

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: “A Puppet Who Can See the Strings”: Dr. Manhattan as Metatextual Comics Reader in *Watchmen*

STUDENT: Matthew Schmalzer

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Sciences and Humanities

DATE: May 2017

PAGES: 24

Using Scott McCloud’s ideas regarding the language of comics in *Understanding Comics* and Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the “chronotope,” this paper investigates how the character Dr. Manhattan from Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’ 1986 graphic novel *Watchmen* experiences time, and how his super-human perceptions of time mirror the privileged position of the comics reader. By connecting Dr. Manhattan to the reader of the comic, a metatextual commentary on the role of the reader and author in the comic form is presented. Dr. Manhattan proves to be a dynamic reader, who exhibits many shortcomings as a reader, but evolves into a much more competent interpreter. Through this change Dr. Manhattan shows how the reader collaborates with the author in an act of mutual creation that is unique to comics because of their sequential narratives.