

Comics and webcomics: super-heroes, over-heroes and poser-heroes

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Comics and webcomics: super-heroes, over-heroes and poser-heroes. *This article aims to analyse the superhero subgenre in comic books and webcomics. First, the study focuses on the characteristics of hero, superhero and antihero categories. Then we briefly describe some contemporary aspect of the history of the stories in superhero comics to propose the inclusion of two new sub-categories: the over-hero and the poser-hero. The theoretical foundation is based on authors such as: Moya (1977; 1994; 2003), Eco (1993), Mix (1993), Beirce (1993), Bloom (2002; 2003), McLaughlin (2005), Knowles (2008), Irwin (2009), Mazur; Danner (2014), among others. The literature specializing in comic books and philosophical perspectives functions as analytical and theoretical support for the interpretation of themes taken from the superhero universe. With the advent of computer graphics and the internet, comic books have conquered new formats, new technologies and new audiences from a democratized distribution. In addition, two factors are important to understand the relevance of webcomics to the history of comics. First, as comics in print are scanned, the comics/webcomics distinction is not exclusive. In this text, we discuss about heroes and superheroes that can be found and read in both printed and digital formats. Second, webcomics have enabled many artists to achieve more visibility for their work through social media. From this perspective, we argue that the notion of webcomics evolve from the notion of comics. In the field of studies and research on sequential art, pop culture and other media the superhero subgenre is widespread. However, in the context of philosophical theorization, for a long time, the productions were limited to the perspective of superheroes from impassable conceptual and methodological approaches. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, the analyses of comic books and, particularly, about the superhero subgenre suffered from the same kind of modeling approach that in many ways led to the same result. This is because, whether critical reading is favorable or unfavorable to superheroism, none of the cited theoretical-methodological contributions gave theoretical primacy to the sequential art, being merely relegated to the condition of object of study. Our proposal here implies subverting this scenario from the proposition of reading comics and webcomics as philosophy and as poetic theory. From this perspective, we will widely use arguments, contexts, and influences from comic book characters and sagas to review, deflect, and redirect some elements of the comic itself. In other words, we will draw our arguments indistinctly from philosophy or literature and comics and webcomics, without establishing any sort of hierarchy between them, in order to propose that the genre of superheroes itself evolved, and, besides heroes, superheroes and antiheroes, we now also have over-heroes and poser-heroes.*

Keywords: Comics, Webcomics, Pop Culture, Superheroes, Pop Philosophy.

1. Introduction

With the advent of computer graphics and the internet, comic books have conquered new formats, new technologies and new audiences from a democratized distribution. For example, the first printed publications of the Marvel Comics and DC Comics publishers made from computer graphics technology, respectively, the graphic novels *The Iron Man: Crash*, by Mike Saenz (1988) and *Batman: Digital Justice*, by Pepe Moreno (1990), are works that can

currently be found in the webcomics format. If comics published by commercial publishers are divided by types and genres, webcomics do not make these distinctions and it is possible to find on the web all types of publications of sequential art (MAZZUR; DANNER, 2014). In addition, two factors are important to understand the relevance of webcomics to the history of comics. First, as comics in print are scanned, the comics/webcomics distinction is not exclusive. For example, in this text, we discuss about heroes and superheroes that can be found and read in both printed and digital formats. Second, webcomics have enabled many artists to achieve more visibility for their work through social media as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, among others. From this perspective, we argue that the notion of webcomics evolve from the notion of comics.

In the field of studies and research on sequential art, pop culture and other media (movies, series, animations, etc.) the superhero subgenre is widespread (MIX, 1997; KNOWLES, 2008; IRWIN, 2009). However, in the context of philosophical theorization, for a long time, the productions were limited to the perspective of superheroes from impassable conceptual and methodological approaches. In general terms, the analysis of any imagetic-textual phenomenon was invariably drawn from theoretical foundations derived from orthodox and heterodox Marxism (Marx, Frankfurt School, Althusser), Semiotics (Peirce, Eco) and Semiology (Saussure, Barthes, Propp). On a smaller scale, arguments were also used from authors from other theoretical traditions such as Psychoanalysis (Freud, Jung), Phenomenology (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty), Existentialism (Sartre), and, also, conceptual resources developed from isolated theorists such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bachelard and Deleuze. From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, the analyses of comic books and, particularly, about the superhero subgenre suffered from the same kind of modeling approach that in many ways led to the same result. (Neotti, 1971; Moya, 1977; Luyten, 1987; Eco, 1993; Cirne, 2000). This is because, whether critical reading is favorable or unfavorable to superheroism, none of the cited theoretical-methodological contributions gave theoretical primacy to the sequential art, being merely relegated to the condition of object of study.

Our proposal here implies subverting this scenario from the proposition of reading comics and webcomics as philosophy and as poetic theory. From this perspective, we will widely use arguments, contexts, and influences from comic book characters and sagas to review, deflect, and redirect some elements of the comic itself. (Bloom 2002; Bloom 2003; McLaughlin 2005; Silva 2008). In other words, we will draw our arguments indistinctly from philosophy or literature and comics and webcomics, without establishing any sort of hierarchy between them, in order to propose that the genre of superheroes itself evolved, and, besides heroes, superheroes and antiheroes, we now also have *over-heroes* and *poser-heroes*.

2. Heroes, Superheroes e Antiheroes

Between the 1920s and 1930s there was a heroic pattern, composed of three types of characters in their respective fields: “the romantic wild hero (Tarzan), the modern urban detective (Dick Tracy) and the space hero extracted from sci-fi (Buck Rogers)” (Feijó 1984, p.88). While Tarzan and Buck Rogers were created in 1929, Dick Tracy debuted in 1931. The continuity of this structure can be observed, respectively, in the later creations of *The Phantom* (1936) and *Jungle Jim* (1934); *The Shadow* (1931), *Mandrake* (1934) and *Secret Agent X-9* (1934); and *Brick Bradford* (1933) and *Flash Gordon* (1934), among others (Feijó, 1984; Luyten, 1985).

Subsequently, this triadic structure was definitely changed with the insertion of a new category: the *superheroes*. The advent of an archetypal superpowered hero, *Superman* (1938), drastically altered the previous scenario (Moya, 1994). From there, the issue was no longer about the territory that the heroic *persona* was supposed to occupy, but about the powers they held. Then, in subsequent decades, there was a creative profusion of characters with the most impressive and sometimes ridiculous superpowers (in this regard, see, for example, some candidates rejected by the DC’s Legion of Superheroes!).

Since the list of superpowers is as ample as human creativity, it would be counterproductive to specify the superheroic creations that emerged from the 1930s until contemporary times. However, it should be mentioned that there was

an interesting expansion in the list of heroic characters, especially in North American publishers. I will briefly summarize subsequent periods.

In the 1940s, the urban theme predominated with detectives, bandits, mobsters; *The Spirit* (1940) and its *femmes fatales*, as well as adventurers like *Terry and the Pirates*, *Steve Canyon* and *Prince Valiant*, among others (Eco, 1993).

At the same time, the superhero comics also thrived and during this period, emblematic characters emerged such as Namor (1939), Human Torch (1939), Flash (1940), Captain Marvel / Shazam (1940), Captain America (1941), Green Lantern (1940), Wonder Woman, Aquaman. And finally, Plastic Man (1941), who although is an extremely powerful superhero, his anachronistic parodies and humor qualify him as our forerunner of *over-heroes* and *poser-heroes*.

In the interstice between 1950 and 1961, the creative freedom of artistic and critical production of comic books (and other forms of artistic, literary and media expression) was severely curtailed by censorship of the infamous Comics Code Authority, a kind of moralistic code of conduct for comic book publications (Moya, 2003, p.157).

The 1950s, considered to be the Silver Age (DC Comics), was also a very conservative period in the superhero universe, as the enemies were generally external and their powers, invariably, came of atomic, nuclear or alien origin.

Meanwhile, in Europe, unaware of superheroism, advanced firmly the diverse creations of Bonelli and Gallepini (*Tex*, 1948); Bonelli and Ferri (*Zagor*, 1961); Forest (*Barbarella*, 1962); Crepax (*Valentina*, 1965); and Hugo Pratt (*Corto Maltese*, 1970); Berardi and Milazzo (*Ken Parker*, 1974); Serpieri (*Druuna*, 1987); Jean Giroud / Moebius (*Blueberry*, 1965; *Airtight Garage*, 1976-1980; and *Incal*, 1981-1988); Enki Bilal (*The Nikopol Trilogy*, 1980-1992). The list is long and complex to classify, just mention, for example, the productions of various themes in the magazines *Metal Hurlant* (1975) in France and also in *2000 AD* (1977) in Great Britain (Mazur; Danner, 2014, p.92-180).

From this perspective, it is interesting to note that Corto Maltese and Ken Parker may be regarded as a separate subcategory, the *reluctant heroes*, for they do not seek deeds and glory, but are inadvertently impelled to the heroic action,

and, in this condition, their scruples do not allow them to shirk from their moral duties. Regarding this last topic, articulated with the superhero subgenre, there is a vast specialized literature that explores the theme of heroic and superheroic ethics. (Irving, 2009).

Back in the universe of superheroes, in the 1960s and 70s the main trend was driven by Marvel Comics, who redefined the typology of characters by emphasizing their human characteristics, particularly their distinctive psychological traits, personal conflicts and problems, moral dilemmas, economic hardship, positioning on social issues, etc. The main examples of characters of this stripe are the 1961's *Fantastic Four* (it is a family and every family is problematic); *Thor*, from 1962 (yes, himself; Odin, his almighty father had to send him to Earth, punishing him so he would stop being arrogant and learn to be people like us...); 1962's *Spider-Man* (nerd teenager with difficulties at school and work finds out that with great powers come great responsibilities); the *X-men*, from 1963 (most of these characters suffer from problems of psychic and somatic nature, as they are mutants, namely, they are individuals who, unlike other human beings, have undergone a genetic mutation and, therefore, have evidenced some kind of power that generally alters their mental and physical characteristics; even those mutants (*homo superior*) who are endowed with powers that do not drastically alter body traits suffer from some kind of racial and social prejudice, since non-mutant humans (*homo sapiens*) see them as a threat, i.e., as the next step of humanity's evolutionary ladder; there are also ideological conflicts between political leaders, personified by Professor X and Magneto; it is important to note here that most of the problems cited become more severe since 1975, with the reformulation of the original team); 1964's *Daredevil* (problems with destructive love relationships and legal nature); *Silver Surfer*, from 1966 (existential problems); *Iron Man*, from 1962 (heart problems and ethyl dependence); *Hulk*, also from 1962 (chromatic, nervous, self-control problems and social isolation); e the *Inhumans*, from 1965 (as its name implies, the scale of their problem is much broader than the mutants'...).

From DC Comics, we can highlight the 1963's *Doom Patrol* (with all staff members suffering severe psychic or physical sequelae from some fatality or

personal drama); *OMAC*, acronym of One-Man Army Corps, created in 1974 and whose main-plot premise involves secret societies with political purposes and conspiracy theories about global surveillance and monitoring systems (KNOWLES, 2008). Here the big problem is not about individuals themselves, but the wider danger posed by fraternities of power (political, economic, etc.) that trigger dystopias through mechanisms of control and massification of people, besides an increasingly constant and ubiquitous bureaucratization in societies; *Shade, The Changing Man*, from 1977, describes the story of a fugitive alien from the planet Meta who, after being wronged and imprisoned in a place that has the suggestive name of Area of Madness, manages to escape and comes to Earth, armed with a special suit that gives him the power to design a force field, fly and project distorted images of himself, i.e. hallucinations related to his own self-perception (i.e., images can be scary, crazy, bizarre, disturbing etc.).

The aforementioned renewal of problems/staff with the *New X-Men* (1975) was partly brought about by a shrinking demand for superhero comics. This change of theme can also be seen in the interesting politicized and realistic phase led by a liberal, middle-class Green Lantern and a partnership with an ex-rich and anarchist Green Arrow who travel the interior of the United States between 1969 and 1972, confronting the reality of the nation. At the same time, important characters emerged (some with and others without powers) and typologically can be defined as precursors of antiheroism, such as Conan the Barbarian (1970); Punisher (1971); Man-Thing (1971); Red Sonja (1973) and Wolverine (1974).

This genesis of antiheroism can be characterized by the explicit profusion of themes permeated by violence, supernaturality, eroticism, drugs, eschatology, madness, paraphilias, amorality, and bizarreness in relation to both the heroic and superheroic patterns.

During the dark 1980s, the aegis of antiheroism takes over with more bitter, violent or frightening readings of classic characters or the inclusion of new characters with such characteristics. Examples are *Batman, The Dark Knight Returns* and *The Killing Joke*. [WARNING: SPOILERS]. In the first work, an aging Batman gives a Homeric beating to Superman and in the second one, he kills the Joker and goes crazy (or goes crazy and murders the crazy murderous

clown, there is controversy about the sequence of the fact that occurred...). Wolverine, on the other hand, becomes more bloodthirsty and accepts his murderous verve. Elektra, in contrast, greatly undermines the stereotype of “damsel” (secondary character, fragile, defenseless, vulnerable and whose role was to be captured by the villains and saved by the heroes) in the comics (she is not a victim, she victimizes; she does not weep, she beats the strong men and makes them cry; she faces heroes and villains; and has no shame about her sexuality). Some characters mislead because they lack the distinctive violent characteristics mentioned above, but on the other hand, are characteristically amoral, such as the Booster Gold (1986), a former footballer of the future who steals several items (empowering him) from the museum in which he worked and goes back to the past to raise fame and fortune (he forges heroic actions and even anticipates *Superman*). He also uses his knowledge to get rich (he wins the lottery several times because he already knew the winning number sequence) and then seduces wealthy old women in the expectation of marrying them and inheriting their fortunes.

In this decade, as we have shown above, there is a profusion of antiheroes (finite, violent, frightening, embittered, amoral, and sexually liberal). Examples are: *Watchmen* (1988), *V for Vendetta* (1982), *Black Orchid* (1989), *Swamp Thing* (1971), *Judge Dredd* (1977), *Wolverine* (1974), *Elektra: Assassin* (1981), *Dreadstar* (1982), *Captain Marvel* (in Jim Starlin's 1982 version of the character originally created in 1967), *Adam Warlock* (also Starlin's 1972 version of the character created in 1967), *Punisher* (created in 1971, but exploded in the subsequent decade), *Alien Legion* (1987), *Marshall Law* (1987), *Spawn* (1992); *Lobo* (1983); *Daredevil* (1986) (which, particularly in the saga *Born Again* gives a realistic tone to the superhero subgenre by highlighting how a villain manages to wipe out a superhero through the use of merely human artifacts without any superpower such as influence, economic power, coercion, drugs, and the use of indirect attacks that target family, friends, career, and the secret identity of the opposing hero).

3. *Over-heroes and Poser-heroes*

Overall, the 1990s continued to explore themes from the previous decade, although it was not a very promising period for female characters (heroic or not), due to the widespread tendency to increasingly summarize the uniforms of beauties whose fights were represented by blows and falls with sensual poses (at the beginning of its activities, Image publisher became known for this approach with characters such as *Glory*, *Witchblade*, *Lady Death*). Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, the superhero subgenre was impacted by the protagonism of antiheroes in productions such as *The Authority* and *Planetary*, counterpoints to *Tom Strong* by Alan Moore and *Astro City* by Kurt Busiek, as both recover to some extent the romanticism and nostalgia of the classic superhero and adventure comics. This change of *status* to the antihero, once secondary and now prioritized in the *ultimate*-kind publications, has contributed significantly to the advent of two new categories in the superhero subgenre: the *over-hero* and the *poser-hero*.

The term *over-hero* was borrowed from the 1998 character named *Overman* by Laerte. The justification for this designation is that in this comic (and currently webcomic) we find all the comics clichés regarding superheroes that the cultural industry of the sequential art tries to hide. The parody of the superhero subgenre is so hyperbolic that *Overman* himself is so superheroic that he does not even know his own secret identity. The consequences of *Overman's* reading are irreversible, because after reading it, it is not possible to return unscathed to the comfort zone of superhero adventures. (Just to highlight one of the merits of this production created by the Brazilian cartoonist, the whole original premise of the next comic book described below was just one of the many themes covered in *Overman*).

Capes (from Image Comics) explores the parodic superheroic need regarding the benefits of a steady job, the dangers of being attacked outside office hours by uninformed supervillains (besides the beating, no overtime); After all, they cannot risk being injured or dying without a good medical insurance. This parody makes us question the subtle and implicit disparity between benefits (housing, salary, etc.) and the main (major and minor) comics teams: Justice League, Avengers, X-Men, X-Force, X-Factor, Sentinels of Magic, Defenders, Birds of Prey, The Champions, Teen Titans, New Titans, Young Justice,

Guardians of the Galaxy, Renegades, New Mutants, Legion of Superheroes, Infinite Inc., Justice Society of America, Doom Patrol, Freedom Fighters, Guarding the Globe, WildC.A.T.s, StormWatch, Alpha Flight, Inhumans, Illuminati, Seven Soldiers of Victory, Heroes for Hire, Green Lantern Corps, Infinity Watch, Shadowpact, Marvel Family, Fantastic Four. Some of these teams went extinct (or should we say, went bankrupt), others should not even exist because they involved superheroic child labor, such as the Power Pack. The other adolescent teams could, more or less, be framed in the labor law that deals with apprentice work under the tutelage of a responsible person. This theme of remuneration should not be underestimated, as even supervillains must agree on the benefits to agree to take on the risks of (pseudo) superhero actions, such as the *Suicide Squad* and the *Thunderbolts*.

Broadly speaking, the *over* prefix denotes an overvaluation; something that is too much; excessive; exaggerated. Here, *over* also denotes a degree of contempt for the superhero figure, especially for their moral values and way of life. The over-hero despises every kind of hero/superhero, whether their kind are patriotic (country-flag hero), ethnic (racial minority representative) or gender identity (homosexual, lesbian, transgender, etc.), mystic/religious, scientific, alien, mutant, meta, vigilant, etc. No matter the origin of the superpowers or the cause they defend, if one is superheroic, they will be hated, scorned or ridiculed, respectively, in the form of *gladius* (confrontation), *obsolescence* (overcoming) or *parody* (simulation). Through *gladius*, over-heroes often confront, maim, and literally kill superheroes. Through *obsolescence*, over-heroes transcend the moral and attitudinal boundaries set by superheroes (now seen as outdated, anachronistic, and obsolete) and obliterate problems that would otherwise tend to repeat themselves indefinitely. Through *parody*, over-heroes may discredit the concept of superheroism, causing the very continuity of superheroic existence to be a mockery, ridiculed as an offensive joke.

This triadic distinction is not absolute or mutually exclusive, for there are cases where over-heroes have only one or two characteristics or, simultaneously, confront, overcome, and simulate superheroism. In contemporary times, we can highlight several over-heroes, some well-known and others relatively anonymous,

either because they have not been published in Brazil or because they are new characters or second or third line of the major US publishers. Several examples are: *Kingdom Come*, 1996, by Mark Waid and Alex Ross (gladius and obsolescence); *Hitman*, from 1993 (obsolescence and parody); *Sixpack*, from 1997 (parody), *The Boys*, from 2006 to 2012 (gladius, obsolescence and parody) and also *The Pro*, from 2002 (obsolescence and parody), all conceived by Garth Ennis who contributed a great deal to spread this perspective of over-heroism. *Foolkiller*, from 2008, by Gregg Hurwitz (obsolescence); *Supreme Power*, between 2003 and 2005, by J. Michael Straczynski (obsolescence); *Marvel Zombies*, between 2005 and 2006, by Robert Kirkman (parody); *Freshmen*, from 2007, by Hugh Sterbakov, published by TopCow/Image Comics (parody); *The Ultimates*, The Avengers in the *Ultimate Marvel* universe, from 2002 (obsolescence), *Old Man Logan*, from 2008 (obsolescence), and *Kick-Ass*, from 2008 (parody), all by Mark Millar. *The Sentry*, the schizophrenic *Superman* version from 2005 until the final and deadlier phase of the *Dark Avengers*, by Brian Michael Bendis.

In general, *poser* designates someone who simulates, pretends, disguises to be something that they are authentically not, but merely adopts clothing, gestures, and vocabularies of a group or subculture (artistic, musical, literary, ideological, etc.), but not their own values. In short, the *poser* is a copycat, a deceiver whose admiration for their idol tends to fade as the fame, popularity, or fad around them becomes more rarefied. It is quite common to identify these walking contradictions in intellectual web figures (ignorant people whose critical comments depend on quick queries on internet search engines, but who get stuck on expressing themselves without this technological support); the communist oligarch; the reactionary liberal, the dark-afraid Goth, the non-practicing religious, the *mall* punk, the anarchist funded by the family, by private companies or the state, the *Thank-God* atheist, the hater with love (the list is extensive). In comics and webcomics, most (but not all) of the *poser-heroes* are frustrated children, teens, or young people because their overpowering family members have extinguished the risky situations in which their gifts could be used.

The Justice Society (DC) is the superhero team that best guides and educates young heroes and heroines on the proper use of their powers, including their concern for merging experienced heroes with newcomers to the team. Another group that also prepares the new members is the Fantastic Four, but this is practically a must because otherwise it would be family neglect. The danger of the lack of a formative process and proper training creates unprecedented situations such as the tragedy of the New Warriors that was the catalyst for the plot that spawned the *Civil War* (Marvel).

Between *over-heroism* and *poser-heroism*, the clash between representatives of the old and the new way of life relatively figures most strongly in the latter subcategory. This recurring theme of the generation gap can be described in an exemplary and provocative way: “Adolescence is the intermediate period of human life, between the idiocy of childhood and the folly of youth, both far from the sins of maturity and the three far from the remorse of old age” (Bierce, 1993, p.16). Old age, in turn, is defined as a “stage of worthlessness that is not incompatible with general inefficiency. The old age is discredited for the lapse of time and considered offensive to popular taste” (Bierce, 1993, p.87). Interestingly, many characters, due to their longevity in comics, were able to make the transition between the various stages and their characteristic perspectives, which in turn culminated in breakthroughs and alliances as ephemeral as their ages and values upheld at the time.

Along the same lines, virtues are considered “certain abstentions” that young *poser-heroes* are unwilling to deprive themselves of (Beirce 1993, p.133). With this train of thought, they see no sense in not using their powers for personal gain. In *The Just's* episode of the *Multiversity* saga, the descendants of some major DC superheroes and supervillains are portrayed as futile, narcissistic and irresponsible teen celebrities. In a reality where villainy and criminality were virtually extinct (by superpowered dads and moms), the only remaining frustration was that they had no just or plausible reason to use their powers. So, without supervillains to fight or natural disasters to stop, they only wear superhero suits, but they act as such because all their energy is spent on parties, drugs, sex, selfies, posts, *hipsterism* and futility.

In a not-so-explicit approach, in a work about *over-heroism*, the character Ashley (Hawkeye's daughter and whose mother is one of Spider-Man's daughters) from the saga *Old Man Logan* impersonates a *poser-heroine* who led a group of *poser-heroes* (Punisher and Daredevil) in a failed insurrection against the Kingpin, a dystopia where supervillainy triumphed over superheroism. What is evident is that Ashley's action, properly dressed in a Spider-Woman spandex uniform, is nowhere near as supposedly heroic because her motives were restricted to merely usurp the power of those she considers villains (even if it meant killing some heroes and several innocents in the process).

This theme of intergenerational conflict is widely explored in comics and webcomics, although it often goes unnoticed in the context of the great sagas. Retrospectively, at some point, the New Titans diverged and confronted the Justice League; The New Mutants confronted the *X-Men* and later even broke up with the main team, starting a myriad of dissent. The Young Avengers also fight the Avengers. In general, in comic book narratives, conflicts are fleeting, and even many rebellious teenage superheroes as they mature are promoted to the top teams. Some recent off-axis Marvel/DC sagas involve conflicts permeated by disparities between ages and worldviews. *Halcyon*, from 2010, by Marc Guggenheim and Tara Butters, sets up one of the best inspired alternate versions of the Justice League and Batman, which confront each other to the last consequences when Utopia arrives through the cunning of villainy. In Mark Millar's 2013 *Jupiter's Legacy*, an interesting panorama is drawn by showing the following counterpoint: *posers* are also extremely dangerous and lethal, but not every infant or young person is *poser*, since with a good education and a little personal tragedy they can become superheroes. In 2015's *Danger Club* by Eric Jones and Landry Q. Walker, the plot has as its prerogative an idea that can be slightly described as an invitation to imagine something like the New Titans being taken seriously in the *ultimate* version, defending alone the planet Earth.

4. *Final considerations*

The revisionist analytical methodological reading applied in the present study revealed that in recent decades there has been a categorical evolution within

the superhero genre in comic books. Although such evolution is quite noticeable, as it has led to considerable changes in character typology and script plot, the specialized literature (theoretical, artistic and media) still persists in the use of classical triadic categorization (hero/superhero/antihero) which, as we have argued, is no longer sufficient to contemplate today's new plots and contexts of superhero comics and webcomics.

From this perspective, we argue that the subcategories of *over-heroes* and *poser-heroes* evolve from the category of antiheroism, but they can no longer be conceptually embraced by it because they refer to new situations, themes, and subjectivities not contemplated in anti-heroism. The same way that the antihero category itself arose to describe a new context that could not be explained or defined by the hitherto prevailing categories of hero and superhero, or by the traditional dualisms between heroes/villains and superheroes/supervillains. Thus, while *over-heroes* simply despise superheroes and therefore confront, overrule and ridicule them; *poser-heroes*, in turn, have a more complex and ambivalent relationship of admiration and aversion, whose spectrum of action travels between futility and lethality.

Given the above, from elements extracted from the recent history of comics and webcomics, we support the proposition of two new subcategories, *over-heroes* and *poser-heroes*, as necessary to describe an existing phenomenon that, however, remains unknown or mistaken called anti-heroism.

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