRAO EN:	Lingua e Literatura Inglesas
(NO CASO DE MODERNAS) MENCIÓN EN:	
TITOR/A:	Pereira Ares, Noemí
LIÑA TEMÁTICA ASIGNADA:	Literatura e cultura en lingua inglesa

SOLICITO a aprobación do seguinte título e resumo:

Título: "People Like Us": Postmodernism and Otherness in Grant Morrison's *Doom Patrol*

Resumo [na lingua en que se vai redacta-lo TFG; entre 1000 e 2000 caracteres]:

Since its inception, sequential art has been struggling to be recognized as an independent art form and not a mere product derived from the amalgamation of text and images. Under postmodernity, and particularly after the publication of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's seminal work *Watchmen* (1986), several comic-book authors have sought to inject the medium with new ideas, incorporating philosophical and intertextual elements to their works, while simultaneously widening the scope of representation and giving voice to peripheral, marginal and liminal identities previously underrepresented in literature and the arts. Departing from these premises, the present thesis intends to examine Grant Morrison's run on *Doom Patrol* (1989-1993) both as a work that partakes in the postmodern valorization of intertextuality and as a text that puts "otherness" at the centre by presenting a panoply of characters that embody a wide range of liminal and peripheral identities. To this end, the study will be structured into two main parts that are nonetheless closely related. In the first part, I shall lay bare the main theorical concepts informing the study, engaging, inter alia, with postmodernism and the notion of otherness. This will be followed by a close reading of Morrison's work in which I shall examine its postmodern elements and, most importantly, its attempt to blur the lines between the margins and the putative centre.

Santiago de Compostela, 2 de novembro de 2022.

SRA. PRESIDENTA DA COMISIÓN DO TRABALLO DE FIN DE GRAO

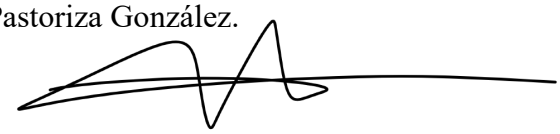
Sinatura do/a interesado/a	Visto e prace (sinatura do/a titor/a)	Aprobado pola Comisión do Traballo de Fin de Grao coa data
	PEREIRA ARES NOEMI - 47370505G Firmado digitalmente por PEREIRA ARES NOEMI - 47370505G Fecha: 2022.11.02 23:44:59 +01'00'	25 NOV. 2022 Selo da Facultade de Filoloxía

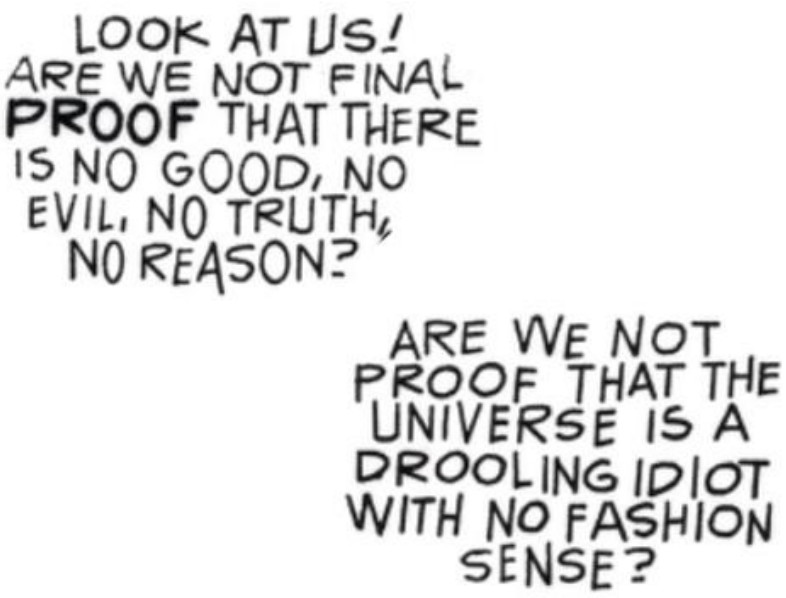
SRA. PRESIDENTA DA COMISIÓN DO TRABALLO DE FIN DE GRAO

Eu, dona Marta Pastoriza González, con DNI 53863431F, declaro que o presente Traballo de Fin de Grao é orixinal, non tendo sido empregada ningunha fonte sen ser referenciada.

Para que así conste, asino o presente documento, en Santiago de Compostela, a 14 de xuño de 2022.

Asdo.: Marta Pastoriza González.





-Grant Morrison

To my mother, my friends, and everyone who has dealt with me during this strange, strange time in my life

Table of Contents

Introduction

In February of 1989, writer Grant Morrison and artist Richard Case took over the creative duties on the second volume[1] of Detective Comics' superhero publication *Doom Patrol*. The volume, a 2-year-long attempted sequel to the fictional team introduced in the science fiction publication *My Greatest Adventure* by Arnold Drake, Bob Haney, and Bruno Premiani, had been long suffering from a steep decline in readership, and it was through a deal with Paul Kupperberg, the then-current writer for the publication, that Morrison was given the chance to take over as an executive decision to try to increase the title's popularity, and to make it stand out from its contemporaries. This deal involved the calculated removal from the fiction of every character Morrison was uninterested in writing about, giving them[2] a relatively blank canvas from which to begin crafting the stories they wanted to tell. Tellingly, the characters Morrison decided to dispose of were far more aligned with the traditional idea of a superhero than the ones that were allowed to remain in the story –all either physically and/or mentally disabled, or having otherwise failed to meet the expectations of normativity that society had imposed upon them. Their superhuman abilities, much like those of Negative Man, Robotman and Elasti-Girl, the original triplet that conformed the Doom Patrol in the Drake and Haney run,[3] were not seen by the narrative as blessings; they were depicted as complex and life-changing disabilities that, under the right circumstances, could be used for the benefit of society.

The Doom Patrol, thus, crawled from the wreckage guided by Morrison's pen, and continued their adventures in the 45 issues that are the subject of this dissertation. This version

[1] In serialised comics, "volume" refers to a collection of consecutive issues of the same series, and is used to differentiate series with the same title once their numbering is restarted for any number of reasons.

[2] Grant Morrison identifies as non-binary and allegedly uses the singular "they" to refer to themself. This convention will be followed through the remainder of this thesis.

[3] A "run", in the context of serialised comics, is understood as the corpus of –for the most part– consecutive monthly issues authored by a specific writer, and is not necessarily tied to the official numbering of the publication. The second volume of *Doom Patrol* is composed of three runs: Paul Kupperberg's (#1-18), Grant Morrison's (#19-63) and Rachel Pollack's (#64-87).

of the Doom Patrol was unlike anything that had come before it, something that Morrison immediately made evident by abandoning the mostly formulaic and intellectually unremarkable stories Kupperberg had been writing up to that point. Instead, they introduced surrealist and postmodernist elements to the publication, peppering it with references to literary fiction, political ideologies, and philosophical concepts. Every issue and every page were full of both overt and implicit intertextual references which, far from being mere aesthetical choices, gave depth to the stories and characters portrayed within them, and blended seemingly into a literary cocktail that looked to challenge the mere idea of canonicity by seamlessly integrating into itself references to both contemporary popular culture and "high art". This wordless questioning of the concept of canon also extended to the depictions of the run's main characters, each of them embodying a different set of paradoxical and peripheral identities that defied classification and sought to challenge the parameters by which an individual or group was designated "normal", functional, and valid. This dissertation, therefore, has a double-edged focus: it seeks to analyse both the postmodernist elements of Morrison's *Doom Patrol* as well as the peripheral and othering position of the book's main characters in order to explore how the two subjects bleed into one another to express the author's opposition to canonical structures and traditional power dynamics, along with their vision of the figure of the superhero as a potentially positive power fantasy.

In order to achieve this, this dissertation will rely on close reading strategies and deploy different theoretical frameworks to illuminate the analysis of Morrison's work. The first section aims to provide a definition of what is putatively understood as "postmodernism", and to enumerate its main characteristics through the writings of key thinkers. The concept of intertextuality and the perceived separation between high art and mass culture will also be explored to properly contextualize the parodic and counter-cultural elements featured in the book. The term "otherness" will then be defined and analysed through the work of different

critics in order to provide the necessary framework to understand the subaltern and marginal themes of *Doom Patrol*. Additionally, this section will illuminate these terms' historical importance within superhero fiction, as well as the reasons as to why they became particularly relevant during the time period in which *Doom Patrol* was being published. The second section of this dissertation serves to put into practice the concepts explored in the first one by analysing how Grant Morrison utilises postmodernism to criticise and parody the superhero genre's main tenets, particularly through the relativisation of concepts such as good, evil, and normativity, and especially through the character of Mr. Nobody. Otherness will be analysed in regards to how the main characters of Morrison's run interact with their world and each-other, providing an extensive critique of traditional power structures and placing special emphasis on the elements of their bodies and minds that mark them as "others". The close reading will finish with an explanation of how the elements of postmodernism and otherness come together into a comprehensive thesis that rejects the very existence of a *status quo* and embraces the subaltern in all of its forms.

I. Theoretical Framework

1.1 "Who Watches the Watchmen?": Grant Morrison, Alan Moore, and the Birth of Postmodernism in Superhero Comics

Though it is generally agreed upon to be a literary movement born in the last decades of the twentieth century, "Postmodernism", as a literary term, proves particularly elusive to define; its reactionary and fluid nature thwarts clear-cut attempts at pinning it down. As Linda Hutcheon put it, for some, "postmodernism" was "a 'moment'", while "for others it was a more general 'condition'" and some even "denigrated it to just a 'style'" (2006, p. 115). In broad terms, postmodernism is characterised by a self-aware approach to intertextuality, plays with narrative levels, metatextuality, and pataphysics, and a blending of different styles and forms to create a new whole that defies classification. Postmodernism, as a general rule, seeks also to deny "the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable" (Lyotard, 1979, p.81), rejecting the existence of fixed ideas of quality and morality –both within and without to mock nostalgia for the ideas and characteristics of modernist thought that were deemed as outdated. The movement began to gain traction within artistic circles around the beginning of the 1960s, whose "political, social and intellectual experience" allowed it to be perceived as a constant interrogation and exploration of the limits of "language, of subjectivity, of sexual identity," and "of systematization and uniformization" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 8). The criticisms of postmodernism, therefore, are not limited to either the artistic field or the institutions that surround it, but are instead directed as the whole of uncritical assumptions about the literary and the real, working in tandem and fundamentally intertwined. In fact, one tends to lead into the other: "conventions of art are often bared in order to challenge the institutions in which they find a home—and a meaning" (Hutcheon 1988, p. 9).

In order to achieve their ultimate goal of deconstruction, postmodernist works attain a "doubly coded" (Hutcheon 2013, p. 115) configuration. That is, they both take advantage of the modernist advancements within their specific craft and at the same time "explore and undermine" the historical conventions they were built upon (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 116). History in postmodern works is not ignored or denied, but rather examined through new lenses in such a way that any perceived flaws or contradictions found through it are brought forward to be parodied and extensively criticised. Therefore, the presence of traditional, historical elements is central to any postmodern work, as it is required in order to complete the paradoxical duality that determines its motivation as such. These elements are then translated into a postmodernist field of thought, examined through a sceptical attitude and stripped of all their supposed, unexamined objectivity in order to challenge the institutions that saw their inception. "There is no single Truth" under postmodernism; "there are, instead, multiple truths, thus causing what we called a crisis of legitimation" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. 199). Postmodernist writers seek to de-anchor literature from a set of central dualities, putting their focus on the many points of the spectrum between them and the exploration of the relationships between these points. Traditional concepts of good, evil, right, wrong, power, and authority are all challenged –both in the fictional and the institutional, deconstructed and parodied in self-reflexive experiments born out of a necessity to tread beyond narrative tropes and conventions perceived as exhausted by the proponents of the movement.

One of the most notable binaries rejected by postmodernist artists, and of particular importance for this dissertation, is the categorical separation between "high art" and "popular culture", which Andreas Huyssen (1986, p. viii) calls "the Great Divide". This divide, fervently defended by theorists such as Theodor Adorno, was understood in modernist thought as a way to defend a culture that "needed protection from the onslaughts of the external world," "a certain regard for the individual subject," and "the fragmentation of socialization" (Adorno,

1993, p. 25). He proposed a separation on the basis that mass culture was shallow and manipulative, and was a premeditated effort from the enforcers of capitalism to indoctrinate the masses. However, postmodernism had no use for the separation, as its proponents saw it as nothing more than a limiting absolutism that discarded works deemed as "pseudo-culture" because of their accessible nature: "not every work of art that does not conform to canonized notions of quality is [...] automatically a piece of Kitsch, and the working of Kitsch into art can indeed result in high-quality works" (Huyssen, 1986, p. ix). Intertextuality played a major role in blurring the lines between the Kitsch and high art, as it meant the incorporation of elements and references from often vastly different works into a text, leading to a sort of crisis of categorization. Julia Kristeva (1986, p. 37) expresses that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another", and, under postmodernism's hyper-aware lens, any text can absorb another to express new meaning. The earliest seasons of acclaimed long-running television sitcom *The Simpsons* (1989-) are perhaps one of the most accessible examples of the archetypical postmodernist work: a critical examination of classic sitcom tropes that challenges authority in virtually every possible axis (gender, race, religion, wealth, etc.) through a myriad of pop culture, cinematographic and literary references while remaining a mainstream production that still managed to challenge what it meant to be "popular culture".

Mainstream superhero comic books were, at the dawn of the 1980s, ripe with contradictions and limiting, outdated tropes that were waiting to be analysed, deconstructed and parodied, which would only happen in full once the so-called "British Invasion"[4] took the medium by storm. Seminal works such as Alan Moore's *Saga of the Swamp Thing* (1983-1987) and later Grant Morrison's *Animal Man* (1988-1990) saw an overall increase in narrative

[4] Term widely used to describe a sudden influx, in the early 1980s, of British comic-book creators into the American scene, particularly DC Comics. Alan Moore, Grant Morrison and Neil Gaiman are usually seen as the writers at the forefront of this movement.

nuance, as well as a tendency to bring back elements of older stories in order to demystify them and analyse the culture that gave birth to them. Both works, and many of their contemporaries, completely recontextualized the non-complicated origin stories of their two main characters, restructuring their narrative conceptions from their very core to retroactively shift them away from the duality of good and evil and toward a more relativist implementation of their core concepts. However, the importance of these works goes beyond their existence as a door for postmodernism to enter the superhero genre: they directly challenged the prevalent culture of their time by refusing to abide by the limitations placed around their craft by external factors, namely the so-called Comics Code Authority (CCA).

The publication of German-born American writer Fredric Werthman's 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent*, in which he argued that comic books were having a negative impact on the developing minds of children and teenagers alike, caused a nation-wide outrage that led most major comic-book publishers to self-censor through the CCA in order to continue marketing their books as "family-friendly". The Code functioned, essentially, as a "seal of approval" that would indicate to parents that a given work had been subjected to a strict procedure of censorship, meaning it was suitable for all audiences. Although this method allowed mainstream superhero publications to thrive anew, it also entailed a prominent loss of creative freedom for the writers. Under the standards the Code abided by, "there was little room for genuine literary exploration" (Carpenter, 2016, p. 12) as it severely restricted the creators' ability to tell nuanced, multi-dimensional stories. Among other things, the CCA censored the depiction of "horror, excessive bloodshed", "disrespect for established authority" and "sex perversion of any inference" (Comic Book Code, 1954). By the time the British Invasion began, the superhero scene had been completely drained of any nuances or abilities to critically examine the world they existed within in the same way as characters like Superman had done during their early years. It was Karen Berger, the editor of *Saga of the Swamp Thing* from 1984

onward, that suggested that British creator Alan Moore stopped seeking the approval of the CCA during the editing process of the 31st issue of the book, which was permeated by shocking body horror imagery and delved into occultism, a favourite subject of Moore's, and therefore not condoned by the regulatory body of the Code. The book had already managed to amass a considerable fanbase, one that was not dissuaded by the complete lack of involvement from the Code's part; far from it, the series would only continue to thrive. While the original *Swamp Thing* stories (1971-1976) had already pushed the boundaries of what could and could not be shown under the CCA's strict guidelines, the appeal of Moore's run came as much from its moral and intellectual complexity as it did from its striking horror imagery. The result was that Moore and Berger "turn[ed] back the clock for the entire medium, showing everyone what might have been 20 years earlier had there never been a Fredic Wertham or a Comics Code Authority" (Carpenter 2016, p. 50). The complete lack of restrictions allowed Moore to design the ultimate postmodernist approach to Swamp Thing by questioning the values of traditional superhero narratives, presenting the character as an outsider poking his head into the world of superheroes and finding their practices reprehensible. The lines between good and evil were blurred all through the run, with Moore presenting the character as a force of nature that, true to postmodernist dogma, saw the world from a relativist point of view, in his case paying more attention to the needs of flora and fauna than to humanity itself after having been detached from what little remained of his humanity.

The publication of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *magnum opus Watchmen* (1984-1985) was, then, seen as the logical conclusion of the seed of postmodernism Moore had already planted with *Swamp Thing*. The Eisner-winning limited series[5] is seen today as the quintessential piece of superhero fiction, as "everything about [its] presentation was different" (Carpenter, 2016, p. 62). Notably, the book made use of intermedia elements such as fragments

[5] In the field of comic books, the term refers to a series whose number of issues is finite and determined in advance.

from fictitious diegetic books, psychological profiles, and magazine articles, which along with its symmetrical narrative structure, its use of foreshadowing and the myriad of symbols that could only be properly understood retroactively, gave the book a certain ergodic edge that was a novelty for a mainstream comic. Through its meticulously crafted inner narrative, Moore and Gibbons offered a holistic deconstruction of the fundamental ideas of the superhero, using analogues of recently acquired DC characters to take the genre to its logical extreme, extrapolating its tropes into the real world in an attempt to force cognitive dissonance on its readers, and juxtaposing the colourful fantasies of those comics with mature subject matters seldom tackled to such a degree in works of the genre. From the unbridled postmodernism of Moore's writing, which questioned the existence of good an evil as monolithic concepts and allowed his characters to evolve past outdated notions of heroism and villainy, arose a necessity for similarly uncensored content that would not merely present its readers with new and exciting notions and astonishing, often gruesome visuals, but also question the precepts that had been guiding the genre since its inception. During the publication of *Saga of the Swamp Thing*, Karen Berger would travel to England "to turn up the stones and see if there weren't any more cranky Brit authors who might be able to work wonders with some of the dusty old characters languishing in DC's back catalog" (Morrison, 1992). It was at that time that authors such as Grant Morrison and Neil Gaiman were brought on board and given creative freedom to develop their own stories in hopes they would somehow be able to replicate Moore's success, on account of their shared underground and counter-cultural background. Their works would be advertised as "mature-labelled comics" within the editorial section of any issue that bypassed the CCA's seal of approval, in hopes that readers would seek out the publications out of a desire to read similar content, essentially creating a network of postmodernist and mature superhero works and very clearly delimiting what would later be considered the corpus of the British Invasion.

While Morrison, at the time, was already writing their own independent superhero comic in *Zenith* (1987-1992), it was their involvement with DC Comics that can be seen as the inception of the particular brand of postmodernism that would permeate through their *Doom Patrol* run. Their choice to venture into mainstream superhero comics through *Animal Man* in 1988 was, according to Martin Holub (2011, p. 46), "a postmodern act in itself", in the sense that the superhero genre was "frowned upon by literary circles," yet Morrison still sought to imbue the text with layers of social commentary, deconstruction of genre tropes, and themes that ran parallel to the main character's development. Even the choice of character appears to show a sort of postmodernist intent from Morrison's part: in spite of Animal Man's pre-existing years of continuity, he was a grossly underdeveloped character who had "never had a book of his own, never a miniseries, never even a major role in the DC Universe" (Carpenter, 2016, p. 115). Though DC was looking for them to write another subversive, revisionist superhero story in the vein of *Watchmen,* Morrison would break the rules of superhero storytelling in a vastly different way. They would demonstrate "both a love for and distrust of comic book conventions" (Carpenter, 2016, p. 116) by embracing the absurdity of the superhero while still psychologically grounding Buddy Baker, the titular Animal Man, and analysing the role of a character often considered inconsequential in a far larger fictional universe. Unlike Moore, Morrison would constantly bring attention to the fact that the reader is, in fact, consuming a superhero comic through the implementation of subtle metanarrative humour that used the genre's conventions to its advantage. A clear example is their subversive play with the "guest star" trope, usually a commercial ploy to bring attention to a lesser known character by including them in a higher profile publication for at least an issue. Morrison decided to bring Superman into the pages of Animal Man, a character who, far from fitting the profile of the traditionally lesser-known characters included in these crossovers, would completely overshadow –both in popularity and physical strength– the titular character in his own

publication, a deliberate artistic choice designed to feed into the themes of identity Morrison had introduced earlier in the book. Baker was also brought to his logical political extreme by being turned into an activist fighting for the rights of animals and even becoming a vegetarian, ideals that were born from his supernatural ability to empathise and borrow the powers of the animals around him.

Where *Watchmen* was deconstructive and analytical, *Animal Man* was parodic and subversive, though both books certainly engaged with the same set of tropes and assumptions, and both actively worked toward tearing them down. The difference was key: Moore sought to ridicule and de-mystify the figure of the superhero as a power fantasy, while Morrison, through their body of work, openly embraced it. Because, while Moore argues that if superheroes were to somehow appear in the real world, they would be fascistic and uncaring, Morrison believes that it is useless to discuss such a hypothetical when these characters have never existed. They argue that "[s]uperheroes aren't real, but they are absolutely real as drawings on paper," and that "only on paper can we be assured that they are real." (Morrison, 2011) Superheroes, under Morrison's pen, are valuable precisely because they are fictitious power fantasies, and they serve the narrative purpose to influence the reader's morality without having to physically exist outside of the paper by challenging the ideas of what "good" and "evil" truly meant. This intent was fundamentally at odds with the main regulations of the CCA, which were designed to present a simplified, non-confrontational version of superhero narratives in which the relationships between truth, power, and normativity were seldom allowed to be explored in any meaningful way. For decades, the figure of the superhero had been that of a defender of the status quo, never allowed to develop a moral consciousness beyond what was considered socially acceptable, and therefore never aligning itself with any sort of minority group or counter-cultural political ideologies. *Animal Man* and its contemporaries were, however, complex works that delved into the political implications of said status quo, with both Moore

and Morrison dipping their toes into feminism, minority narratives, and the nature of good and evil as monolithic, tangible ideas. The main characters in these works, be it implicitly or explicitly, challenged the power relationships that governed their worlds in ways that no other book in the medium had done before. However, the main feature that separates the two authors' processes of deconstruction was that, while Moore sought to destroy the traditional idea of the superhero to expose the flaws inherent to the genre's particular brand of storytelling, Morrison was looking to pick apart the pieces and build something new from them, to show the world how powerful superhero narratives could be to examine real-world problems without resorting to realism. They, therefore, follow their deconstruction with the creation of a new kind of fantasy that, in their words, can only be realised on paper: a power fantasy for those groups who specifically lack one.

What makes Morrison's early works in *Animal Man* and *Doom Patrol* particularly interesting, however, is the fact that they were published during the beginning of a period of transition that would lead to what is today known as the "Dark Age" of comics. This period is characterised by the increasingly desperate attempts to imitate the style of British authors' works by less involved writers. The necessity for moral complexity, deconstruction, and thematic exploration gave way to a pursuit of surface-level "mature" elements that, while certainly inspired by the body of work of authors such as Moore and Frank Miller,[6] lacked the depth and postmodernist analysis that had characterised them. Mainstream readers, seeking works of a similar tone and subject matter to Moore and Gibbons' seminal work, were driven toward these violent, cynical works that plagued mainstream publications during the late eighties and most of the nineties. Their lack of any truly postmodernist analysis, as well as their dwelling on surface-level elements such as gratuitous violence, blood, drug-use and explicit

[6] Author of *The Dark Knight Returns* (1984), a work often cited alongside Moore's *Watchmen* as one of the kick-starters of the Dark Age of comics. Its depiction of an older, anti-heroic version of Batman would prove key in shaping the morality of superhero comics for decades to come.

depictions of sexuality, are imperative to understand one of the main driving forces behind *Doom Patrol*, as Morrison was as critical about their mindless reproduction as they were about the tropes developed during the decades the CCA was culturally relevant. While *Animal Man* started as a more traditional deconstruction that would slowly morph into the metatextual masterpiece it is known as today, *Doom Patrol* distanced itself from the deconstruction of superhero tropes right from the start, and sought to embrace instead the absurdity of its historical context by parodying and commenting on its contemporaneity. The publication found itself at a point of intersection between two cultural landscapes characterised by moral simplicity and uncomplicated, surface-level depictions of superhero characters that seldom challenged the perception of the reader. Morrison's course of action, then, was to abandon the pretences of realism that had characterised many of the imitators of *Watchmen*, while at the same time poking fun at the corporate-mandated homogeneity of ideologies seen in books under the CCA.

To achieve these goals, Morrison decided to build their stories around a core cast of characters that were, in one way or another, acting as representatives or analogues for existing minority groups. At the same time, instead of infusing their works with the sense of realism and self-importance that permeated the transition into the Dark Age, Morrison would actively avoid logical, realistic explanations and operate, instead, through their world's own internal consistency, using surrealism to parody the necessity for grounded and realistic stories and the paradox of attempting to extrapolate impossible characters into the real world.

1.2 "Is he Man, or Monster… or is he Both?": An Introduction to Otherness and its Implications in Superhero Fiction

In its broadest possible definition, "otherness" can be explained as "the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in-group [...] constructs one or many dominated out-groups [...] by stigmatizing a difference" (Staszak, 2009, p. 43) between the two groups. The difference is then weaponized, becoming a "motive for potential discrimination" (2009, p. 43) and an excuse to negate the identity of the out-group (the "other") for any number of reasons. While the notion of "othering" was coined as an academic term by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in 1985, in reference to the process by which European colonists "world[ed]"[7] the culture and history of colonised countries, the concept can be traced back, at least, to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807), particularly to its passages regarding the "lord-bondsman dialectic" or, as is commonly known in English, as the "master-slave dialectic". This parable is divided into two fundamental parts: one concerned with the political relationship between lords and serfs, and another of a far more psychological, existential nature. In his foreword to the Oxford University Press translation of the book, J. N. Findlay (1977, p. xvii) describes this dynamic as the result of a "Life-and-death struggle" consequence of the inherent wish of both self-consciousness –described in the parable as two men– to be recognized as "the sole centre of active universality". In the aftermath of the struggle, one of the subjects adopts a dominant position in the relationship –the "lord"– and the other, inevitably, becomes subservient to him –the "bondsman"–, and consequently begins to be seen by the "lord" not as a person, but as a thing. According to Hegel, the "lord" is "a consciousness existing for itself" (Hegel, 1977, p. 115) that, in order to properly comprehend and contextualise his own existence, must exist in opposition to another consciousness, one "whose nature [...] is to be

[7] A concept originating in Martin Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art* that signifies the constant re-establishment of a world by a piece of art, erasing the previous visions of said world.

bound up with an existence that is independent" (1977, p. 115). The "bondsman", then, exists to allow the lord to relate himself to an independent existence, and is othered and objectified after the initial struggle that originally proved his existence to be "something merely negative" (1977, p. 115). The basic principle behind the nature of this dialectic relationship implies that, in order for the two subjects to be able to exist as they are, the bond between them must be one of opposition, of antagonism; for one side to be able to establish his power, the other must irrevocably be subservient to him, but this second entity also necessitates the relationship in order to be able to recognize himself. Paradoxically, however, the only side of the struggle with the capacity to ever transcend the nature of the relationship is the "bondsman"; by the very same process of objectification that allows the "lord" to subdue the "bondsman", the former becomes unable to find recognition in the latter's self-consciousness, as "the lord cannot get the reciprocal recognition that his self-consciousness demands from a consciousness so degraded and distorted" (1977, p. 522). Consequently, the "bondsman [...] becomes shaken out of his narrow self-identification and [...] becomes the ideal which he contemplates in his lord" (1977, p. 522), gaining an advantage in the relationship and transcending the very same limits that keep the lord's self-recognition process stagnant. Hegel posits that every historical dominator/dominated relationship follows this pattern, and that it is required for the "bondsman" to transcend past this stagnant state to drive history forward.

Simone de Beauvoir would write about this parable in *The Second Sex* (1949), agreeing with the idea that "a fundamental hostility to any other consciousness is found in consciousness itself" and that "the other consciousness has an opposing reciprocal claim." (1949, p. 27). She later exposes the relativism inherent to this parable by proposing a hypothetical of her own, in which a local "is shocked to realize that in neighboring countries locals view him as a foreigner," and is therefore faced with the reality that "otherness" is entirely dependent on the culture from which each perception of "normalcy" stems. Her larger point by referencing the

parable, however, is to extrapolate this idea and apply it to feminist studies to question why, under patriarchal society, this notion of reciprocity seems to be non-existent. In this relationship in which men are the "lord" and women the "bondsman", the transcendence that should, in theory, be achieved by the "other", by the dominated side, has not yet been reached by women within patriarchy. In this situation, she argues, "it is not the Other who [...] defines the One; the Other is posited as Other by the One positing itself as the One" (1949, p. 27). There is no reciprocity to be found in this relationship, as women were defined as "other" by completely bypassing the struggle stage, and they have historically lacked "the concrete means to organize themselves into a unit that could posit itself in opposition" (1949, p. 28). They were left with "no history, no religion of their own" (1949, p. 28) and, therefore, unable to form a force that could pose an opposition against the system that binds them, unlike colonised "others" with pre-existing cultures that allowed them to resist struggle and, slowly but surely, break the bonds that tied them to their "lords". This critical difference between the cultural "bondsman" posited by Hegel and the real, tangible experience of a minority group with no means to become opposed to their "lords" allows de Beauvoir to create a special category of "others" that have never had the means to oppose their position.

The means by which these "others" are designated as such was named "othering" by Gayatri Spivak, who adheres to the definition given by Jacques Lacan: the "other" as an entity in which the subject sees its reflection and both recognizes itself and understands it as separate enough to aspire to a fictional "anticipated mastery" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 155). Othering is the process through which colonial discourse creates a separation between the imperial subject and the colonised "other", a "mastered" entity that is based on a reflection and therefore entirely fictional; it exists only in the mind of the subject and is imposed upon the "other" against their will. The Othering, then, "locates its "others" by this process in the pursuit of that power within which its own subjectivity is established" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 158). This process notably

differs from the idea of struggle between "lord" and "bondsman introduced" by Hegel, as it requires no "fight to the death" to occur at all, instead being much closer to the interpretation de Beauvoir put forward in *The Second Sex*: the creation of colonial "others" not through a process of mutual struggle, but through the delineation of an opposition that exists only in the mind of the subject and requires no previous knowledge or interaction from the other's part. This non-struggle, this complete and reiterated negation of identity that becomes embedded into a given culture or in-group from the very moment it begins to exist in the same space as the subject, fosters the creation of patches of "othered" identities that must develop their own independent cultures in order to resist their erasure. Non-normative sexualities, transgenderism, dysfunctional bodies, and mental illness are all signifiers of "otherness" for the prevailing culture based on biologically-determined criteria, and have historically lacked the ability to resist their placement. Much like de Beauvoir exposed, however, the criteria to determine who becomes an "other" are dependent on the culture of any given society, and not based on empirical, ontological truths that justify the continued oppression of these groups.

The idea of "otherness" is not only relevant for the discussion of *Doom Patrol*, but the concept of the superhero as a whole. In the words of Barbara Brownie and Danny Graydon, "[a]ll superheroes have a complex relationship with identity," as they are often forced to perform two different roles through their life; "one of otherness, and one of ordinariness" (2016, p. 152). There is, then, a conflict of identity at the core of virtually every superhero narrative: their superpowered personas must be hidden behind a veil of "normalcy", lest they face discrimination for the characteristics that separate them from non-powered human beings, marking them as the "other" out of no fault of their own. In essence, they hide a part of their identity out of the fear of ostracization, understanding that, under most societal standards, the "othering" aspects of their identities (in this case, their superpowers) are incompatible with a

functional performance of normalcy. This practice, known in psychology as masking,[8] is often used in real life by individuals with non-normative identities to easily navigate social situations while avoiding discrimination and/or prejudice. This is colloquially referred to as "being in the closet", and, while it is nowadays almost exclusively used in reference to queerness, can be and has been applied to many other non-visible identities with the potential to be masked. In the context of many superhero stories, however, "othered" identities become exceptional, spectacular, astonishing; superpowers are used to help individuals in need and assert a character's own sense of individuality against a society that constantly pressures them to erase their non-normative characteristics.

The idea of the superhero as a complex interaction between two identities can be traced back to DC Comics' *Action Comics* #1 (1938), the debut of the archetypal figure around which the entire superhero genre would be constructed: Superman. Created in 1938 by two Jewish men in a moment in time when tensions were high among the Jewish communities of the United States as a consequence of the rise of antisemitism around the globe, the Man of Steel arose out of a necessity to see this particular minority defended in fiction – a modern Golem of Prague, an unstoppable force given life by Jewish people with the purpose of protecting them from harm. According to Jerry Siegel, co-creator of the character, Superman's inception was the result of him "reading of the oppression and slaughter of helpless, oppressed Jews in Nazi Germany" and "seeing movies depicting the horrors of privation suffered by the downtrodden" (Siegel, qtd. in Sommerland, 2018). The parallelisms between the origin story of Superman – whose given name, Kal-El, is of Hebrew roots– and prominent Judaism prophet Moses are overt: both characters were saved at a young age from certain death –the destruction of Krypton and the purging of Egyptian children in *Exodus 1:5*, respectively– by their parental figures,

[8] In psychology, a process by which an individual camouflages any number of personal traits in order to fit within a specific set of societal parameters.

becoming the sole survivors of said calamities, and both are seen as a figure of hope and justice among their peers. Superman was, then, utilised by its creators to appropriate the figure of the *Übermensch* to construct an overtly Jewish-coded character who fought oppression and injustice –and, particularly, antisemitism. The earliest issues of *Action Comics* would depict Superman standing up for the working class and fighting for the rights of people of colour of the United States, showing a level of intersectionality that would slowly erode away through the years within superhero publications. In other words, he was an "other" conjured up by two similarly "othered" individuals to fight for the rights of groups of people who, at the time, held very little individual power. The two identities at the core of the prototypical superhero would become visually and narratively sundered, however: Superman, still had the advantage of being able to camouflage his otherness whenever necessary, adopting the performative identity of Clark Kent to blend in and avoid the negative connotations that his superpowers brought – coding him as a "Closet Jew[9]"– though he would continue to report and condemn anything he perceived as an injustice. This dualism of identity within the superhero genre would continue to be explored through the 40s and 50s by both DC and Marvel Comics: characters such as Batman and Spider-Man would see a substantial amount of major plot points within their stories built upon the tension between their two separate identities.

Paradoxically, and at the same time, disabilities such as physical deformities (Red Skull in 1941) and mental illness (the Joker in 1940) were often used as design shortcuts to signal a character as villainous. These characters were presented as "disfigured, inhuman Others, their maleficence going hand in hand with their deviation from the superhero's physical ideal," (Alainz and Smith, 2019, p. 14) creating a clear dichotomy between what supposedly a putatively acceptable "other" and their dehumanised, Machiavellian opponents. It would not

[9] Performers of Crypto-Judaism, colloquially referred to as "closet Jews", are members of the Jewish community who publicly hide their faith. This was usually done to enable a private performance of one's faith while keeping the privileges that came from being perceived as a follower of a different religion, notably Christianism.

be until the 1960s that superheroes would be allowed to be physically deformed: Marvel characters such as Ben Grimm, the Thing (1961) and Bruce Banner, the Hulk (1962) would perform a more sympathetic form of "otherness", the markers of such being far more benign in nature and intended to allow for a far more sympathetic portrayal –in fact, much of their characters' drama relied on the dysfunctionality of their bodies. While physical deformities as a signifier of evil would never truly be abandoned by popular culture as a whole, these two characters were the first to ever present them while still being on the side of good. These characters would represent "what Baudrillard call[ed] hypervisibility, the postmodern condition par excellence" and consequently would not have "the chance to chill with a secret identity, like old Clark Kent used to do" (Shaviro, 1997). Their physical transformations, permanent in the case of Grimm and periodical for Banner, did not allow for the chance to return to their proverbial closets, forever exposed to the world in their dysfunctional forms and unable to hide behind a veil of anonymity like some of the most popular characters of the House of Ideas. Tellingly, even in their cases their deformities were a physical manifestation of their natural "otherness": Grimm, much like his creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, was a Jewish man, while Banner would later be revealed to suffer from dissociative identity disorder, the Hulk being a physical manifestation of one of his most prominent alters.

In 1963, both Marvel and DC would release their own spins on the hypervisible "other" to the world. Kirby and Lee would design a team of super-powered misfits, the X-Men, unapologetically a "metaphor for what was happening with the civil rights movement in the country at that time" (Lee, 2000). These characters were, in essence, social activists opposing bigotry against their kind, a race known as "mutants" who, in most cases, displayed physical characteristics that made them a target for in-universe hatred and dehumanisation. Almost exactly at the same time, and in what would prove to be a controversial coincidence, Arnold Drake was requested by DC Comics editor Murray Boltinoff to transform the adventure

anthology series *My Greatest Adventure* into a superhero publication to "punch it up," as "the era of the superheroes ha[d] taken over completely" (Drake, 1999). This prompted him to devise the Doom Patrol, a group of superheroes whose physical deformities and abnormal bodily functions would make them rather similar to the X-Men. The main difference between the two sets of characters was their inception: while the X-Men were "othered" from birth by the X-gene that modified their bodies and/or gave them metahuman abilities, every member of the Doom Patrol had at some point been a functional human being. Their "otherness" was imposed upon them by accidents that permanently changed their bodies, and would join together not out of a desire to do good, but in order to shield themselves from the hatred of the world. Where the X-Men were noble freedom fighters, the Doom Patrol "hated being superheroes" (Drake, 1999) and would often save the world out of a sense of self-preservation, although as the original run progressed, they would become closer and more considerate with each-other, bound by a sense of solidarity that stemmed from their similarly dysfunctional bodies. These two groups of superheroes are particularly relevant for our purposes, as they represent a radical change within superhero "otherness": the formation of cultures that allowed them to oppose their status as "others" and challenge the status quo, a notion de Beauvoir considered of utmost importance for a "bondsman" to be able to truly and definitely struggle against the "lord", in spite of the internal differences of the group.

II. Analysis

2.1 "No Good, No Evil, No Truth, No Reason": The Postmodern in *Doom Patrol*

As noted in the Introduction, Grant Morrison reintroduced the surviving members of the Doom Patrol in the four-issue storyline *Crawling from the Wreckage* (2004a),[10] essentially resetting the status quo to accommodate for the writer's new original creations, such as Crazy Jane and Dorothy, as well as making a conscious effort to magnify the idiosyncrasies of the existing members of the roster. Morrison's goal, ultimately, was to do away with all traces of traditional superhero tropes and, as per their agreement with Paul Kupperberg, this would entail the removal of several characters that had been introduced during the previous run. The motivation for this was, likely, that the publication had become far too similar to Marvel's *X-Men*, and Morrison wanted to experiment with a roster of hyper-visible characters with very few unambiguously heroic traits. Thus, the Scottish writer reduced the roster to three pivotal characters: Robotman, Rebis, and Crazy Jane. The robotic Cliff Steele, alias Robotman, is one of the surviving members of the previous iteration of the team, and the closest the run ever gets to having a main character, as he is by far the least complex member of the group in terms of psychological configuration. Larry Trainor, known as Negative Man for most of *Doom Patrol*'s publication history, is re-introduced to the plot when the negative spirit that gave him his powers fuses his body with that of Doctor Eleanor Poole (Morrison, 2004a, p. 25), turning them into the hermaphroditic entity Rebis. Finally, Crazy Jane, a character completely original to the run, suffers from dissociative disorder, with each of her "64 separate personalities" having "its own name and function," as well as "its own distinct metahuman ability" (Morrison, 2004a, p.

[10] Hereafter and for a more streamlined reading, direct and indirect references to Morrison's *Doom Patrol* will be cited by using the collected editions of the run. These editions are dated 2000-2008 and do not represent the original dates of publication of the individual issues. Whenever the original date of publication of the issues is relevant, it will be referenced separately.

27). This section will thereby explore the postmodernist elements of the run through the inherently anti-superheroic identities of the main cast in regard to the conflicts they face, as well as the importance of the most notable antagonist of the run: Mr. Nobody, a Dadaistic, anarchic entity born from the mind of one-off villain Eric Morden.

It is in the storyline that follows *Crawling, The Painting that Ate Paris* (2004b), that *Doom Patrol* fully sets itself apart from its contemporaries through the delimitation of clear lines that separate the world in which the characters operate from the realm of traditional superheroes. Even though the book had already distanced itself from other superhero stories by delving into metafiction and pataphysics in *Crawling from the Wreckage* (2004a), which will be discussed at greater depth in this chapter, it is the declaration of intentions at the beginning of *The Painting* that I believe creates the distinction Morrison would lean in moving forward. This declaration revolves around the only villainous character Morrison recuperated from a previous run of *Doom Patrol* for more than a one-issue appearance: the mostly inconsequential, often forgotten, Eric Morden. A character whose singular appearance had been in issue 86 of the original *Doom Patrol* run (1964), Morden was introduced as little more than an archetypical mad scientist collaborating with classic Doom Patrol antagonists The Brotherhood of Evil. And, while the organisation continued to appear sporadically through the run, Morden was never seen again. In their run, Morrison reintroduces the character to reveal that, after his failure to stop the Doom Patrol in his original appearance, the other members of the Brotherhood had sworn to murder him (Morrison, 2004b, p. 20). This proverbial rescuing from obscurity of an inconsequential character is, as seen when discussing *Animal Man* in Chapter 1.1, a fundamental aspect of Morrison's *modus operandi*. However, Morden's appearance here does not follow the same pattern as other characters Morrison had reintroduced to the canon in *Animal Man*: where most of them had only been slightly altered in terms of backstory and personality, Morden has been completely redesigned, essentially being turned into a new

character. Diegetically, this is explained through a flashback (Morrison, 2004b, pp. 20–25) in which Morden, believing to be undergoing a plastic surgery operation, becomes the subject of an experiment that completely erases his identity, turning him into a "virtual man," a "notional man" (Morrison 2004b, p. 25): the character now known as "Mr. Nobody". His very name toys with the idea that he has been repurposed from a metaphorical "nobody", a forgotten character abandoned by the canon, into what would ironically become the Doom Patrol's most iconic villain going forward.

Mr. Nobody is the key to understanding Morrison's postmodern approach to writing *Doom Patrol*. Having been relieved of his identity, his place in the world, and his physical body, Morden ceases to exist as a person, and the entity that remains becomes enlightened, able to see the incongruences in the structure of the world, and understanding that there is "no good, no evil," deeming the concepts "outdated [...] for an antique age" (Morrison 2004b, p. 27). These statements seem to take on an almost meta meaning, as Nobody proceeds to subvert many of the tropes tied to superhero villains. When asked if he intends to rebuild the Brotherhood of Evil, he replies he will instead "celebrate the total absurdity of life, the gigantic hocus-pocus of existence" (Morrison 2004b, p. 27) by building his own organisation, the "Brotherhood of Dada" (Morrison 2004b, p. 28). This core tenet could easily be a statement by Morrison, considering how most of the bizarre adventures they build for the characters of *Doom Patrol* from then on reject the duality of good and evil and become something else, often entirely inscrutable for both the main characters and the reader. Either way, it serves to exemplify to perfection Morrison's approach to writing the book: a direct rejection of the traditional roles of hero and villain seen in more conventional superhero stories, and an embracement of the utterly absurd, the Dadaist, and, by consequence, the mocking of traditional moral and artistic dichotomies. The very nature of most supernatural forces presented as antagonists in the run, originating from parallel dimensions, distant planets, or

entirely different planes of reality, makes them so naturally incomprehensible that most of their internal logic is obscured or left entirely unexplained. In a genre where both heroes and villains had traditionally been known for going on long tirades about their abilities, this could be notably confusing to most readers, but that was Morrison's intent all along. Morrison themself would later go on to state:

> People seemed to pick up on all the wrong elements of [Doom Patrol], and feel that there were things which they couldn't understand, when they were basically things which they didn't have to understand. There weren't any secrets in it, nothing was symbolic in Doom Patrol. (Hasted, 1995, p. 70)

What this entails is that Morrison was looking to completely defamiliarize the struggles of these characters, turning them from larger-than-life battles between good and evil into pure absurdist conflicts that, most of the time, would hold no meaning for any outside observer regardless of how dire their consequences were. These antagonistic forces are not, however, symbolic in nature, and hold no meaning beyond their particular placement in the sequence of events. Though many readers at the time sought to "decipher" the grammatically and syntactically incoherent sentences spoken by the Scissormen in *Crawling from the Wreckage*, for example, Morrison would go on to reveal that they had written the dialogues for these characters by "playing around with the spellcheck on the [word] processor" by "spell[ing] words wrongly" to see what the computer suggested they should replace them with (Maddox, 1990).

Not even the more traditional superhero characters[11] that come to assist the citizens of Paris after Mr. Nobody entraps them into the painting that gives title to the storyline seem to

[11] Tellingly, one of the characters who comes to assist the citizens of Paris in the story arc is Animal Man himself. Considering Morrison was concurrently writing *Doom Patrol* and *Animal Man* at this point in time, the inclusion of the character reads as a declaration of intent on Morrison's part: though Animal Man is traditionally "weird" in a way no other member of the Justice League is, not even him can properly comprehend or interact with the all-encompassing absurdity the Doom Patrol have to face on a daily basis.

understand what is really going on, and seem afraid to interact with the painting out of an existential fear of the unknown (Morrison 2004b, p. 55). In fact, it is implied that the Doom Patrol are particularly qualified to deal with threats of this nature because of their subaltern identities and dysfunctional, non-conforming physical or psychological configurations. In this particular instance, the painting may only be accessed through a meditation on the incompatible and paradoxical, and Crazy Jane is instructed to concentrate on the existence of Rebis as an "avatar of contradiction" to allow them passage (Morrison 2004b, pp. 56-57). Through the navigation of contradiction and subjectivity and the understanding of the relativity of ideas such as good, evil, and truth, the main characters are allowed to interact with the paranatural forces that threaten the fabric of reality in each of the stories, usually rejecting traditional superhero violence in favour of dialectics. When the paraphysical city of Orqwith threatens to merge with the DC Universe, Rebis stops its advances by posing a philosophical question that forces the rulers of the city to confront their fictional nature within the context of the story, driving them back (Morrison, 2004a, pp. 100-101). Similarly, instead of physically confronting the indestructible Decreator, a cosmic entity that deconstructs reality just by staring at it, Jane uses her powers to send a telepathic message that will theoretically keep it occupied, slowing down its *decreation* of reality to a point where it will become unnoticeable, and only inconsequential objects will become deconstructed under its presence (Morrison, 2004b, pp. 200). In these examples, the decisions taken by the members of the Doom Patrol subvert the archetypical hero/villain conflict by bypassing the dichotomy of inherent good and evil altogether and embracing the absurdity of the situations they are taking part in to seek solutions beyond physical conflict, often operating within the realm of paradox. While physical struggle does take place on several occasions through the run, it is often secondary to the main ideological or psychological conflict of any given story arc, and does not serve the purpose of proving any given character right. In *The House that Jack Built*, while the antagonistic presence

of Red Jack is as close to a proper traditional villain as the run ever gets, the means to his defeat rely not on direct physical conflict, but on the release of the butterflies he kept captive in his home, which allowed him to stay alive by feeding on their never-ending pain (Morrison, 2004a, pp. 150-151). The antagonist had been, up to this point, the only one to personally threaten the life of one of the members of the Doom Patrol, and his patriarchal imposition of marriage upon Rhea Sheehorn is what eventually sees him punished and defeated – not his inherent quality as an outside, incomprehensible force.

Another important way in which postmodernity bleeds into *Doom Patrol* is the addition of intertextual literary references that serve to create an interplay of fictional works within the very narrative of the story. The clearest and earliest example of this running theme is the treatment of Orqwith, the diegetically fictional city that becomes real through the imaginations of a group of philosophers. The city is not only fictional within the world of *Doom Patrol*; it is also a direct reference to Jorge Luís Borges' *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (1940), which sees a fictional city slowly take over reality, albeit in a much slower manner than Orqwith does in *Crawling from the Wreckage*. Here, Morrison plays with several layers of reality at the same time as they unapologetically explore the themes and ideas of the original short story, while also implementing tropes from the superhero genre that, as mentioned above, are relegated to a secondary role once the comic delves into the paradoxical ideas most of its length is built upon. This is far from the last implementation of intertextuality in *Doom Patrol* –of notable mention are the references to the Brothers Grimm story *Spirit in a Bottle* that serves to frame Rebis' story of self-discovery and acceptance, and the many titles of songs and poems that Morrison recycles as names for the various personalities of Crazy Jane, such as The Hangman's Beautiful Daughter and Jane herself. In all cases, the author shows a level of self-awareness that implies these references are not only introduced to add flavour to the text, but to create intertextual relationships that help give new meaning to concepts introduced through the run.

This collection of seemingly random references, taken from all dimensions of "high art" and popular culture, appear to paint a picture of homogeneity when put together. That is, Morrison seems to be attempting to challenge the very absurdity of a literary canon, of assigning importance to certain works of art while others –mostly related to minority and outsider narratives– are left in the dark. The implementation of deeper literary elements in contrast with traditional superhero tropes in such a way that the former often supersede the later offers insight into one or more characters' arcs –while it is not necessary to understand the references in order to fully comprehend *Doom Patrol*, they often complement the text in ways that are rarely mentioned directly. For example, in the opening issue of the run (Morrison, 2004a, p.19), Larry Trainor is seen reading Harlan Ellison's *Partners in Wonder* (1971), whose short stories are described by the author as "products of two minds working together, sometimes in complete harmony, more often in opposition" (Ellison, 1983, p.4). This hints at the relationship between Trainor and the Negative Spirit, as well as their eventual fusion with Eleanor Poole and the complexities of Rebis' personality. Similarly, minor characters like Dorothy Spinner are also elevated through the use of intertextuality: through her name and the visual motif of the red shoes, she is connected to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), which by itself points at her own development. Dorothy's entire character arc is dependent on her ability to mature and gain self-confidence (a major theme in *Oz*) in order to avoid relying on her self-destructive "imaginary friends", entities that she summons during particularly traumatic moments as a sort of paranormal coping mechanism.

2.2 "Nobody Wants to Be a Brain in a Robot Body": the treatment of otherness in *Doom Patrol*

Through the explicit depiction of their metahuman abilities as life-changing disabilities, Morrison emphasises the physical and psychological issues the main characters face during their daily lives. Virtually every one of the main characters in *Doom Patrol* presents a non-normative or anomalous physical or psychological trait that marks them as an "other" in the eyes of society at large, and are often correlated with some sort of superpower. The main trifecta of characters in the run, especially, seem to exemplify the main three dichotomies Morrison explores through their stories, with Cliff representing the disconnection between body and mind, Jane being depicted as a mentally ill person, and Rebis being an agender, hermaphroditic being that blurs the lines between genders. Although these characters will all be explored in the present section, the main focus will be placed on Clifford Steele, alias Robotman, as the development of the themes of otherness that permeate Morrison's *Doom Patrol* runs almost perfectly parallel to his character arc.

Having suffered from a racing car accident from which only his brain survived, Cliff was fitted with a mechanical body crafted by scientist Niles Caulder (Drake & Haney, 1963, pp. 7-8), who would later go on to become the leader of the Doom Patrol. Morrison turns Cliff's power, the source of his identity as Robotman, into a physical disability that has dire consequences for his mental health: though Cliff had shown plenty of discontent with his situation in previous runs, these feelings are elevated into a deep sense of dysmorphia, a direct result of his new body's inability to access his senses of smell, taste and touch. Tom Peyer, in his introduction to the 2004 edition of *Crawling from the Wreckage*, refers to Cliff as "omniplegic" (2004a, p. 5), a word that perfectly expresses his condition as seen under Morrison's particular lenses: a brain within a body that, in spite of –or perhaps because of– its artificial nature, is dysfunctional in its entirety, and must be regularly fixed or upgraded. Cliff

becomes coded as an "other" through both his lack of access to the full spectrum of human sensations and his reliance on outside forces to allow his prosthetic body and organs to properly function.

At the beginning of the run, Cliff is revealed to have "signed himself into a psychiatric hospital" (Morrison, 2004a, p. 15), though the institution itself seems far too underqualified to provide him with proper psychological care, causing Cliff to spiral into self-destruction and prompting him to attempt to damage his own robotic body in an attempt to feel anything (Morrison, 2004a, p. 22). Nobody, within the personnel of the hospital, seems to be able to help either Cliff or Jane –who has been signed into the same institution– in a meaningful way, as they fail to understand what causes Cliff's self-destructive tendencies. The physical space of the dilapidated psychiatric hospital signifies a distrust for the authority that is supposedly in charge of healing the human mind, its state of disrepair a sign of a larger problem that is explored through the entire run: the inability –or unwillingness– of the state to take proper care of those who have been deemed as "others" and excluded from society. Although Cliff is, of course, an exceptional case, several panels depict other patients harming themselves or roaming through the building in varying states of distress (Morrison, 2004a, pp. 21, 26) as virtually nothing is done to put a stop to their tribulations or help build a more adequate environment for them. Through the intercalation of two plotlines, the space of the psychiatric hospital is contrasted with that of Alamance Memorial Hospital, in which a depowered Larry Trainor has been resting and being taken proper care of. Considering the differences between Larry and Cliff's body configuration –with Larry being a white, cisgender man showing no signs of dysfunction– this can easily be read as commentary on the difference in treatment between an individual who represents a set of hegemonic identities, and one who is, for all intents and purposes, an "other". In spite of the physical space of the psychiatric hospital not returning until the very end of the run, Morrison revisits the idea of an attempt to find a cure for otherness

in the short segments that see Cliff and Jane visit "Hell", once more establishing it as a manifestation of an establishment that operates under the façade of helping the mentally ill reintegrate into society while in actuality attempting to "cure" their individual deviancies, often with negative results.

The root of all of Cliff's psychological problems is revealed, in the very first page of the run, to be his attachment to his only remaining organic organ: his brain. His rejection of his dysfunctional, non-normative body stems from the belief that his humanity depends on the existence of his brain – the "beautiful bit" as he refers to it in the dream sequence that kickstarts the run (Morrison, 2004a, p.10). This first approach to the character reveals his unwillingness to accept his own subaltern identity, believing himself to still be a part of the norm, as opposed to an exception to it, as long as he can cling to his last living organ. He has been convinced by the matrix of normativity built around him, as well as the mockery and scorn he became a victim of after his accident, of his own state as an "other" – still, he attempts to reassure himself that, as long as his brain remains intact, the part of him that is "normal" and that corresponds to the hegemonic masculinity his daredevil persona exemplified, he will have a place within society. Cliff's character arc revolves around letting go of the concept of "normalcy" altogether, not out of a misplaced belief that he will never be able to partake in it, but as part of a larger theme of allowing himself to surrender his trust on the monolithic concepts that have shaped his life up until this point. Through the run, Cliff's trust in traditional power structures is slowly eroded away as his teammates become more and more comfortable expressing themselves through their subaltern identities, and the institutions around them reveal themselves to be agents of a status quo that has little place for someone like Cliff. This can be seen clearly in the way that his teammates, Rebis and Jane, slowly acclimate to their own dysfunctions and accept their position as "other", understanding that "normalcy" is a set of standards picked in opposition to hegemonic identities and holds no inherent value. Cliff,

meanwhile, continues to misgender and deadname Rebis, unwilling to compromise and accept their new identity as a non-binary, intersexual being, and attempts to help Jane "cure" herself, while she understands that the only way forward is to accept her identities and integrate them into herself. This behaviour stems from his belief that, much like himself, his teammates must have a sense of normalcy for them to cling to, though they very much seem to be perfectly comfortable living life on their own terms, in the edges of society. Jane understands that the turmoil within her mind is born out of a childhood trauma that she must let go of, stopping it from ever taking over her life again. Once she learns to release herself from the grip of her long-dead abuser (Morrison, 2007, pp. 157-159) and accepts that her trauma should not have to define her, she manages to appease her many alternate personalities, allowing her system of alters to "integrate" and become far more functional and happier as a consequence, referring to themselves as a "team" from then on (Morrison, 2008, 40). At the same time, Rebis learns to accept the contradictory identity of their own existence, a fusion between opposites, and achieves a form of immortality that allows them to ultimately defeat one of two main villains of the run and save their comrades (Morrison, 2007, pp.87-110).

Cliff, however, does not fully embrace his subaltern personality until the very end of the run. His bonding with Jane through shared trauma and the mutual exploration of each-other's disabilities slowly erodes away Cliff's self-destructive tendencies, even though he continues to still use his own body as a shield to protect her during the course of the run. The two characters complement each-other exceptionally well, with Cliff's social skills helping Jane navigate a world that sees her as irrational and dangerous, and Jane's emotional depth, as well as her own eventual acceptance of her subalternity, help Cliff develop a more profound idea of what it means to not fit in, and why that may have more to say about the world around him than about his own dysfunctional body. Jane also slowly dismantles the more toxic traits of Cliff's masculinity, including his necessity to act as a sort of father figure to other members

of the team, believing to know what is best for them. Though their bond paves the way for their ultimate development, it is only after they part ways that each of them is allowed to experiment the change that will help them move forward with their lives.

After the Candlemaker destroys his original brain and he is rebooted into a completely mechanical body, essentially losing the one part of him he considered valuable, Cliff becomes the only one who can access the Think Tank and stop Niles Caulder's plan to come to fruition. It is during his final confrontation with Caulder, through a virtualized gatekeeper designed to restrict access to the core programming of the Tank, that Cliff accepts his own identity by rejecting the possibility of regaining his human form, a proposition Caulder makes as a last-ditch attempt to convince him to stay away from the Think Tank. Cliff, however, chooses to save his teammates, and by extension the rest of the world, over his last opportunity to ever live a normative life again (Morrison, 2008, pp. 116-117). After a brief return to the psychiatric hospital, however, it is revealed that Cliff feels nothing from having saved the planet, as he does not believe it worth saving; he has witnessed the way personalities that fall outside the canon of "normalcy" are treated and does no longer want to fit within the parameters of said system (Morrison, 2008, pp. 120-122).

The antagonistic forces the Doom Patrol face also play a role in allowing these characters to grow and better understand their own subalternity, both from the inside and outside of the margins of society. The previously mentioned Mr. Nobody, through his two appearances in the run, is used to exemplify the growth Rebis, and especially Jane, have undergone, as well as Cliff's inability to accept his own otherness until the end. In Nobody's first appearance, the team travels to Paris to prevent his Dadaist schemes from coming to fruition, but in the latter half of the run, both Jane and Rebis refuse to face him. Having come to understand, through the trials and tribulations they've faced through the story, that Nobody's postmodern philosophy more closely matches their paradoxical existences, they see no need to

thwart his plans to become president of the United States. During his electoral campaign, Nobody advocates for a world that breaks the arbitrarily imposed rules of capitalism and the existence of canonical structures of power between human beings, which particularly resonates with Jane and eventually becomes the event that catapults her into seeking help not within the psychiatric system, but within herself. At the same time, the run points the finger toward a very specific type of threat: that of an imposition of artificial normalcy condoned by the system. The true "villains" of Doom Patrol are not the extra-dimensional entities that readers are more likely to remember, but the systems built to exclude and erase the identities of the members of the team, all of them dysfunctional and "other" in different, often overlapping ways. The most pronounced example of this antagonization of authority and normalcy can be seen in the story arc regarding the Ant Farm and the Men from N.O.W.H.E.R.E. Through several non-consecutive issues, various members of the Doom Patrol confront the government body known as the Bureau of Normalcy, whose mission is to remove every and all deviancy from the world in an attempt to homogenise humanity. The run presents them as overtly unsympathetic and borderline sociopathic in their desire to forcefully erase anything that escapes the definition of what is considered normal, to the point where they will instrumentalize entities like the Thing behind the Pentagon or "Yankee Doodle" Dandy. Despite their overt hate toward anything that escapes their comprehension, they will still utilise the powers of others to their own benefit. Their own adherence to the status quo, however, is presented by the run as far more artificial and harmful than any of the deviancies they have made their mission to erase, and pokes fun at the absurdity of attempting to erase what has naturally arisen from human nature. It is also worth mentioning the role of Sergeant Washington in the events that unfold under the Pentagon, as he switches sides and aids the Doom Patrol in their escape. Washington is revealed to have joined the army in an attempt to repress his own queerness and, once relieved from his charge, he is salvaged by Danny the Street and becomes a drag performer. The implication here is that

an enforcement of a particular set of traits is far more dangerous for humankind than any one individual who deviates from the status quo and that, in fact, if cleansed of values like toxic masculinity, patriotism, and conservative Christian ideology, and allowed instead to lead lives based on their own personal identities, individuals would become far happier.

The alternative to this change, which Morrison sees necessary for a development of a society that embraces subalternity and rejects any set of parameters that determine the value of individuals, manifests into two specific sequences that happen independently from each other, but are relevant both to each other and to Morrison's previous work. Both Cliff and Jane are heavily implied to visit the "real world" through sequences that can be ambiguously presented as dreams or delusions, each happening at a different point and under different circumstances in the final half of the run. When Cliff is suffering from hallucinations upon having his personality and memories backed up into a computerised version of his brain, he sees himself in a place his mind recognizes as "Hell" (Morrison, 2008, p.15): a world that lacks superheroes and in which his physical disabilities manifest in a more realistic, grounded manner. Similarly, when Jane confronts the Candlemaker, the latter uses his powers to send her "to Hell" (Morrison, 2008, p.70), which is eventually revealed to be a world not dissimilar to the one Cliff visits in his own delusions. These short incursions into a world that is seemingly a mirror of ours echo the latest half of Morrison's *Animal Man*, which saw the titular character escape the fictional world of the comic he was in and eventually meet the author writing his adventures (that is, Morrison themself). There is, however, a thread that connects these two exercises in metafiction that is absent from *Animal Man*: both Cliff and Jane are under the supervision of a mental health specialist, and both show their distrust of their authority during their respective sections of the book. In Cliff's dream, which occurs at a pivotal moment during his transformation into a fully mechanical being, he visits a therapist that he heavily distrusts, as he believes the therapist is taking advantage of his illness to empty his wallet while never

actually helping his mental health improve (Morrison, 2008, p.13). This unnamed therapist attempts to rationalise his identity as Robotman, which in this reality is nothing more than a recurring dream, and deconstruct what it could possibly mean in a world that is devoid of metahumans (Morrison, 2008, p.12). This is more related to the idea of Morrison disliking the *Watchmen* school of deconstruction, and their own belief that attempting to rationalise superheroes will only take away their symbolic power, therefore stripping them of their relevance in modern fiction. Jane's version of "Hell" is much more direct in its anti-establishment messaging, and the psychiatric hospital in which she is held takes up a large portion of the last issue of the run. The issue takes aim at historically abusive techniques utilised by mental health specialists in a misguided attempt to "cure" patients suffering from personality disorder, and depicts Jane resisting to accept this reality by intermittently escaping to an imagined adventure with the other members of the Doom Patrol.

2.3 “There Is Another World”: Danny the Street and Grant Morrison’s Subaltern Utopia

In order for individuals to properly express themselves and live a life that aligns with their racial, sexual, or gender identity, Morrison implies the world around them must fundamentally change. After having shown the horrors that come with any attempt to erase subalternity, to forcefully remove any traits that are seen as deviancies, Morrison uses the character of Danny the Street to propose a solution: “another world [...] a better world” (Morrison, 2008, p.159). Danny is introduced as a sentient street with a stereotypical drag queen mode of speech, immediately coding him not only as a physical abnormality t, but also as inherently queer. Danny becomes a friend of the Doom Patrol and aids them in several occasions, as he finds in them something not dissimilar to himself. Throughout the run, Danny shows himself to be a shelter for both anomalous, superpowered individuals, but to any individuals who have been abandoned by society due to their non-conforming traits. The art by Richard Case consistently depicts disabled, racialized, or queer-coded individuals as background characters who have found their way to Danny, and it is eventually revealed that the sentient street has made it his life mission to rescue those who do not fit within the mould of traditionally “functional” identities. Background characters are rarely, if ever, highlighted by the art during the entirety of the run, and the emphasis the artist puts on the denizens of Danny the Street shows an intent to draw the reader’s attention toward their visible othering traits: characters in wheelchairs, wearing flamboyant clothes often associated with the gay movement, or showing body configurations that escape the framework of normativity. After the events of *Planet Love*, Danny expands to become an entirely new planet, though he tells Rebis he will “continue to send himself” into the world so that the “lost and heartsick” can enter his realm (Morrison, 2008, p. 131). Morrison is exploring the idea of a world where only those who have been ostracised from society are allowed in, with this hypothetical space containing such a wide

variety of subaltern identities that the concept of what is and is not "other" is completely erased there. Two of the main issues driving the run from the very beginning become more intertwined than ever in these final chapters of the story: the creation of a world that is entirely subaltern means a complete restructuring of old systems of thought, challenged by the mere existence of a place that defies definition under modernist standards, while at the same time the space provides physical, literal refuge for those on the margins of society. This is, according to Morrison, the only proper way of escaping the "Hell" both Cliff and Jane had gone through –a radically altered experience that serves as an alternate home for those who cannot fit within societal standards. This idea could easily read pessimistic in nature, as it implies that the only hope for marginalised individuals to ever be accepted is to create a community that is completely severed from their point of origin. However, Morrison's works both before (*Animal Man*) and after (*All Star Superman*) imply that the hypothetical idea of a utopian reality separate from ours is not mutually exclusive with the hope that societal norms can be torn down to create a more just one. Through both of these works, Morrison expresses the idea of the power of the fictionality of the superhero, and why that is an important concept to understand when analysing any character produced from the genre. In *All Star Superman* (2005-2008), Morrison explores the inherent power in the idea that the archetypical superhero's perfection should act not like a literal representation of power and dominance, but instead work to serve as a fictional role model that, while never actually achievable, serves to educate individuals that are kind and accepting. Superman, in his almost infinite kindness and tolerance, is not written in opposition to humanity, but rather as a hypothetical future version of what mankind may achieve through the proper understanding of the idea superheroes represent. In being entirely fictional, they become symbols of something that could be, something entirely within our grasp –albeit not in a literal, superpowered sense. The idea of Danny the World is merely a societal extrapolation of Morrison's views on the superhero as a source of hope and kindness they had already begun

to explore in *Animal Man,* a book that rejects the precept of comics that are written purely for shock value and hold no positive moral ideas. The power of the superhero, in Morrison's eyes, is symbolic; their books rarely treat superpowers as the essential ability a character must master in order to become better, but are instead used to complement the character's personality and personal growth.

In equating the superheroic with the subaltern in *Doom Patrol*, Morrison is painting the picture of a set of *übermensch*, not unlike Superman, who manage to better themselves and each other even under much more dire circumstances. The ultimate message of *Doom Patrol*, then, is that only by rejecting the precepts of traditional values and embracing the pure, unfiltered absurdity of life and art would the world become a safe and just place for all manner of identities that, once shed the ideas that bind them to the concept of "other", may live a fullest life within a kinder, more accepting society. The members of the Doom Patrol, therefore, become symbols for what the ultimate expression of these identities could mean: a group that fights for the preservation of everything unusual, be it people or otherwise, without rejecting their own otherness in favour of culturally enforced identities.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the ways in which Grant Morrison's *Doom Patrol* defies traditional dichotomies inherent to the superhero genre, during a particular time in the history of the comic medium in which said challenges meant a restructuring of the values the genre had been built upon for decades. This began with the reshaping of such classic as characters Robotman and Negative Man, as well as the inclusion of more openly subaltern characters like Crazy Jane or Danny the Street, to better align the group with the otherness they were designed to embody in their original appearances, and thus rejecting the more traditional superhero tropes that had permeated the run authored by Paul Kupperberg. Through a series of adventures characterised by a clear absence of absolute morality, the writer crafts this newly formed Doom Patrol as a set of characters that, sooner or later, overcome the necessity for clear delineations between good and evil, allowing them to operate on a level far more philosophical and experimental than most superheroes before them, including previous iterations of the team. Through the radically postmodern ideas Morrison poured into Mr. Nobody, they allowed themself to reshape the morality of characters, old and new, and establish the relativity of the concepts they were working with, much like the rest of the works that characterised the British Invasion of mainstream comics. *Doom Patrol* found itself at a cultural intersection between two distinct eras of mainstream comic publishing, becoming relevant within the canon precisely because of how radically against the previously established *status quo* the work had positioned itself. After decades of censorship and restriction, and thanks to the efforts of, among others, Karen Berger, Alan Moore and Grant Morrison, the comic book medium was able to evolve past its limitations and become fertile ground for experimentation, both narrative and thematic, in aggressive rejection of the black-and-white dichotomies that had plagued the medium during the years the Comics Code Authority was culturally relevant.

It is through this rejection that Morrison establishes the two deeply intertwined forces that drive the narrative forward: the questioning of traditional moral dichotomies, and the critique to the system that allows these to fester. These ideas, embodied by both the main characters and their antagonists, are never truly separate from one another, and often converge to present a more holistic critique of canonicity as it pertains to both literary works and the matrix of normalcy built around a set of specific hegemonic traits and ostracising the subaltern. Though the Doom Patrol face against otherworldly and paranormal entities all through the run, their most dangerous and recurring antagonists in the text are the agents of normalcy that attempt to erase their otherness from the world, through direct means or otherwise. The main trifecta of characters themselves deal with some degree of internalised hatred against their subaltern personalities but, thanks to the bonds formed through the run and their shared adventures, end up understanding that their different configurations are not, by themselves, a problem, but are only made so because of their opposition to an already established, arbitrary set of identities that society had been built upon without them having any say on the matter.

The ending to the run, though bittersweet, provides readers with the ultimate alternative to the established matrix of accepted bodily, psychological, and gender configurations: an entirely new world configured around the subaltern, the "other", and defined by its acceptance of everything outside of the norm. By definition, a world such as that would see no discrimination and would be able to provide care to those who had been previously rejected by society at large, especially when said rejection stems from divergent psychological or bodily configurations.

Works Cited

Adorno, T. W. (1993). Theory of Pseudo-Culture (1959). *Telos, 1993*(95), 15–38. <https://doi.org/10.3817/0393095015>

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2000). *Postcolonial Studies. Key Concepts*. Routledge.

Borges, J. L. (1994). "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" (pp. 7–15). In *Ficciones*. Emecé Editores.

Brownie, B., & Graydon, D. (2016). "Negotiating Ordinariness and Otherness: Superman, Clark Kent and the superhero masquerade." In M. Peppas & S. Ebrahim (Eds.), *Frame Escapes: Graphic Novel Intertexts* (pp. 152–161). Inter-Disciplinary Press.

Carpenter, G. (2016). *The British Invasion: Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison, and the Invention of the Modern Comic Book Writer*. Sequart Organization.

Comic Book Code, (1954). <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Comic_book_code_of_1954>

De Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex* (J. Thurman, Trans.). Vintage Classics.

Drake, A., Haney, B., & Permiani, B. (1963). The Doom Patrol. *My Greatest Adventure*, *1*(80), 2–8.

Drake, Arnold., & Premiani, B. (1964). The Brotherhood of Evil. *Doom Patrol*, *1*(86), 1–17. DC Comics.

Ellison, H. (1971). "Sons of Janus". In Ellison, H. (Ed.), *Partners in Wonder* (pp. 4–6). Walker & Company.

Finger, B., Kane, B., & Moldoff, S. (1940). The Joker Returns. *Batman*, *1*(1), 3–14. DC Comics.

Goodreads. (2011, August 1). "Interview with Grant Morrison." *Goodreads.* <https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/601.Grant_Morrison>

Hasted, N. (1995). Grant Morrison. *The Comics Journal*, *176*, 52–82.

Hegel, G. W. F., & Findlay, J. N. (1977). *Phenomenology of spirit* (A. V. Miller, Trans). Oxford University Press.

Holub, M. (2011). *Postmodernism in British and American Comics: Postmodernist overtones in the works of Alan Moore and Grant Morrison*. Prague.

Hutcheon, L. (1987). "Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism." *Textual Practice*, *1*(1), 8–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502368708582005>

Hutcheon, L. (2013). "Postmodernism." In P. Wake & S. Malpas (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory* (pp. 115–125). Routledge.

Huyssen, A. (1986). "Introduction". In *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (pp.vi–xii) Indiana University Press.

Keller, K. (1999). *Arnold Drake - This Old Drake Still Has the Fire in Him*. Sequential Tart. <http://www.sequentialtart.com/archive/jan00/drake.shtml>

Kristeva, J. (2002). "World, Dialogue and Novel." In T. Moi (T. Moi, Trans.), *The Kristeva Reader* (pp. 36–59). Blackwell.

Lee, S., Kirby, J., & Goldberg, S. (1961). The Fantastic Four. *Fantastic Four*, *1*(1), 1–13. Marvel Comics.

Lee, S., Kirby, J., & Paul, R. (1962). The Hulk. *The Incredible Hulk*, *1*(1), 1–6. Marvel Comics.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism? In G. B. Brian Massumi (Trans.), *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (pp. 71–84). Manchester University Press.

Maddox, M. (1990, February). *Amazing Heroes #176: An Interview with Grant Morrison*. Deep Space Transmissions. <https://sites.google.com/site/deepspacetransmissions/interviews-1/1990-s/199002-amazing-heroes-176>

Moore, A., Bissette, S., & Totleben, J. (2012). *Saga of the Swamp Thing* (K. Berger, Ed.; Vol. 1). Vertigo.

Moore, A., Gibbons, D., & Higgins, J. (2014). *Watchmen* (L. Wein, Ed.). DC Comics.

Morrison, G., & Case, R. (2000). *Doom Patrol: Crawling from the Wreckage* (Vol. 1). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., Case, R., & Dringenberg, M. (2006). *Doom Patrol: Musclebound* (Vol. 4). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., Case, R., & Jones, K. (2005). *Doom Patrol: Down Paradise Way* (Vol. 3). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., Case, R., & Nyberg, J. (2004). *Doom Patrol: The Painting that Ate Paris* (Vol. 2). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., Case, R., & Phillips, S. (2008). *Doom Patrol: Planet love* (Vol. 6). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., Case, R., Steacey, K., & Woch, S. (2007). *Doom Patrol: Magic Bus* (Vol. 5). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., & Truog, C. (1990). Deus Ex Machina. *Animal Man, 1*(26), 13–15. DC Comics.

Morrison, G., Truog, C., Grummett, T., Hazlewood, D., & McKenna, M. (2018). *Animal Man by Grant Morrison 30th anniversary Deluxe edition* (Vol. 1). Vertigo.

Morrison, G., & Yeowell, S. (2014). *Zenith* (Vols. 1–3). Rebellion.

Shaviro, S. (1996). *DOOM PATROLS, Chapter 6: Cliff Steele*. Dhalgren. <http://www.dhalgren.com/Doom/ch06.html>

Siegel, J., & Shuster, J. (1938). Superman. *Action Comics*, *1*(1), 1–13. DC Comics.

Simon, J., & Kirby, J. (1941). The Riddle of the Red Skull. *Captain America Comics*, *1*(1), 34–49. Marvel Comics.

Smith, S. T., & Alaniz, J. (2019). "Introduction". In S.T. Smith & J Alain (Eds.), *Uncanny Bodies: Superhero Comics and Disability* (pp. 1-35). Penn State Press.

Sommerlad, J. (2018, May 10). "Superman at 80: The Jewish Origins of the Man of Steel and the 'Curse' That Haunts the Actors who Play Him." *The Independent.* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/superman-jewish-

origins-film-adaptations-curse-jerry-siegel-christopher-reeve-henry-cavill-a8344461.html>

Staszak, J. (2009). "Other/Otherness." In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, Vol. 8*. Elsevier, Cop.

Strauss, B. (2000, August 11). "Generator X: Interview with Stan Lee." *The Guardian.* <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2000/aug/12/features>

tractorforklift. (2019, March 22). *Karen Berger, the Berger Books, and Vertigo*. Concrete Gray. https://tractorforklift.wordpress.com/2019/03/22/karen-berger-the-berger-books-and-vertigo/