

This assignment is a mandatory part of your portfolio and needs to be handed in on time. It is ungraded but you will receive feedback. Additionally, a sample solution will be published on the Institutswiki.

Please make sure to submit your assignment stapled together but not bound in any folder. Every assignment must include a cover sheet and the statement on plagiarism. You may write up to three pages of text, according to the formatting specifications of our style sheet. Any text beyond the first three pages will be ignored.

Please analyse the following sequence taken from our graphic novel: Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*. Burbank, CA: DC Comics, 2014. 118-19. Print.

1. Formal and media-specific analysis

1.1. Comment briefly on relevant formal aspects (text containers, representation of speech, structure of the section).

The section is a flashback (hypodiegesis) that recapitulates the radioactive bodily disintegration (p. 118) and gradual re-assemblage of Dr. Manhattan (p. 119), who is both narrator and focalizer

- narratory blocks in blue with extra frames: thoughts/narration by Dr. Manhattan (1-6; 9-11)
- speech balloons: dialogue between two men (6-8); speech balloon in panel 8 includes a shriek of one of the men
- overlap of representations of speech (narratory block and speech balloon) in panel 6
- importance of splash panels 4 and 8
- disintegration:
 - panels 1-2 and 4: Dr. Manhattan's disintegration in the radioactive test chamber
 - panel 3 extra: memory of evening with Janey
- reassembling:
 - panels 5-11: eventual re-assemblage of Dr. Manhattan;
 - or alternatively: panel 5-6: transition between Dr. Manhattan's death and re-appearance as superhuman being;
 - or, panel 5 extra: after Dr. Manhattan's disintegration and after a token funeral, Janey hangs up photograph
 - panel 7-10: gradual re-assemblage of the body with
 - panel 11 presenting a metaphorical comparison of the atomic re-composition of the body to the re-assemblage of a clock that has been taken into pieces
- cf. structure in 2.1

1.2. Identify various discourses in the given passages by considering terms / vocabulary / visual motifs; settings / institutions; subject positions / roles.

- Discourse of nuclear power:
 - Terms/visuals: "particle cannons," "air grows too warm too quickly," "atoms," "test chamber," "light," "taking to pieces," "circulatory system," "perimeter fence," "reassembling the components in the correct sequence;" solely "visual" allusions to discourse: clock and other motifs

- Setting/institution: Gila Flats laboratory, reactor, bestiary, bathroom, kitchen, Gila Flats base; outside and inside positions (f. ex. window, people looking in, mirror etc.)
- Subject positions/roles: Dr. Glass, Janey and other scientists incl. Dr. Osterman; two men in dialogue; kitchen personnel; military guards
- Other discourses: religion/death: “funeral,” “bury,” “behind glass,” “vanishing”; “Jesus H. Christ”, esp. visual representation (splash panel on p. 118); pop culture: “Presley”, fan: “Carol-Anne”; politics: “Castro,” “(specter of) communism”; physics/materiality/medicine/science/sensory: “hear,” “warm,” “cold beer,” “light,” “snapshot,” “bestiary,” “muscle,” “screams;” x-ray (splash panel), anatomy, and hands (visuals); gender/masculinity: “guys these days”, “beard”, “beautiful woman,” “Castro”, “Presley” vs. visual representations of masculinity

2. Functional analysis: Toward a problem-oriented sample analysis

Based on the data generated through your formal and media-specific analysis, provide a **coherently written** analysis with a clear research problem that addresses the following points:

2.1. the discursive construction of identity (consider the interaction of visual and literary elements);

- Dr. Manhattan’s identity is mainly constructed by the discourse of nuclear power and in connection with death and in opposition to a past life of sensual, human experiences;
- other discourses may be considered, also in interaction with visuals:
 - dissolved physical body – lack of contours, x-ray image, destruction (crucifixion), overly bright light as rendered through the white color; re-assembled body (resurrection) as ghost, walking skeleton, skinned human in pale light blue and green colors;
 - motif of watch and watchmaking symbolizing time, observation, closeness to nuclear war/destruction, as well as Dr. Manhattan’s superpowers;
 - transformation from human into superhuman creature rendered by change of color scheme from life-like, warm to toxic, cold colors. And ...
- interaction of visual and literary elements:
 - panels 1-4: color white dominates with the exception of panel 3 (green, yellow-brown, and flesh-color); white imitates the bright light as opposed to life-like colors of close-up on two hands that touch on the beer glass in panel 3; temporally, panel 3 is included in the narrative through the narratory blocks; visually, however, the colors make the panel stand out (it is a repeat from the panel on p. 115); angles shift from long-shot (panel 1) to extreme close-ups (panels 2-3) and then show full body in splash panel; splash panel visually narrates and dramatizes the radioactive death of Dr. Manhattan’s body through allusion to x-ray image with black skeleton against white background; gesture reminiscent of being crucified; visual narration of bodily dissolution through lack of contours and dynamic of the electromagnetic waves indicated in black.
 - And ... there are many other possibilities here!
 - panels 5-11: three regular panels on the top and bottom, splash panel at the center shows climax in a close-up: re-appearance of Dr. Manhattan; first as a ghostlike shape (panel 7), then he is drawn as gradually regaining contours and even muscles (panels 8-10); in the center splash panel, he shimmers in a pale blue-green, uranium-like color; the other characters’ faces and the rooms are rendered in toxic colors; panel 11 is – like panel 3 – a repeat panel from the

preceding narration (p. 113) with more life-like, “healthy” colors; temporal narration: the sequence of the months from September into November are visualized by Dr. Manhattan’s gradual gaining contours and muscles in close-ups, medium and long shots. And ...

- again, there are many other possibilities, e.g. the motif of the hands on these two pages involves past memories of a life before the nuclear accident, a life as a human being.

2.2. relevant contexts (historical, cultural, literary, generic, etc.).

- origin story of superhero/genre history and tradition/genre superhero fiction
- The Manhattan Project/Cold War
- 1950s: Cuba, red scare
- McCarthy era and questions of “un-American conduct”/counterculture
- Etc.

3. Comparison and/or contrast: Second section

Suggest one other section from the text that contrasts and/or corresponds with the given section in an aspect relevant to your research problem. Briefly discuss how both sections relate to the problem by addressing differences in representation and their possible functions.

- E.g. Representations of Dr. Manhattan’s role in cold war political and cultural context (also: representations of national identity in combination with religious discourse), cf. pp.139ff: Professor Milton Glass, “Dr. Manhattan: Super-Powers and the Superpowers”
- E.g. Representation of bodily disintegration/masculinity/corporeality (also: dualism between political/physical power vs. impotence), cf. pp. 228-29: Nite Owl’s dream
- Etc.

4. Lecture

In a short concluding paragraph, relate your analysis to knowledge and skills from the lecture.