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I'll Huff and I'll Puff and I'll Blow Your Expectations Down:

Intertextuality and Bill Willingham's *Fables*

Rodriguez: "You *can't* do that. Those are all characters from different stories.

They aren't part of the same fictional universe."

Jack: "Who says?"

(Willingham, *Fables: Homelands* 23)

It seems wrong to begin a paper on a comic book series without a tip of the hat to Art Spiegelman, whose *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and forced a shift toward the societal perception of comic books as a media form possible of producing literature as well as "kids' stuff" ("The Pulitzer Prizes"). But to say that academic attention was drawn to comic books only after 1992 would be far from the truth. In his article "Comics and Folk Literature," published in 1980, Alex Scobie states, "Comics have attracted the professional attention of sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, and educationists for at least thirty years" (70). As far back as 1952, former educator Herman O. Makey argues for the use of comic books in teaching as a sort of necessary evil to stimulate young minds using that which already interests them, reluctantly admitting, "I am inclined to think that it is better to read comic books with understanding than to read other books without understanding" (548). Makey most likely never got a chance to read *Maus*, but echoes of his unwillingness to see comics as an art form can be seen even in criticism of the Pulitzer-winning work itself, as Joseph Witek points out some of the most

“perplexing” reviews include remarks such as “Art Spiegelman doesn't draw comics” and “*Maus* is not exactly a comic book, either; comics are for kids,” to which Witek responds, “if *Maus* is not a comic book and if Art Spiegelman doesn't draw comics, nothing is and no one ever has” (qtd. in Witek par. 1; Witek par. 40).

Any comic book fan would stand up and cheer at Witek's defense, because comic book fans are very much aware that the medium often needs defending. A comic book fan carries with him or her little-known facts with which to impress a skeptical audience, such as Alan Moore's graphic novel *Watchmen* being on *Time Magazine*'s list of “the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to the present” or that the 2002 Oscar-winning movie *Road to Perdition* was based on a graphic novel of the same name (Grossman and Lacayo; “Road to Perdition (2002)”). But more than a decade and a half after *Maus* and over fifty years after Makey, academic writers are still self-consciously referencing the “‘comics-will-ruin-your-mind’ attitude,” as illustrator Phoebe Glockner puts it (246). For example, Cord Scott's 2006 article on the educational uses of comic books is titled “The ‘Good’ Comics: Using Comic Books to Teach History,” quoting Dr. Fredric Wertham's *The Seduction of the Innocent*, a book from 1954 that reached infamy in its time for, among other things, denouncing Batman as a homosexual (546). It feels as if even now the medium must be defended in every paper written. To this, as well, Witek has a defense, saying in his Spiegelman article, “To assume that because in the past comics have been trivial and jejune they must forever be so is to ignore the history of the medium and the present examples of some of its best practitioners” (par. 40). It is time to move on from the defense and on to the works themselves, which in themselves contain more proof than a two-page introduction could ever give.

One of these “best practitioners” is Bill Willingham, whose comic book series *Fables* is an intertextual treasure. The story of folk tale characters forced by war to remove from their own homelands to the present-day “real world,” the twelve-volume (and counting) work clearly places itself in the realm of hypotextuality in that it “transforms, modifies, elaborates, or extends” the fairy tales and nursery rhymes from which its characters are taken to revitalize them for a modern, adult audience (Chandler). Andrea Nicole Miller states in her review of *Fables* that, “Willingham's deep knowledge of his characters' origins in the oral tradition, and as embodied in compilations by the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault, is clearly apparent, and his decidedly modernized versions of the characters inherit present-day sensibilities in regards to behavior, appearance, sex, and violence” (A. Miller 253). What Miller does not address is the unique way that Willingham comes to his modernizations, specifically in those characters who share names or characteristics within different stories. Willingham merges these characters and uses this amalgamation as the basis for their modern-day personalities in a clever bit of intertextual slight-of-hand. The clearest examples of this use can be seen in the characters of Jack, whose frequent use in both fairy tales and nursery rhymes makes him the perfect con man; Prince Charming, who becomes the womanizing ex-husband of Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella; and Bigby—Willingham’s Big Bad Wolf, whom Willingham makes the singular villain of both the “Little Red Riding Hood” and “The Three Little Pigs” tales but whose keen senses and shady past lend themselves to the creation of a noir detective. By comparing the source material to the updated characters, clear lines can be drawn to Willingham’s choices, as well as between the works themselves.

I have called *Fables* an intertextual treasure and every comic book reader knows that, when it comes to this genre, there is always more to be found in the chest. Willingham appeals to his readers through a two-fold use of nostalgia, by using aspects from both the genres of folk tales and superhero comic books—what might be referred to as architextuality, “the designation of a text as part of a genre or genres” (Chandler). The first genre, that of folk tales, is obvious in Willingham’s choice of characters. The second is more subtly drawn for the reader, so to speak. Again, Jack, Prince Charming, and Bigby prove themselves to be fine examples, suggesting in their characters aspects of superheroes from both the Marvel and DC publishing lines. Willingham never forgets his medium, and *Fables* grounds itself in the world of comic books—when it happens to be on the ground, and not up a beanstalk.

Bigby: You look out of breath, Jack. Been climbing beanstalks again?

(Willingham, *Fables: Legends in Exile* 7)

The reader’s first introduction to Jack of Fables (a.k.a. Jack Horner, a.k.a. Jack B. Nimble...) is that of a young blond man, racing to the security office of Bigby Wolf, to report the disappearance of his girlfriend, Rose Red—Snow White’s rebellious younger sister. In the quote above, Willingham lets the reader know exactly which Jack is being presented: the now-grown boy from *The Red Fairy Book*’s “Jack and the Beanstalk,” once the “giddy, thoughtless boy” who sold a cow for magic beans (Lang). After Bigby examines Rose Red’s bloody apartment, he arrests Jack, telling him, “You’ve occasionally been clever, Jack...but never smart” (Willingham, *Fables: Legends in Exile* 25). During his interrogation of Jack, he lets the reader in on more of Jack’s character:

Bigby: You're always trying to beat the system, Jack. There was the time you tried to steal Numblin's seven league boots to win the New York Marathon.

Jack: The Boston Marathon. At least I tried to do it out of state, to divert attention away from Fabletown [...]

Bigby: And what about the time you tried to raffle off the map to your remaining magic beans?

Jack: What law did that break? I have a right to make money off my own property.

Bigby: Except the map was a fake and you lost the beans centuries ago—if you ever had them at all. (41)

Here Willingham shows his knowledge of the source material. While modern retellings may only touch on the high points of the story—the hoodwinking of Jack, the beanstalk, the rescue of the Golden Goose, and the destruction of the beanstalk that leads to the giant's death—Lang's tale includes Jack's transformation from a "giddy, thoughtless boy" to a "clever" (but not smart), plotting young man who regains his family's fortune by deceiving the giant and his wife. At one point, Jack "dyed his hair and disguised himself" to trick the giant's wife into not recognizing him upon his return to the giant's castle (Lang). This is likely the seed (or bean) that was planted in Willingham's mind as he created the character of Jack, as he responds to Bigby allegations by asking, "So I try to play a good-natured gag now and then. So what? I'm a trickster by nature, but I'm not violent" (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 41). The Jack of the beanstalk tale is decidedly not violent as well, declaring to his fairy helper, "I could not kill anyone unless I were

fighting with him; and I could not draw my sword upon a woman” (Lang). Thus Willingham ties his texts and the source material even more closely together.

Jack’s modernized trickster nature makes him a con man, as is made clear when Bigby reveals that Rose Red’s disappearance was part of yet another one of Jack’s schemes, created by Jack and Rose Red to cheat Bluebeard out of enough money for Jack to start a get-rich-quick dot-com start up, one that ultimately fail and lose them everything, as Bigby says, “down the same black hole where everyone else lost their dot-com investments” (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 110). Willingham shows that while the character’s reckless, thoughtless nature still holds true, he is now firmly planted in the twenty-first century. Willingham extrapolates the boy from Lang’s story and makes him a poor excuse for a con man, but one who always lands on his feet.

This explains the many occurrences of characters named Jack in the folk tales—his “tricks” lead him to take on a multitude of names, another common attribute of fictional con men. In his spin-off series, *Jack of Fables*, Jack’s aliases are listed by the evil Mister Revise, a man who tries to eradicate Fables by kidnapping them and erasing their stories in the “mundane” (human) world, believing that this will destroy the source of their powers. Mr. Revise reads, “You are Jack Horner. Pseudonyms include Jack of the Tales, Jack B. Nimble, John Trick, Jack the Giant-Killer. Am I leaving any out?” Jack’s glib reply is, “Jack Frost. But that was a different country, and the soldiers are all frozen” (Willingham, *The (Nearly) Great Escape* 47). When Jack tells the story of how he became Jack Frost, he also refers to “my Jack O’Lantern days, which is another whole story for another time” (Willingham, *Jack of Fables: Jack of Hearts* 9). Jack has a name and a con for every occasion.

But it is not only the characters of his own world that Jack cons, it is also the readers of the series. The Jack of *The (Nearly) Great Escape* is portrayed as far more arrogant and womanizing than the desperate boyfriend of *Legends in Exile* and *Animal Farm*. When Bigby reveals Jack and Rose Red's scheme, he tells them that Jack's huffing and puffing in his office made Bigby suspicious, as "a simple run to my office, from the cab parked outside, shouldn't have winded him . . . being Jack, he overdid it" (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 100-01). Rose Red's reaction to is to yell at her boyfriend, "I told you to be subtle, jackass" and Jack's response is a meek "But..." (101). Rose Red appears to the audience to have the power in the relationship. When she leaves to do community service at the Fables' "Farm," a place where non-human Fables can live without fear of revealing themselves to the mundane world, Jack calls out to her, "Hey! Rose Bush, aren't you going to...?" but there is no response from his now-ex-girlfriend (Willingham, *Animal Farm* 5). He then turns to Bigby and complains, "She didn't even say goodbye. She acted like I wasn't even here" (5).

However, while Jack may care about Rose, this has far from broken his heart. Willingham reveals later than Jack's pain may have been a con after all, as seen at the end of *Sons of Empire*, where Willingham and artist Andrew Pepoy answers a reader's question: "Did Jack leave anyone messages before he left Fabletown forever?" Jack is seen making a phone call to Rose Red, telling her, "I just wanted to say that you were the one. You were the girl I that I wanted to spend eternity with" (Willingham, *Sons of Empire* 187). This is consistent with Jack's characterization in the first two collections, but then he makes a phone call to a woman named Jill, telling her "I'm leaving town for awhile, but first I just wanted to say that you were the one. You were the girl I could've

spent my life with” (188). Then, of course, he makes another call to another woman. This is more in line with the Jack from his own title, who swaggers his way from one issue to the next, but it leaves the reader feeling that the flying carpet has been pulled out from under his or her feet.

Jack’s arrogance is also seen in another method that ties the two genres of the series together: the teaser boxes at the end of each issue of *Jack of Fables*. Teaser boxes have been used since the early days of comics to entice the reader to buy the next issue. Jack’s teasers are unique in that while sometimes they reveal what is to come, the information is, at the very least, confused with ridiculous misinformation. At the end of the first issue, the teaser reads, “Next: We discover how this attractive (and criminally insane) young lady found her way into my bed; I give this Mister Revise character a piece of my mind; and I single-handedly repel an attacking herd of evil super-intelligent elephants! Don’t miss it!” (Willingham, *The (Nearly) Great Escape* 28). While Jack does learn why Goldilocks is trying to seduce him, and he does meet Mister Revise, there are no evil super-intelligent elephants. Jack’s teaser instead reads like a tall tale. Author S.E. Schlosser, who runs AmericanFolklore.net, defines a tall tale as “an extravagant, fanciful or greatly exaggerated story” and Jack’s “exaggerations” are incredibly close to outright lies, a far cry from the honest teasers generally found in superhero comics (Schlosser).

With so much raw material in the folk tales for Willingham to use, it is not surprising to see that of the three characters on which this paper focuses, Jack has the least overt connections to the comic book world of superheroes. However, Jack has

echoes of some of the minor characters from the Marvel Comics title *X-Men*—or, as Jack might tell you, these characters have some echoes of him.

The creation of *X-Men* was a departure for comics creator Stan Lee who, until that point, had written characters whose powers came outside sources. P. Andrew Miller, in his article “Mutants, Metaphor, and Marginalism: What X-actly Do the X-Men Stand For?”, gives a concise overview of the creation of the title:

The first X-Men title appeared in 1963, when [creators] Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were building the Marvel line-up. Running out of interesting origin stories, Lee decided to create a team of super heroes who were born with super abilities instead of being bitten by radioactive arachnids or bombarded by comic rays. Taking the scientific principle of genetic mutation, Lee stretched the premise to its limit and created the original X-Men. (P. Miller 282)

Unlike the alien Superman or the irradiated Hulk, the X-Men’s powers are inborn, creating a tension between the “mutants” and the society that fears their innate abilities. But just as not every *Fables* story is about the war that forced their evacuation, not every X-Men character carries the metaphor in everything they do, and it is with two of these entertaining minor characters that Jack shares traits: Gambit and Longshot.

Created in 1990, Gambit is the code name for Remy LeBeau, whose power is the ability to charge objects with “biokinetic energy,” leading to their destruction, usually in the form of an explosion (Barney-Hawke and Moreels 20). Like Jack, Gambit is charismatic and dishonest. As a boy, he too was a trickster, taught by his foster family to become “a master thief” (20). He later is expelled from his community, the X-Men, as

Jack is expelled from Fabletown after a particularly large (and still unsuccessful) con in *Homelands* (Barney-Hawke and Moreels 20; Willingham, *Homelands* 48). Another connection exists between the characters in their love interests. Both Gambit's redheaded lover Rogue and Jack's redheaded girlfriend Rose Red are emotionally stunted—Rogue by her inability to control her power, which is “[a]bility [and] memory absorption through physical contact,” so that she is incapable of touching another human being, and Rose Red by her resentment towards her sister, who is “still the popular one” while Rose's story all but disappeared in the mundane world (Barney-Hawke and Moreels 35; Willingham, *Animal Farm* 110). Rose only sees Jack as a way of “annoy[ing] the hell out of” Snow White (Willingham, *Storybook Love* 84). Neither woman is capable of sustaining a loving relationship.

While there are some similarities between Gambit and Jack, it is with Longshot that more obvious parallels can be drawn. Like Jack, Longshot is a character who always lands on his feet and, like Jack, this is a part of his nature. According to the Marvel biography, Longshot has the “[p]ower to alter probability to give himself good luck.” (Barney-Hawke and Moreels 28). Created in 1985 and still occasionally popping up in the X-Men titles today, the character has had two mini-series of his own but no long-running title. He is mainly known for being the love interest of Dazzler, a member of the X-Men, but the existence of his character also was brought to the attention of children of the 1990s through a featured role in two episodes of the popular *X-Men* animated series that ran Saturday mornings on the Fox network (“Longshot” and “Mojovision”).

Jack's luck is first revealed at the end of *Legends of Exile*, when he reveals to Bigby that he won the Fabletown lottery “and I only bought a single ticket on a lark”

(Willingham 93). In the second *Jack of Fables* storyline, *Jack of Hearts*, Jack pits his luck against the “Fable” personification Lady Luck and, while she often has the advantage, he manages to escape her with only his usual losses—no money and no woman, but lives to con another day. He believes his luck is a right of his power as a Fable. As his inner dialogue reads as the storyline at the beginning of the fourth issue of *Jack of Hearts*,

My mother always said we make our own luck. Of course, my mother also told me there were no such things as magic beans, so what the hell did she know? No, Mom wasn’t too bright, but she was right about luck. And I’m the greatest fable in the known world—I should be luckier than anyone! (Willingham 122)

Whether the connection between Fables’ popularity and their immortality has yet to be proven in the series, it cannot be doubted that Jack has at least some of the “power” of luck, or else he would not continue to land on his feet adventure after adventure.

Another connection exists in the way the two characters are drawn. Physically, the characters both have long, straight blond hair and blue eyes, although Jack’s haircut is of a slightly more modern style. Similarities in hair and eye color, while seemingly insignificant on the surface, are used repeatedly by Willingham to connect *Fables* characters to superhero characters and tropes, allowing the reader to consciously or subconsciously associate the series with the superhero genre. This is seen more clearly in the character of Prince Charming.

Prince Charming: I swear you've had that same scowl on your face for the past three or four hundred years.

Snow White: You ought to know. You helped put it there.

(Willingham, *Fables: Legends in Exile* 78)

“Prince Charming” is more a concept than a character. The expression has come to mean “an ideal or idealized young male lover; a perfect young man” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). He is Snow White’s Prince, Sleeping Beauty’s Prince, Cinderella’s Prince. Little girls playing on the internet do not even learn his name when they click on the princesses’ online stories, as he is just “the Prince” (“Cinderella”; “Sleeping Beauty”; “Snow White”). He is a nameless hero, an object on which to put one’s desires. Perhaps this is why, when the reader is introduced to his *Fables* incarnation, he does not give any name but that of “Prince Charming,” telling his latest conquest, “I’m embarrassed to admit that I’d actually have to fetch my wallet to recall which identity I’m using these days” (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 15). In the real world, he needs no other name for he has either no identity, in that the “perfect” mate does not exist, or else he has many identities, as encapsulated in the cliché “there’s someone out there for everyone.”

Willingham draws primarily from the three Grimm stories of Snow White, Cinderella, and Briar Rose to create his Prince Charming. In each of the stories, a prince ultimately marries each of the women, but a quick look at the stories shows that he does little to nothing to earn them, or even get to know them. In “Snow White,” the prince is immediately drawn to Snow White’s beauty as she lies in the dwarfs’ coffin, apparently dead. He has no concept of her as a person. It is no surprise, then, that the prince’s

immediate response is to offer a trade, asking the dwarves, "Let me have the coffin. I will give you whatever you want for it" (Grimm 89). As Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar write, "An 'it,' a possession, Snow White has become an idealized image of herself, and as such she has definitely proven herself to be the patriarchy's ideal woman, the perfect candidate for Queen" (296). He does not, as the Disney movie would have it, awaken her with a chaste kiss in the Grimm tale. Instead, she "came to life" when the prince's servants, carrying the coffin, "stumbled over a shrub, and the jolt freed the poisonous piece of apple lodged in Snow White's throat" (Grimm 89). Although the Prince's desire for the coffin leads to the dislodging of the apple, he does not actively "save" her.

In the Grimm, the actual kiss of awakening occurs in the story of "Briar Rose," the character more commonly known as Sleeping Beauty. However, again the prince does little to "rescue" to Princess. In the Grimm version, the last of the fairies makes no mention of a prince, only that Briar Rose "should not really die, but should only fall asleep for a hundred years." The Prince here is not destined to awaken her and, in fact, only happens to come along at exactly the right time, "that very day the hundred years were ended." Unlike the Perrault version of the fairy tale, where "all the great trees, the bushes, and brambles gave way of themselves to let [the prince] pass through," this prince "saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he went with ease, and they shut in after him as thick as ever" (Perrault; Grimm). The Perrault and the Grimm differ in that there is more of a sense of the magical in Perrault's "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," where the prince has been destined to awaken Sleeping Beauty and "the trees closed again as soon as he had passed through them," which causes the rest of

his party to be left behind. In the Grimm version, the phrase “as thick as ever” suggests that all the prince did was push the shrubs aside to pass through, and afterward the shrubs returned to their natural state of being, as it would be for anyone who had done so.

The kiss appears to have no magical quality either. As the story goes,

She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, so he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him; and they went out together; and soon the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and gazed on each other with great wonder. (Grimm)

It is a lovely moment, but there is no sense of destiny and the only “wonder” is that of the newly-woken court. It is just as likely that, the spell now being obviously past, Briar Rose is awoken by the kiss in the way that any person would be stirred from sleep by a kiss. Even if this is not true, if there is a magical quality to the kiss—as Willingham acknowledges in *Fables* despite his obvious preference for the Grimm version of the tale—there is no hacking and slashing through the thorns, no magical creatures to battle, and no hardship to the prince, unless kissing a beautiful, passive young woman constitutes “hardship.”

Finally, there is the Grimm tale “Cinderella.” Here the prince is fooled twice by the young woman, who slips away from him after two nights of dancing together. The third night, he return the favor by covering the staircase she runs down with pitch in hopes that she will get stuck. He fails at this attempt and instead ends up with her shoe.

Having followed the girl twice to her father’s property, he is sure that one of the man’s daughters is his dance partner. Again he is fooled twice when he takes each of the

stepsisters home. It is only through the aid of two magical helpers in the form of doves that the prince realizes that his “false brides” are not his dance partner (Grimm 121). It is only when the shoe fits her that he “looked her straight in the face, [and] he recognized the beautiful girl with whom he had danced and exclaimed: ‘She is the true bride’” (121-22). Perhaps it would have saved some time for him to look into her face first but, at any rate, his bride is found.

These ineffectual princes are obviously the basis for Willingham’s Prince Charming. By taking the three princes and merging them into one, Willingham highlights this ineffectualness even as he amuses the reader with the idea of Prince Charming as a thrice-divorced, philandering ex-husband who at the beginning of *Legends in Exile* is penniless and homeless. He is blandly handsome, glib, and living on his persuasive charisma which, like Jack’s luck, might be magical in nature. This ability first comes into question when he quickly seduces a waitress and easily talks her into picking up the check for his lunch and, later, letting him move temporarily into her apartment (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 14, 30). Later in the series, he shares a stolen kiss with Beauty, and she more clearly defines both this ability and his nature:

“Was I authentically tempted to throw caution to the wind and let you take me here on my desk, or the floor, or wherever you stashed the cot back there? Of course I was. We both know the persuasive powers you possess. You practically exude a dress-hiking, panty-dropping musk that would make us all rich if we could bottle it. But we both know you’re hollow, Prince Charming. Empty. A ton of slick romance, encrusted with not a particle of real love.” (Willingham, *Arabian Days (and Nights)* 31)

This fits in perfectly with the princes from the Grimm stories, who have little interaction with their brides before the weddings. They are interested in the surface and, especially in the case of Cinderella, the acquisition of the woman.

This becomes more clear when viewed through the eyes of his ex-wives Snow White, Briar Rose, and Cinderella. In *The Mean Seasons*, the three women get together for lunch and inevitably talk about him, which Cinderella says is the result of having nothing in common otherwise: “We’re not friends—close or otherwise. We don’t travel in the same social circles. [. . .] We’re like an annual meeting of his parole board, getting together once a year to confirm that he’s still an unrepentant fuck and continues to be deserving of our organized contempt” (Willingham 8). She then argues that she was the “most injured” by Charming, as with first wife Snow White he “might not have known of his many weaknesses in marital fidelity,” although one could argue that these weaknesses became clear when Snow found him in bed with her sister, Rose Red (9). “Cindy” addresses that by saying that his infidelities could have been the result of his marriage to Snow White, not his nature, as without true love Charming would not have been able to wake Briar Rose. By the time he marries Cinderella, she concludes, he already knows he is incapable of monogamous relationships.

Charming expands on his relationship with Briar Rose and confirms his love of the surface, the chase, and the acquisition in *Storybook Love* when he is unable to wake Briar Rose a second time, as he no longer feels “true love” toward her (Willingham 62). He then tells Bigby and Flycatcher that his “true love” does not last very long: “I always truly love a woman when I’m first chasing her. But I’m only good at the chase. My love quickly faded once I had to settle down to the tough business of actually living with her.

I'm just no damned good at the happily ever after part" (62). By tying together the three princes of the tales into one character, Willingham manages to show how similar they were in the first place.

When first dealing with the architextual connections in *Fables*, it was difficult to find a character comparable to Prince Charming. After all, the common quality in superheroes is goodness, and Prince Charming cannot be called good. Neither is he evil, the common quality for supervillains, for while he is selfish, he is not completely selfish. One example of this is in his sexual relationships. As a lover, he is considerate—"amazing," as he is told by his conquest, the waitress Molly, in *Legends in Exile* (Willingham 18). He replies, "I know," and goes on to tell her, "I've always believed a truly accomplished nobleman should hone his cocksmanhood every bit as much as his swordsmanship" (18). His ex-wives have no complaint either, as Cinderella says during their luncheon, "Say what you will about our mutual ex-husband. One thing none of us can deny...he was great in the sack" (Willingham, *The Mean Seasons* 8).

As an ex-husband, he is confusing to say the least. He challenges Bluebeard to a duel in *Storybook Love*, and a startled Bluebeard asks him why. His response is that he is doing it for Snow White, as Bluebeard has secretly been planning to kill Bigby Wolf, and Prince Charming has realized that "she seems to want the old dog, so, even though I find him personally distasteful, I can't allow you to kill him" (Willingham 127-28). Bluebeard finds this suspect, to which Prince Charming replies, "Look at it this way: with someone like me, noble urges occur so seldom that I can hardly afford to ignore the rare few that do come along" (128). However, "noble impulses only go so far," and Prince Charming also reveals that, upon Bluebeard's death, he intends to find a way to acquire Bluebeard's

assets (134). It is difficult to tell, then, whether his regret toward the end of his relationship with Snow White is sincere, especially when compared to the way he treats his second ex-wife, Briar Rose.

After Prince Charming is kicked out of his latest lover's apartment, he ingratiate himself to a very rich Briar Rose and begins staying with her, although in a separate bedroom. The reader knows that his kindness is an act, and it is when he moves from the public area of her living room to the private area of his locked bedroom that the architextual connection to the comic book genre can be found. Prince Charming's responses to Briar Rose's sharp tongue are silver-tongued and his smile is so wide as to be false but, when he closes his bedroom door, he immediately takes on a serious role as the reader finds that he has been using the Mouse Police to spy on Bluebeard (Willingham, *Storybook Love* 113). With his furrowed brow and fierce gaze, he strongly resembles DC Comics' Bruce Wayne, the Batman.

Once noticed, the connection becomes clear: Prince Charming is neither the hero nor the villain but instead the alter ego. In mainstream superhero comic books, the alter ego suggests a duality in the characters, creating a hierarchy where one persona is dominant or given more worth. While the superhero Batman was born Bruce Wayne, the true mask is his real face; "Bruce Wayne" is the superficial persona he has created to distract the public from discovering his vigilantism (see: Christopher Nolan's movie *Batman Begins*; Ed Brubaker's *Bruce Wayne: Murderer?* storyline; Bruce Timm's *Batman: The Animated Series*). Bruce Wayne is black-haired, blue-eyed, handsome, glib, rich, and womanizing—very much like Prince Charming of *Fables* (as he was rich before he removed to the mundane world, leaving most of his wealth behind). However, these

parallels are not limited to the one character. Rival publishing company Marvel Comics has its own black-haired, blue-eyed, handsome, glib, rich, and womanizing character in Tony “Iron Man” Stark, a character who has not only his own title but is part of the Marvel superteam The Avengers (Sanderson, *Marvel Universe* 97). So this trope would not be unfamiliar to any reader who limits his- or herself to only one of the major publishing companies.

As Beauty’s comment earlier revealed, Prince Charming is the surface, the one he so desperately loves to chase. It is no surprise then that his genre counterpart is found in the “mask” of the created public persona. When situated in the morally black-and-white world of colorfully-attired superheroes, Prince Charming is decidedly gray.

Jack: Blown down any piggies’ homes lately?

(Willingham, *Fables: Legends in Exile* 7)

In 1982, a decidedly violent Little Red Riding Hood shot and killed the Big Bad Wolf in Roald Dahl’s poem “Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf” (21). She later returned to kill off another wolf in “The Three Little Pigs”—also taking out the third pig to acquire for herself “a PIGSKIN TRAVELLING CASE” (24). Dahl was not the first to turn the tales on their heads but, by 1989, the heroes of the stories often had become the villains while the villain of the story often became the hero. In Jon Scieszka’s children’s story “The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs,” narrator Alexander T. Wolf proclaims himself the helpless victim of both circumstance and a carnivorous appetite, telling his readers, “If cheeseburgers were cute, folks would probably think you were Big and Bad, too.”

His sneezing knocked down the pigs' houses and he inadvertently kills the First Little Pig. He then tells his readers, "It seemed a shame to leave a perfectly good ham dinner lying there in the straw. So I ate it up./Think of it as a big cheeseburger just lying there." Later, the third pig is found to be a "rude little porker" who insults Alexander Wolf, and the media portrays him as the villain of the tale to turn an uninteresting story into one that is "jazzed up."

1989 also saw the publication of Jane Yolen's *The Faery Flag: Stories and Poems of Fantasy and the Supernatural*, containing the story "Happy Dens or A Day in the Old Wolves' Home," where once again the pigs are rude and stories are "jazzed up" for the sake of the reader—only in this case, the wolf is a vegetarian and is being used as a tool to win Peter (of "and the Wolf" fame)'s mayoral election (Apseloff 137).

Willingham continues in this tradition by making his Bigby Wolf a sympathetic character. Here Willingham "transforms" the character, to use Chandler's term. His Big Bad Wolf is both literally transformed into a human being, and figuratively transformed into a hero.

At the beginning of *Legends in Exile*, Bigby is seen as a normal, if hairy-looking, human being, raising the question "How can this person be the Big Bad Wolf?" Readers are given a hint to Bigby's condition when he casts a shadow on a wall, which is not his own outline but one of a wolf (Willingham 20). Later, he transforms from human guise to a sort of man/wolf form to protect Jack from Bluebeard, a much larger form than his human persona (64-5). Finally, in the short story "A Wolf in the Fold," which appears to be written specifically for the collection, Bigby's history is given, revealing not only the source of his transformative nature but also how he changed from predator to hero. Once

the Big Bad Wolf of legend, Bigby became annoyed by the army invading the homelands, “not only because they had the temerity to enter his territory uninvited” but also “they killed or spirited away many of those living in the wooded valley that the wolf had marked in his mind to dine on one day, and such a breach of etiquette could not be endured.” Bigby then begins to wage his own war against the new self-proclaimed emperor’s army and aids Fables in reaching a land “far beyond the Emperor’s reach and possible even his knowledge”—that is, “our” world. For his deeds, Bigby is offered a place in Fabletown by Snow White and a mysterious man who calls himself “Feathertop.” Snow White uses an enchanted blade “tainted with ancient magic” to give him the ability to shift shapes so that he may live with the human Fable community, as the animal community known as “The Farm” does not so easily forgive Bigby’s previous transgressions (Willingham).

When Snow White approaches Bigby to make this deal, he sees her “expensive gown of charcoal gray . . . bowed out by any number of petticoats beneath” and thinks “a ridiculous contrivance . . . in which to go tramping through the woods” (Willingham). This echoes Yolen’s story, where the author “makes fun of the outfit illustrators usually portray Little Red Riding Hood as wearing: ‘a long red riding hood, a lacy dress, white stockings, and black patent-leather Mary Jane shoes. Hardly what you could call your usual hiking-in-the-woods outfit’” (Apseloff 136; qtd. in Apseloff 136). Whether Willingham is referencing Yolen’s story, drawing a subtle comparison between Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White, or only giving Bigby’s view of human society is unknown. However, it makes for an interesting intertextual question for another day and

marks a startling difference from how a modernized Bigby is portrayed throughout the rest of the collection.

Once given human form, Bigby finds a place in Fable society as the head of security. Having been considered a hero by some in the homelands, it is no surprise then that Bigby is given a protective, heroic (as opposed to “superheroic”) role in the community. But part of this choice of roles is that Bigby’s heightened wolf senses give him a natural advantage when it comes to processing and sorting information; he literally has a nose for sluething: a wolf’s snout. The first sign of this is in *Legends in Exile*, where he hands his cigarette to Snow White before entering Rose Red’s bloody apartment, telling her, “Hold this. I’m going to need my senses clear” (Willingham 22). Later, in *Storybook Love*, he explains that this is both a blessing and a curse:

Living in the city, I have to smoke like a chimney just to deaden my senses enough to put up with the massive information overload . . . And even with that, I have to work hard to mentally filter out all of the millions of intrusive sounds and scents—every smoke-belching vehicle, every single person, with their natural smells, plus the different colognes and perfumes they drench themselves in. Every morsel of food served in twenty thousands homes and restaurants, and every scrap of garbage they produce. I’d go crazy if I couldn’t block it all out. (Willingham 124)

Willingham takes the tradition of the wolf’s “big eyes” that can see better, “big ears” that can hear better, et cetera, and applies it to the character of Bigby.

That Bigby becomes a detective is perhaps a reference to the link between comic books and the pulp fiction of the 1930s, many of which were detective stories or featured

characters with detective skills such as The Shadow or Doc Savage, who was described by one of his authors, Lester Dent, as “Sherlock Holmes with his deducting ability, Tarzan of the Apes with his towering physique and muscular ability, Craig Kennedy with his scientific knowledge, and Abraham Lincoln with his Christliness” (qtd. in Lampkin). In his book *How to Read Superhero Comics and Why*, Geoff Klock calls pulp fiction “the literature out of which the superhero narrative emerged” (76). Even Superman is at least in part a result of the pulp heroes, according to Mark David Nevins in his article “Mythology and Superheroes,” who states, “the debt Superman owes in both specific and general terms to Doc Savage . . . is under-emphasized in every consideration of Superman that I have read” (27). Certainly one of the earliest, most popular characters of mainstream superhero comics, Batman, is the direct result of pulp fiction, and is described by comic book writer Chuck Dixon in *Batman: The Ultimate Guide to the Dark Knight* as “equal parts Sherlock Holmes, Zorro, Scarlet Pimpernel, Shadow, and Dracula,” echoing Dent’s description of The Shadow’s successor Doc Savage (6).

But Bigby’s less-than-heroic past paints him as an anti-hero, a character “who is totally unlike a conventional hero” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Willingham plays with this idea by making him the love interest of Snow White who, as Prince Charming’s ex-wife, has been soured on the idea of happily ever after. Bigby shows interest in Snow White as early as *Legends in Exile*, but Snow White, while obviously flattered, continually turns him down. This is explained by Prince Charming during his fight with Bluebeard, who says, “[Snow White] has been so relentlessly betrayed by everyone she’s ever loved, she can’t help but snap and snarl at a new love . . . I was far from the worst of the lot—you should have seen her stepmother—but my betrayal seemed to have been the

proverbial last straw” (Willingham, *Storybook Love* 128). At this time in the storyline, Bigby and Snow White have been enchanted by Bluebeard to travel to a place “well away from civilization” where they can be assassinated and “the bodies will never be found” (98). The two awaken days later with no memory of what has occurred and, unable to sleep while their assassin is in pursuit, Snow White mentions her fears of what may have passed, pointing out to Bigby, “There was only one tent and one sleeping bag. Were we sleeping together?” Bigby tells her that it is more likely that he was “sleeping wild” in his wolf form (120). This proves to be a lie, as Snow White discovers when the Fables doctor confirms her pregnancy (166). At this point, she confronts Bigby, who says that he has no memory of the event. She then accuses him of lying, as “[y]ou’ve got all those special sense you’re always boasting about, so you would have known what we did as soon as we came to, but you hid it!” Bigby’s only reply is that he was doing what was necessary “in order to stay calm and focused in a dangerous situation” (167). This creates a break between the characters, one that is not fully mended during Snow White’s pregnancy and subsequent move to The Farm—the one place Bigby is not allowed to go—when some of her “litter” of seven cannot pass for human. This is hardly the kind of “storybook love” common in folktales.

It is only much later, after Bigby’s departure and return to the Fable community, that he and Snow White finally make amends, and Bigby proposes to her, declaring himself “no handsome prince, come to steal you away from all the cares of the world” (Willingham, *Wolves* 91). He goes on to say:

I can never offer you riches and palaces or any sort of luxury. But I think you’ve had your fill of such things by now. What I can offer you is a

home in *our* valley, where we can raise *our* kids. And I'm old-fashioned enough that I think we should be married to do it. (91)

This is a realistic and modern version of romance, where there is no castle at the end but a stable home. A life offering more Prince Charming's hollow "happily ever after" is acknowledged in the mention of child-rearing and the proposition of not just raising the children, but raising them together, is apparent in the use of the word "our." The decidedly not-Charming Bigby has taken an unconventional route to "happily ever after" but has arrived there all the same.

While Bigby first evokes a pulp fiction-inspired anti-hero, as the series progresses he reveals himself to have much in common with one of the most popular modern comic book characters, Wolverine of the X-Men. Wolverine was created by Marvel Comics in 1974 and first appeared in *The Incredible Hulk*, but it was when he joined the X-Men the next year that things really began to take off (Barney-Hawke and Moreels 45). At the time, Marvel wanted to create a diverse team, and Canadian Wolverine fit the bill (Sanderson, *X-Men: The Ultimate Guide* 57). His presence also added a tension between the long-standing romance of Scott "Cyclops" Summers and Jean Grey, and his bond with younger members like Jubilee and Kitty Pryde softened his image from raging animal to beloved anti-hero.

As with Bigby's wolf-self and former Fable-eating habits, Wolverine has a tightly-reined animal nature that he can unleash at will. The *Marvel Encyclopedia: X-Men* describes Wolverine as a character whose "greatest enemy might just be himself. Having taken many years to tame his overwhelming impulses to kill, Wolverine knows that even the slightest lapse in control could easily allow him to slip into a berserk rage"

(Barney-Hawke and Moreels 45). And yet despite this frightful aspect of their natures, both have relationships with characters who by rights should be at the very least intimidated by them, if not downright afraid. Just as Wolverine is close with the younger members of his team, Bigby has a good relationship with Little Boy Blue (who when the series begins seems quite young indeed, although later appears older) and Fabletown janitor Flycatcher, once the sweet and innocent Frog Prince. Flycatcher teases Bigby without fear of retribution by calling him “super sleuth” in the first collection, and later teases him again on Remembrance Day when he is dancing poorly with Snow White (Willingham, *Legends in Exile* 51, 91). Bigby is even seen in that same book lending his couch to Colin Pig, one of The Three Little Pigs, who has snuck to the city from the Farm. As Colin puts it, “I’m a living symbol of your lasting redemption. Who can continue to doubt that you’ve reformed, after one of your old enemies, a succulent piggy, survives sleeping in your apartment?” (29). Who can doubt that Wolverine has self-control when he spends so much of his time with unharmed children?

There are also physical similarities between the two characters. Both are extremely hairy, with dark hair and brown eyes, when the color of the eyes is distinct at all (for brown eyes see Willingham, *Legends in Exile* and Barney-Hawke and Moreels 45; for no discernable eye color see Willingham, *Wolves* and Chris Claremont et al., *X-tinction Agenda*). Both are sometimes drawn with wide, flat noses, as can be evidenced in *Fables: Wolves* and Frank Quitely’s depiction of Wolverine on the cover of *New X-Men* #115 (Quitely and Townsend). Also, the two are often drawn smoking, Bigby all throughout *Fables* and Wolverine especially during Chris Claremont’s authorship of the X-Men in the 1980s (Claremont et al., *Essential X-Men Vol. 4*).

The strangest connection between Bigby and Wolverine occurs during *Wolves*. When Bigby and Snow White are apart, Bigby travels to Alaska, where he lives with a young woman named Sarah Tanaraq, whose skin color and straight hair suggest an indigenous ethnicity in an industry that “rel[ies] upon visually codified representations in which characters are continually reduced to their appearances” (Singer 107). This creates a link between Sarah and Silver Fox, a member of the Blackfoot tribe, with whom Wolverine shared a home and a bed in Canada (“Silver Fox”). Sarah’s last name, Tanaraq, is another link back to Wolverine: it is the name of a “Great Beast” that possesses a member of Alpha Flight, Canada’s answer to the X-Men (“Sasquatch (Walter Langkowski)”). Wolverine was originally to be leader of Alpha Flight before choosing to join the X-Men instead (Sanderson, *X-Men: The Ultimate Guide* 64). These links leave little room for coincidence.

Finally, the two characters heal quickly and appear to be immortal, perhaps with the former causing the latter. Wolverine’s “healing factor” causes him “to heal from injuries at exceptional speed, making him virtually unkillable . . . Gunshot wounds in nonvital areas cannot stop him. Within hours he can fully recover from an injury that would kill a human” (Sanderson, *X-Men: The Ultimate Guide* 64-5). Bigby’s immortality has yet to be tested but, in *Storybook Love*, he tells Snow White that a broken bone will “heal itself as soon as I change to wolf form—provided I set the bone first” (Willingham 114). It is likely, though, that between his rapid healing ability and (perhaps) his popularity as a Fable, he can survive as well as Wolverine.

There can be no doubt, then, that the two characters are incredibly similar yet completely distinct. Willingham proves with Bigby Wolf that he can suggest a major

superhero character and still manage to create a fully-realized, unique character. Bigby, more than any other character, situates *Fables* completely in both the genres of folk tales and of superhero comic books.

Next: I put all this maudlin crap behind me and start a whole new, exciting adventure for you to fawn over.

(Willingham, *Jack of Fables: Jack of Hearts* 143)

Once upon a time, there was an author named Bill Willingham who asked the question, “What would folk tale characters be like in the modern-day world?” Turning to the legendary stories of his childhood, he created a rich, layered world where the characters were allowed to grow and change in ways that flowed naturally from the source materials while enhancing the readers’ understanding of those source materials.

The moral of the story, if there is one to be found, is that both folk tales and comic books contain a treasure trove of possibilities for the imagination—whether that imagination is that of a child, or that of an adult. Willingham’s deft use of intertextuality proves that societally-imposed “kids’ stuff” can be matured for an adult audience, whether in the realm of folk tales or comic books.

And we all live happily ever after.

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- Apseloff, Marilyn Fain. “The Big, Bad Wolf: New Approaches to an Old Folk Tale.” Children’s Literary Association Quarterly 15.3 (1990): 135-137.**
- Baker, Ronald L. “Folklore Motifs in Comic Books of Superheroes.” Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin 41 (1975): 170-174.**
- Barney-Hawke, Syd, and Eric. J. Moreels. Marvel Encyclopedia Vol. 2: X-Men. Eds. Mark D. Beazley and Jeff Youngquist. New York: Marvel Comics, 2003.**
- Batman: The Animated Series. Vol. 1-4. Dir. Bruce Timm. Perf. Kevin Conroy, Mark Hamill, Arleen Sorkin. 1992-1995. DVD. Warner Bros., 2004.**
- Batman Begins. Dir. Christopher Nolan. Perf. Christian Bale, Michael Caine, Katie Holmes. 2005. DVD. Warner Bros., 2005.**
- Boker, Pamela A. “America’s Women Superheroes: Power, Gender, and the Comics.” The Mid-Atlantic Almanack 2 (1993): 107-117.**
- Brubaker, Ed. Batman: Bruce Wayne: Murderer? New York: DC Comics, 2002.**
- Chandler, Daniel. “Semiotics for Beginners: Intertextuality.” Aberystwyth University. 10 April 2008 <<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html>>.**
- Chandler discusses Genette’s five subtypes of “transtextuality” (intertextuality), two of which form the basis of my thesis.
- “Cinderella.” Disney Princess – The Official Website. 5 April 2008**

<http://disney.go.com/princess/html/main_iframe.html>.

I searched through this page to find a name for the Prince. None was given.

Claremont, Chris et al. Essential X-Men Vol. 4. New York: Marvel Comics, 2001.

Claremont, Chris et al. X-Tinction Agenda. New York: Marvel Comics, 1992.

“Cyclops.” Marvel.com. 10 April 2008 <<http://www.marvel.com/universe/>

Cyclops_%28Scott_Summers%29>.

I used this for my rough draft, as it is the biography on the official Marvel website. Unfortunately, the site appears to now be using a wiki approach to its character pages, so the information from this source is suspect despite its “official” web housing.

Dahl, Roald. “Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.” The Classic Fairy Tales. Ed.

Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 21.

Dahl’s humorous poem sets up the punch line in “The Three Little Pigs.”

Dahl, Roald. “The Three Little Pigs.” The Classic Fairy Tales. Ed. Maria Tatar.

New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 22.

Dahl’s humorous poem provides the punch line to the joke and also links the stories together by the shared character of Little Red Riding Hood.

Diebler, Matthew. “‘I’m Not One of Them Anymore’: Marvel’s X-Men and the

Loss of Minority (Racial) Identity.” International Journal of Comic Art 8.2

(2006): 406-413.

Dixon, Chuck. “Foreword.” Batman: The Ultimate Guide to the Dark Knight. New

York: Dorling Kindersley, 2005.

Duffy, William. “Sing Muse, of the Immortal Hero: Using Epic to Understand

Comic Books.” International Journal of Comic Art 8.1 (2006: 258-270).
“Gambit.” Marvel.com. 11 April 2008 <<http://www.marvel.com/universe/Gambit>>.

I used this for my rough draft, as it is the biography on the official Marvel website. Unfortunately, the site appears to now be using a wiki approach to its character pages, so the information from this source is suspect despite its “official” web housing.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. “[Snow White and her Wicked Stepmother].” The Classic Fairy Tales. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 291-297.

Gilbert and Gubar’s psychoanalysis of the main character and the mother figure in the Snow White variations reveals a cycle of self-hatred in women and briefly speaks of the Prince’s marginal role in the story.

Gloeckner, Phoebe. “Comic Books: A Medium Deserving Another Look.” A Review of General Semantics 46.3 (1989): 246-247. MLA Bibliography. EBSCOhost. Stockton College Lib., Pomona, NJ. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://web.ebscohost.com.sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?vid=1&hid=21&sid=48f18e15-05a2-40a5-8b63-b369065ee0d4%40sessionmgr8>>.

Gloeckner’s short but persuasive article references the predominant negative attitudes about comic books and also mentions in passing the nostalgic nature of comics for the adult viewer of comic book movies.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. “Briar Rose.” Grimms’ Fairy Tales. Project

Gutenberg. Apr. 2001. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext01/grimm10.txt>>.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. “Cinderella.” **The Classic Fairy Tales**. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 117-122.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. “Snow White.” **The Classic Fairy Tales**. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 83-89.

Grossman, Lev and Richard Lacayo. “Watchmen – ALL-TIME 100 Novels.” **Time**. 2005. 5 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/0,24459,watchmen,00.html>>.

Hall, Kelley J. and Betsy Lucal. “Tapping into Parallel Universes: Using Superhero Comic Books in Sociology Courses.” **Teaching Sociology** 27.1 (1999): 60-66.

Klock, Geoff. **How to Read Superhero Comics and Why**. New York: Continuum, 2002.

Klock gives a view brief overview of comics and discusses them in Bloomian terms. I used his introduction as a guide for my own introductory writing, and his annotated bibliography helped me to feel more comfortable with writing my own. When I found that I wanted to discuss the connection between pulp fiction and superhero comics, I looked again to Klock to find information on Doc Savage and the Shadow.

Lampkin, William P. “Doc Savage.” **ThePulp.net**. 2008. Apr. 28 2008 <<http://www.thepulp.net/docsavage.html>>.

Lang, Andrew. “Jack and the Beanstalk.” **The Red Fairy Book**. **Project Gutenberg**. May 1996. 10 April 2008 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/>>

etext96/rdfry10.txt>.

Lecker, Michael J. “Why Can’t I Be Just Like Everyone Else?": A Queer Reading of the X-Men.” International Journal of Comic Art 9.1 (2007): 679-687.

Lendrum, Rob. “The Super Black Macho, One Baad Mutha: Black Superhero Masculinity in 1970s Mainstream Comic Books.” Extrapolation 46.3 (2005): 360-372.

**“Longshot.” X-Men. Writ. David McDermott and Steven Melching. Dir. Frank Squillace. Fox. The Internet Movie Database. 28 Apr. 2008
<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751321/>>.**

Makey, Herman O. “Comics Books—A Challenge.” The English Journal 41.10 (1952): 547-549.

This was the oldest peer-reviewed reference I found online. Sadly, in terms of comic book recognition as worthy of being studied, there was not much difference in Makey’s opinions and opinions I was finding forty years later.

McLaughlin, Jeff. “9-1-01: Truth, Justice, and Comic Books.” International Journal of Comic Art 8.1 (2006): 412-425.

Mergen, Bernard. “Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America by Bradford W. Wright.” Journal of American History 89.1 (2002): 295-296.

**Miller, Andrea Nicole. “Fables.” MELUS 32.3 (2007): 253-255. Academic Search Premier. EBSCOhost. Stockton College Lib., Pomona, NJ. 3 Apr. 2008
<<http://web.ebscohost.com.sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/detail?>**

vid=3&hid=22&sid=7f32db48-7707-47a8-990f-
ac96aa795527%40sessionmgr8>.

Miller's review was the only one I could find in a peer-reviewed journal. Her focus is not my own—which is obvious given her choice of publications—but the review was useful in finding outside description of the texts.

Miller, P. Andrew. "Mutants, Metaphor, and Marginalism: What X-Actly Do the X-Men Stand For?" Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts 13.3 (2003): 282-290.

Miller's in-depth look at the X-Men reveals the comic's "melting-pot" message. Miller's explanation of the origins of the title was clear and quotable for introducing the X-Men into my paper.

"Mojovision." X-Men. Writ. Brooks Wachtel. Fox. 5 Feb. 1994. The Internet Movie Database. 28 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751322/>>.

Nevins, Mark David. "Mythology and Superheroes." Inks: Cartoon and Comic Art Studies 3.3. (1996): 24-30.

Perrault, Charles. "Little Red Riding Hood." The Classic Fairy Tales. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 11-13.

Perrault's version of the tale contains many of its best-known elements, including the origin of the name and the popular repetition of "Grandmother, what big ____ you have!" Additionally, this is the only "classic" version where the girl does not get away.

Perrault, Charles. "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood." The Tales of Mother Goose as First Collected by Charles Perrault in 1696. Project Gutenberg. 15 Mar.

2008 <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17208/17208-h/17208-h.htm>>.

This version of the tale emphasizes the Prince's involvement in the rescue of Sleeping Beauty and continues much further than the popular story, showing the background of the Prince to be that of son of a king and his cannibalistic ogress of a queen.

Peters, Brian Mitchell. "Qu(e)rying Comic Book Culture and Presentations of Sexuality in *Wonder Woman*." CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 5.3 (2003). 7 Apr. 2008 <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol5/iss3/6>>.

Peters writes about the history of *Wonder Woman* and examines gay and lesbian themes in the work. I found that the article's main focus was not usable for my paper; however, Peters saw a powerless Wonder Woman, using the alter ego of Diana Prince, as "a kind of private investigator," which fits into the idea of intertextuality between pulp fiction and superheroes.

Pewewardy, Cornel. "From Subhuman to Superhuman: Images of First Nations Peoples in Comic Books." Simile: Studies in Media & Information Literacy Education 2.2 (2002). MLA Bibliography. EBSCOhost. Stockton College Lib., Pomona, NJ. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://web.ebscohost.com.sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/detail?vid=1&hid=6&sid=6741488e-b1b3-4e32-af22-2a1625419a2b%40sessionmgr7>>.

Pewewardy's article finds most portrayals of First Nations peoples in comics books to be problematic. While I enjoyed reading the article, I was specifically

looking for quotes on the discussion of artist “shorthand” while portraying First Nations characters and did not find anything I felt I could use.

Powell, David. “Prince Charming.” *Society for Theatre Research* 35.2 (1981): 88.

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<<http://www.pulitzer.org/>>.

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Quitely, Frank, and Tom Townsend. “E is for Extinction (Two of Three).” *New X-Men* #115 (Aug. 2001), DC Comics.

“Road to Perdition (2002).” *The Internet Movie Database*. 2008. 28 Apr. 2008

<<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0257044/>>.

Roberts, Garyn G. “Understanding the Sequential Art of Comic Strips and Comic Books and Their Descendants in the Early Years of the New Millennium.”

***Journal of American Culture* 27.2 (2004): 210-217. *MLA Bibliography*.**

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<[http://web.ebscohost.com/sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?](http://web.ebscohost.com/sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?vid=1&hid=6&sid=0c149bf4-b57b-44e5-990c-e309d8bd56f8%40sessionmgr8)

vid=1&hid=6&sid=0c149bf4-b57b-44e5-990c-

e309d8bd56f8%40sessionmgr8>.

Roberts's highly informative article places comic books in their rightful place as a major aspect of pop culture and details its influences on other media such as novels, television, and movies. Roberts's clear, concise writing is highly quotable for a paper that needs to be accessible to those who have little knowledge of comic books outside of their influence in other media.

Sanderson, Peter. Marvel Universe. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.

Sanderson, Peter. X-Men: The Ultimate Guide. Revised ed. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2006.

"Sasquatch (Walter Langowski)." Marvel.com. 9 April 2008

<http://www.marvel.com/universe/Sasquatch_%28Walter_Langkowski%29>.

I used this for my rough draft, as it is the biography on the official Marvel website. Unfortunately, the site appears to now be using a wiki approach to its character pages, so the information from this source is suspect despite its "official" web housing. However, this is the only source I could find on the character that references Tanaraq.

Schlosser, S.E. "Folklore definitions." American Folklore. 14 Apr. 2008. 20 Apr.

2008 <<http://www.americanfolklore.net/what-is-folklore.html>>.

Scieszka, Jon. The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs. New York: Viking Penguin, 1989.

Scieszka's children's book is a retelling of the story of the Three Little Pigs, with the wolf as the misunderstood hero. This story lends credibility to my theory that

the casting of the Big Bad Wolf as hero rather than villain in *Fables* was inevitable.

Scobie, Alex. "Comics and Folk Literature." Journal of Folklore Studies 21.1-2 (1980): 70-81.

Scobie draws parallels between oral traditions, epic, and comic books. I felt that Scobie's discussion, while making a few very good points, felt dated for a paper that dealt primarily with a 21st century work.

Scott, Cord. "The 'Good' Comics: Using Comic Books to Teach History." International Journal of Comic Art 8.1 (2006): 546-561.

Scott gives a chronological look at the different eras and the comic book works that can be examined in the classroom. Scott also lists seven questions that came out of his own experience teaching these titles. Scott's reference to Wertham shows that the stigma of comics as being worthy of study still lingers today.

Shyminsky, Neil. "Mutant Readers, Reading Mutants: Appropriation, Assimilation, and the X-Men." International Journal of Comic Art 8.2 (2006): 387-405.

"Silver Fox." Marvel.com. 10 April 2008 <http://www.marvel.com/universe/Silver_Fox>.

Singer, Marc. "'Black Skins' and White Masks: Comic Books and the Secret of Race." African American Review 36.1 (2002): 107-19. MLA Bibliography. EBSCOhost. Stockton College Lib., Pomona, NJ. 8 Apr. 2008 <<http://web.ebscohost.com/sunny.stockton.edu:2048/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=4&sid=02d63421-08c7-4831-b17c-cb9b1c6db786%40SRCSM2>>.

Singer discusses the stereotyping and marginalization of characters of color in comic books. His general overview of the way that art is used to portray stereotypes was useful in understanding and explaining how comic book artists use a type of “shorthand” to relay aspects of character, such as race, immediately to their audience.

“Sleeping Beauty.” Disney Princess – The Official Website. 5 April 2008

<http://disney.go.com/princess/html/main_iframe.html>.

I searched through this page to find a name for the Prince. None was given.

“Snow White.” Disney Princess – The Official Website. 5 April 2008

<http://disney.go.com/princess/html/main_iframe.html>.

I searched through this page to find a name for the Prince. None was given.

Tatar, Maria. “Sex and Violence: The Hard Core of Fairy Tales.” The Classic Fairy Tales. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 364-373.

Tatar analyzes the changes from the Perrault versions of the stories to the Grimms’, asserting that while the violence often stays intact, the sexual nature of the relationships are toned down, especially as it pertained to incestuous relationships. This analysis helps to draw a line from one set of stories to another, and to highlight the author’s involvement in the retelling of these folk tales.

Trushell, John M. “American Dreams of Mutants: The X-Men—“Pulp” Fiction, Science Fiction, and Superheroes.” Journal of Popular Culture 38.1 (2004): 149-168.

Willingham, Bill, et al. Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall. New York: DC Comics, 2006.

- . **Fables: Animal Farm**. New York: DC Comics, 2003.
- . **Fables: Arabian Nights (and Days)**. New York: DC Comics, 2006.
- . **Fables: Homelands**. New York: DC Comics, 2005.
- . **Fables: Legends in Exile**. New York: DC Comics, 2002.
- . **Fables: March of the Wooden Soldiers**. New York: DC Comics, 2004.
- . **Fables: The Mean Seasons**. New York: DC Comics, 2005.
- . **Fables: Sons of Empire**. New York: DC Comics, 2007.
- . **Fables: Storybook Love**. New York: DC Comics, 2004.
- . **Fables: Wolves**. New York: DC Comics, 2006.
- . **Jack of Fables: Jack of Hearts**. New York: DC Comics, 2007.
- . **Jack of Fables: The (Nearly) Great Escape**. New York: DC Comics, 2007.

Witek, Joseph. "Imagetext, or, Why Art Spiegelman Doesn't Draw Comics."

ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies. 1.1 (2004). Dept of English, University of Florida. 19 Apr 2008 <http://www.english.ufl.edu/imagetext/archives/v1_1/witek/index.shtml>.

Witek looks at underground comics while tackling the issue of comics as "art."

This proved to be an invaluable source for my introduction.

"Wolverine (James Howlett)." Marvel.com. 9 April 2008 <http://www.marvel.com/universe/Wolverine_%28James_Howlett%29>.

I used this for my rough draft, as it is the biography on the official Marvel website. Unfortunately, the site appears to now be using a wiki approach to its character pages, so the information from this source is suspect despite its "official" web housing.

Professor Stephen Hawking, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, is one of the most formidable intellects ever to theorise on the origins of the universe. The first step in an academic carrier is usually lecturer, then senior lecturer, then reader, then eventually perhaps professor. Note that in the US, a professor is a full-time teacher at university. A teacher at secondary school or high school or junior college is never a professor.