

**A Modern Asmodeus?
Clark Kent, Journalistic Fantasies
of Omniscience and the Panoptic Gaze**

**by
Dr Hazel Mackenzie
Department of English and Digital Media
University of Buckingham
hazel.mackenzie@buckingham.ac.uk**

“In a strong sense, Superman *is* the mighty newspaper.”ⁱ It is interesting, and perhaps a little odd, that Clark Kent is possibly the twentieth century’s most famous fictional representation of a journalist (narrowly beaten by his own girlfriend Lois Lane), and yet so little attention has been paid to this aspect of his persona. Clark Kent is the journalist as superhero. Moreover, he is the first and most famous of superheroes. What does this say about the position of journalists in American, and Western, culture? This question has rarely been answered. How does this change through the different iterations of the character over the course of the twentieth and now the twenty-first century? Does it change? What does our continuing fascination with the character suggest? Clark Kent is not only a journalist and a superhero, he is a superhero with x-ray vision and super-hearing, or, alternatively he is a journalist who can see through walls and overhear private conversations half a city away, who is also a superhero.

Following Paul K. Saint-Amour’s work on the *flâneur*,ⁱⁱ I want to suggest a “shadow lineage” for Metropolis’ premier reporter, a recurrent figure in Western culture, that was first glimpsed in the non-canonical Book of Tobit, and then again in various religious works from the Testament of Solomon to *Paradise Lost*, and who grew to popularity in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain and America after the translation of Alain René Le Sage’s 1707 *Le*

*Diable Boîteux as Asmodeus or The Devil with Two Sticks.*ⁱⁱⁱ Asmodeus, with his ability to lift the roofs from atop houses and reveal the hidden life of the city, is the embodiment of nineteenth-century British and American fantasies of journalistic omniscience, and Clark Kent, I would argue, is the twentieth-century update of the Asmodean fantasy of omniscience. He is an update, however, with a crucial difference. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the character of Asmodeus evolved from a misshapen old cripple to a handsome young man, from a creature who gifted knowledge to his companions in various self-interested exchanges to a being that exposed corruption and vice for the enlightenment of his companion and his readers. However, he never entirely cast off the mantle of the devil. Anxiety always accompanies desire in eighteenth and nineteenth century invocations. It is only in the twentieth century that we see such powers rendered angelic in the form of Clark Kent—Clark Kent, a character that puts Rupert Murdoch’s News International to shame in terms of unauthorized surveillance, and yet at the same time is depicted as a God-like ideal. This is a significant transformation of this fantasy of journalistic omniscience.

As critics such as Saint-Amour and Jonathan Arac have indicated, the Asmodean myth and its embodiment of the desire for knowledge beyond the partial limited view of the individual journalist, the wish for transparency and knowability it encompasses, are in keeping with the development of post-industrial urban society.^{iv} Invoked by a variety of writers from Charles Sedley, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Charles Dickens and John Hollingshead to Harrison G. Buchanan and George Thompson, Asmodeus’s ability to fly and to render houses transparent counterbalanced the growing obscurity of burgeoning metropolises such as London and New York. For Saint-Amour and Arac, the Asmodean myth is part of the move towards Foucault’s disciplinary society, in which surveillance is regulatory and productive of power. Asmodeus’s

powers of surveillance, however, are demonic, unlike Clark Kent's. Is Clark Kent then the poster child of a disciplinary society? Does his idealisation suggest the twentieth century's acceptance of the panoptical gaze as an intrinsic and therefore invisible fact of life? Or on further study do we see the same overlap between desire and anxiety as exhibited in earlier depictions of a similar fantasy? Answers to such questions are rendered particularly difficult by the nature of the subject: a character who has had countless manifestations in a multitude of different media over the course of near a century authored by numerous individuals and collaborative teams, from comic books to cartoon strips, a radio series, three live-action television series, an animated series, and at least six films as well as songs, advertisements, action figures, lunchboxes, t-shirts and a variety of other merchandise. Throughout these various iterations, however, some essential features do for the most part remain the same, and other features are developed with a relative degree of consistency. Thus, I would argue that while in the early twentieth century Clark Kent's idealisation of the disciplinary gaze is normalized to the point of invisibility, later incarnations manifest a creeping unease in keeping with twenty-first century anxieties regarding privacy and the practice of journalism in the digital age.

Clark Kent in Critical Context

Given the proliferation of the Superman myth in popular culture, there has been surprisingly little critical analysis of Clark Kent or his alter ego within cultural or media studies. Much of the discussions that are available transgress the lines between academia and fandom. There are some notable exceptions, however. For example, Gary Engle's influential article "What Makes Superman So Darned American?" Engle argues "Superman raises the American immigrant experience to the level of religious myth." Superman for Engle is "an optimistic

myth of assimilation,” in which the Clark Kent persona is as significant, if not more significant, as that of “Superman.” After all, while “Superman's powers make the hero capable of saving humanity; Kent's total immersion in the American heartland makes him want to do it.”^v Identity, cultural or racial, is the focus of most critical discussion of the mythology. Danny Fingeroth argues for the significance of Superman creators Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel's Jewish heritage in the creation of the superhero myth.^{vi} For Brad Ricca, “Superman is inextricably a narrative about self,” specifically the masculine self. Timid and physically weak, Siegel and Shuster made Superman the masculine ideal they secretly wished they were: strong, handsome and confident, a man of action who women fell in love with.^{vii} In “The Myth of Superman” Umberto Eco examines the immobility of a figure capable of “produc[ing] work and wealth in astronomic dimensions in a few seconds,” who “could exercise good on a cosmic level,” who could revolutionize the world, but who rather fights to uphold the status quo. “In other words, the only visible form that evil assumes is an attempt on private property.”^{viii} Frederic Wertham, one of Superman's most notorious critics, also points fingers at the Man of Steel's morality:

The Superman type of comic books tends to force and superforce. Dr. Paul A. Witty, professor of education at Northwestern University, has well described these comics when he said that they “present our world in a kind of Fascist setting of violence and hate and destruction [...]” Actually, Superman (with the big S on his uniform—we should, I suppose, be thankful that is not an S.S.) needs an endless stream of ever new submen, criminals and “foreign-looking” people not only to justify his existence but even to make it possible. It is this feature that engenders in children either one or

the other of two attitudes: either they fantasize themselves as supermen, with attendant prejudices against the submen, or it makes them submissive and receptive to the blandishments of strong men who will solve their social problems for them—by force.^{ix}

For Wertham, Superman's emphasis on force to solve problems and his *übermensch*-style depiction was worryingly authoritarian and carried not-so-subtle messages about race and class. Wertham was a psychiatrist, much of whose research methodology was later questioned, but a number of critics have positioned Superman similarly on the side of authority.^x

Consumers of comic-book culture might view themselves as essentially "oppositional" and other,^{xi} but critics examining the Superman mythology are often far from uncovering an oppositional figure. Rather, William Moulton Marston in 1944 argued that superhero comics were beneficial to children because "[t]he wish to be super-strong is a healthy wish, a vital, compelling, power-producing desire," Engle writes of Clark Kent as "the consummate figure of total cultural assimilation" and Alex Boney sees Superman and his superhero cohorts as "answer[ing] modernist apprehensions with action, assertiveness, positivity and clarity."^{xii} Nonetheless, for others, Superman is a more equivocal figure. Dennis O'Neil argues that attitudes to the police and the establishment in superhero narratives are indicative of social discontent, while Clare Pitkethly holds that the split personality of the superhero is paramount and that the inherently dualistic nature of Superman and other superheroes renders them fundamentally "other." For Pitkethly, "the superhero is a figure of contradiction," not easily resolved.^{xiii} Whether as a figure of continuity and assimilation or as a potentially transgressive outsider, however, few have looked at the Superman myth and

stories in the light of journalism. Clark Kent's role as a journalist is referenced simply as a plot convenience, allowing Superman to be close to the action, or in terms of the autobiographical leanings of Siegel and Shuster, who both worked for their high-school newspaper, the *Glenville Torch*. Yet it seems to me that this is an essential element of his character and its depiction is in keeping with a long tradition of literary explorations of the journalist and the role of journalism in society.

Fantasies of Journalistic Omniscience

The fantasy of omniscience has been a significant constituent of journalistic discourse and the portrayal of journalism, both in journalistic and non-journalistic texts, since the beginning of the eighteenth century. As Scott Paul Gordon writes regarding Addison and Steele's most famous journalistic persona, it is easy enough to see "Mr. Spectator as a 'father' of surveillance technologies."^{xiv} Or in the words of Greg Polly, "When he is eavesdropping in a coffeehouse, it is difficult not to feel that Mr. Spectator is something of a spy."^{xv} Charles Dickens's journalistic ideal was represented by "a certain Shadow, which may go into any place, by sunlight, moonlight, starlight, firelight, candlelight, and be in all homes, and all nooks and corners, and be supposed to be cognisant of everything, and go everywhere."^{xvi} What attracts Tom Wolfe to the New Journalism in the mid-twentieth century is the journalist's apparently omniscient insight: "I really didn't understand how anyone could manage to do reporting on things like the personal by-lay between a man and his fourth wife."^{xvii} The very nature of journalism and its role in Western society encourages such fantasies. An intrinsic part of the journalistic mission is, and has always been, the portrayal of society to itself. However, with increasing urbanisation and exponential population growth this became steadily more difficult as society became increasingly unknowable, thus arose the desire to

render transparent those features of modern society that lent it inscrutability. Key amongst which was the labyrinthine nature of the modern city—its architecture, social practices and everyday dynamics, as noted by critics such as D. A. Miller and Audrey Jaffe as well as Saint-Amour and Arac.^{xviii}

Benedict Anderson has aligned the newspaper with the “deep horizontal comradeship” of the nation—“a complex gloss upon the word ‘meanwhile.’”^{xix} However, the newspaper does not maintain a horizontal relationship either with society or with its readership. From the eighteenth century, the press has presented itself as an objective overseer of society—whether in practice this was the case or not. In the average news article, the reader is not viewed in terms of equality, instead the reader is regarded as a passive consumer of information: information that not only creates an impression of knowledge but of order. As Mark Andrejevic writes: “To the extent that the goal of journalism became, at least in part, to portray an increasingly populous and interdependent society to itself, it came to rely on strategies for tracking, describing and categorizing the populace—strategies related to the disciplinary drive for monitoring and the incitement to self-disclosure.”^{xx} Indeed, the newspaper and journalism in general have been viewed as part and parcel of the institutions of modernity that Foucault has pinpointed as working towards the establishment of a disciplinary society. It organizes the information the populace receives about society, categorising it, labelling it and individualising it. It states what is important and what is not, and although of course the picture it presents is selective, it gives the impression of comprehensiveness, and it is this impression from the Foucauldian perspective that is important, for it is the belief that one is being ceaselessly watched, rather than the act, which ensures conformity.

Journalism is society's own panopticon. Or to take the view of Jack Lule, it is the seat of modern myth and myth inherently speaks to the maintenance of social order.^{xxi} News is not simply the dissemination of knowledge in Lule's view but the structuring of knowledge into archetypal stories that offer exemplary models, confirming certain core beliefs, denying others, and providing examples of good and bad. In other words, they do not simply present information, but rather they order that information in an ideologically driven way, usually in a manner that supports the "dominant social consensus:"

Our society seems to welcome dissent to social order. News, in particular, seems to have been established as a channel for such dissent [...] But when studied carefully, news stories are shown to seldom challenge core values. They rarely question the very structure of society. They don't dispute the system of governance, the apportionment of power, the distribution of wealth, or other central features of U.S. society [...] After years of watching dramatic spectacles and tumultuous accounts in the news, we lift our eyes and realize that things have pretty much stayed the same. Day after day, the news upholds the social order in which it holds, after all, a prominent position.^{xxii}

Like the comic, the newspaper, despite the fact that it is based upon recording change, provides a curiously static view of the world. The date may change on the header, but the structure of the newspaper itself remains the same. Moreover, the details of the stories may change, but their structure also remains essentially the same. The same stories are told over and over again simply with different characters. For Lule then, journalism may present itself from time to time as the purveyor of dissent, but it is intrinsically conservative in its structures.

In this way, journalism and the journalist in particular are similar to the detective and detective fiction. Often anti-authoritarian in appearance, the detective is often the agent of what Franco Moretti terms totalitarian urges for a transparent society. “Detective fiction is a hymn to culture’s coercive abilities,” in Moretti’s view, a culture that “knows, orders, and defines all the significant data of individual existence as part of social existence.” The detective resolves the “deep anxiety of an expanding society: the fear that development might liberate centrifugal energies and thus make effective social control impossible.” A fear that Moretti aligns with the growth of the city: “This problem emerges fully in the metropolis, where anonymity—that is, impunity—potentially reigns and which is rapidly becoming a tangled and inaccessible hiding place.”^{xxiii}

Like the detective, the figure of the journalist in literature, television and film orders and defines significant data, uncovers hiding places and acts to make the city and society a little more transparent. In this both the detective and the journalist are similar, although the journalist perhaps goes even further than the detective, for the journalist not only solves the mystery, illuminating what otherwise seemed inscrutable, but publicizes the knowledge uncovered. Detective fiction reassures the reader that there is no true anonymity within which the criminal can hide, fiction revolving around the journalist goes further and reassures the reader that not only is there no true anonymity that can hide criminal actions, but they will be made fully aware of all such actions by the news media. Like the detective then, the journalist embodies a fantasy of omniscience engendered by fears fostered by population growth, urbanisation and architectural and technological development.

Asmodean Flights

From 1708 onwards this fantasy was frequently embodied in the figure of the demon Asmodeus. Le Sage's picaresque novel *Le Diable Boiteux* ran to seven editions in Paris in its first year and to four editions in Britain between 1708 and 1718. Le Sage's revised 1726 edition was issued in English in 1729, and further versions appeared in 1749 and 1770.^{xxiv} The popularity and influence of the novel in both France and Britain was such that it has been suggested that on its basis Le Sage should "be counted among the first creators of the modern novel."^{xxv} Le Sage's novel was initially based upon Luis Vélez de Guevara's *El Diablo cojuelo* (1641) and tells the story of the student Don Cleofas Leandro Perez Zambullo, who accidentally releases Asmodeus from the bottle in which he is trapped by a powerful magician. In return for his release Asmodeus takes Cleofas under his wing, quite literally, and flying over the city of Madrid, lifts the rooftops from houses, prisons and palaces, revealing to him the truths hiding behind the walls of the city he lives in. Variations upon this story and upon the figure of Asmodeus appear in numerous different texts in Britain and America, as well as France, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but particularly in the latter. For example, "Asmodeus, or, Strictures on the Glasgow Democrats" published in the *Glasgow Courier* in 1793, a series entitled "Revelations of Life in Nottingham; by the English Asmodeus" initially published the *Nottingham Telegraph* at an unknown date in the early to mid-nineteenth century and then reprinted in book form, Charles Sedley's *Asmodeus, or The Devil in London: A Sketch* (1808), Zachariah Cleardoubt's *The Scotch Diable Boiteux, or, Asmodeus in Edinburgh* (1808), 1820s French periodical *Le Diable Boîteux*, a short-lived British periodical from 1832 entitled *Asmodeus or The Devil in London*, Edward Bulwer Lytton's "Asmodeus at Large" series in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1833, Tom Pepper's *Asmodeus; or the Iniquities of New York: Being A Complete Expose of the Crimes, Doings and Vices as exhibited in the Haunts of Gamblers and Houses of Prostitution, both in High and Low Life!*

(1848), radical New York democrats Harrison G. Buchanan and George Thompson's respective works *Asmodeus, or Legends of New York* (1848) and *New-York Life* (1849), *Revelations of Asmodeus: or, Mysteries of Upper Ten-Dom* (1849), *Sharps and Flats, or, The Perils of City Life by Asmodeus* (1850), the anonymously-published *Asmodeus in New-York* (1868), J. Bower Harrison's pamphlet *A Vision of Asmodeus and the Reflections of Dr. Anselmo* (1880) as well as references in Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837), Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man* (1857), Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846-48) and *American Notes* (1842), Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892)^{xxvi} and variously in the journalism of Henry Morley, John Hollingshead, George Sala and numerous others.^{xxvii} As David L. Pike notes, the "Asmodean flight," the trope of the detailed and piercing view of city from above, was a commonplace of urban literature in the nineteenth century. Asmodeus embodied "a supranational spirit of the time [...] representing overlooking and penetrating vision and an acute ability to diagnose the state of the contemporary European body" and was invoked both as structuring narrative and as a universal short-hand for the desire for "the all-seeing viewpoint no longer available to the mere mortal inhabitant of or visitor to the city."

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"Could the Reader take an Asmodeus' Flight, and waving open all roofs and privacies, look down from the Tower of Notre Dame, what a Paris were it!"^{xxix} Details of course vary from manifestation to manifestation, but certain key elements of the Asmodean character recur again and again (flight, vision, disguise and the revelation of corruption and vice) and it is these key characteristics that form the basis of the Asmodean metaphor, which, as Tanya Agathocleous writes, becomes one of the touchstones of nineteenth-century sketch literature as well as of the realist novel.^{xxx} Pike notes that Asmodeus is also "the bohemian, the dandy,

the flaneur” but while these aspects of the characters are often embraced by longer fictional treatments of the character, it is not these elements that are invoked repeatedly by writers, rather it is Asmodeus’s penetrating vision, his bird’s eye view on humanity and his exposure of its crimes that become synonymous with the name of Asmodeus and which for readers at the time even the briefest reference to the lame devil or lifting off roof-tops brought to mind.^{xxxix}

From Le Sage onwards, first and foremost Asmodeus is the delineator of the city. Through use of his supernatural powers of vision, flight and disguise, he renders the city knowable: “‘I am about, by my supernatural powers, to take away the roofs from the houses of this great city; and notwithstanding the darkness of the night, to reveal to your eyes whatever is doing within them’. As he spake, he extended his right arm, the roofs disappeared, and the Student’s astonished sight penetrated the interior of the surrounding dwellings as plainly as if the noon-day sun shone over them.”^{xxxix} He appears crippled yet he can fly. He can make buildings transparent so that he and his companion may see through them, and frequently hear what they otherwise would not be able to hear. In some incarnations, he is able to disguise both himself and his companion so that they can not only see into the houses they spy on but enter into them unnoticed. And in each incarnation, he employs these powers in order to reveal the crime and corruption hiding in the city’s secret places.

Nottingham’s Asmodeus seeks to lift “the veil from before the hidden mysteries of iniquity—to lay bare the gangrene that is eating into the very heart’s core of society—to expose the deformity” of Nottingham’s streets.^{xxxix} Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s “Asmodeus at Large” begins with a discourse on cholera, a disease rife amongst the overcrowded and confined spaces of the nineteenth-century city (crime was not the only hazard of the obscure, labyrinthine

nature of the modern urban landscape).^{xxxiv} Harrison Buchanan's Asmodeus writes that he "unfolds to you, as one of the million, the sins and 'bonds of iniquity' found within the precincts and bounds of this 'Queen city of the Western world'. Another writer has attempted, but faintly, to delineate the 'Crimes and Mysteries' of these extended thoroughfares. Be it ours to lift the evil and show to you REALITIES that have never 'been dreamed of in your philosophy.'" ^{xxxv} "At midnight, wander through this city. Look upon the countless houses and reflect what is going on within" remarks another New York Asmodeus from 1848: "Here we behold the wearied and sated with luxury, and there poverty in its squalor and rags lies down on a bed of straw [...] Pause now in front of that respectable looking house. In the rear is a building, beneath whose roof and within its bolted doors are seven men in their shirtsleeves, all hard at work [...] counterfeiting the notes of one of our banks."^{xxxvi}

The desire to uncover, to see and to know, and beyond that to make comprehensible, is written large in Asmodean tales. Asmodeus however transforms over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Initially, referenced as a small malformed cripple in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth-century Asmodeus is often able to transform his appearance at will, frequently having the appearance of a young man with only a slight limp, and even in certain depictions having the "body of a soldier, remarkable for the beauty of his person and his athletic form."^{xxxvii} More significantly, Asmodeus transforms from a devil who revels in corruption and vice that he exposes to a more benevolent, supernatural figure, for example, in the anonymously published pamphlet, *A Vision of Asmodeus and the Reflections of Dr. Anselmo*. Here Asmodeus visits Dr. Anselmo, a man oppressed by "the eternal round of business" who begins to "feel a disappointment at life, an *ennui* and distaste of existence."

^{xxxviii} As in earlier tales, Asmodeus shows Dr. Anselmo the city from above and gives him a preternatural insight into the lives around him, but Asmodeus's purpose here is not simply entertainment but rather to act as a guiding spirit to Dr. Anselmo's lost soul: "Henceforth, look upon life in a more contented spirit, and do not expect your lot to be an exception to the common fate of humanity. Do not suppose that your good intentions will always be appreciated, nor your best endeavours always be successful. [...] Consider your own position to be, at least, equal to your deserts; and learn from the visit of Asmodeus, that greater hardships than yours may be endured with patience, and greater goodness may be buried in oblivion".^{xxxix} In fact from the 1840s onwards there were attempts to recast Asmodeus's motivations as writers sought to incorporate them with their own. Truth, cast as an essential good, and the moral health of society, are the aims of these writers and their Asmodean flights. "The Press, whose special mission it is to exercise a rigid, but wholesome, censorship over the habits and morals of the people, is bound upon its responsibility to God, and to the country," writes the Nottingham Asmodeus.^{xl} An Asmodeus of New York insists that "This work is no creation of the fancy—though in the form of fiction, its scenes, variations and plots are all drawn from real life, and are depicted in colors of truth." The truthfulness of the work is vital to this Asmodeus: "If the reader should deem any of the disclosures improper or in delicate, let him remember that it is impossible to reveal the condition of the unfortunate women of a great city like New York, without the ease of language and the exhibition of scenes that, employed for any other purpose, might be liable to censure. [...] Who will not at once, after reading this work, come out and assist us in putting down the thousand ways whereby houses of ill-fame are kept supplied with 'fresh hands'?"^{xli} It is only through an unflinching revelation of the truth that society will be incited to action. Asmodeus here is a watchdog figure, his powers of surveillance a remedy to society's evils. His is the disciplinary gaze that

the individual internalizes, that instils the fiction of constant observation within the self that promotes conformity to society's rules. It is the gaze that the journalist seeks to ape, particularly in the late nineteenth century when Edward Burke's 1747 characterisation of the press as the "fourth estate" was given new life by the founder of the first "new journalism" W. T. Stead.^{xiii}

Nonetheless, throughout the nineteenth century there remained an uneasiness regarding the powers of vision and insight that Asmodeus embodied. Fantasise as they might about having a bird's eye view of the metropolis and stripping the city of its secrets, anxiety about consequences of such transparency remained. In Melville's *The Confidence Man*, one character asks "'Supposing that at high 'change on the Paris Bourse, Asmodeus should lounge in, distributing handbills, revealing the true thoughts and designs of all the operators present—would that be the fair thing in Asmodeus? Or, as Hamlet says, were it 'to consider the thing too curiously?'"^{xliii} Similarly, while on the one hand Charles Dickens invokes the fantasy of what such powers of surveillance could achieve for the good of the world, on the other he acknowledges and condemns their negative potential. Thus, in *Dombey and Son* we find the following passage:

Oh for a good spirit who would take the house-tops off, with a more potent and benignant hand than the lame demon in the tale, and show a Christian people what dark shapes issue from amidst their homes, to swell the retinue of the Destroying Angel as he moves forth among them! [...] Bright and blest the morning that should rise on such a night: for men, delayed no more by stumbling-blocks of their own making, which are but specks of dust upon the path between them and eternity, would then apply themselves, like

creatures of one common origin, owing one duty to the Father of one family, and tending to the one common end, to make the world a better place!^{xliv}

Yet in *American Notes*, we find Asmodeus referenced in quite a different way: “What are the fifty newspapers, which those precocious urchins are bawling down the street, and which are kept filed within, what are they but amusements? Not vapid waterish amusements, but good strong stuff, dealing in round abuse and blackguard names; pulling off the roofs of private house, as the Halting Devil did in Spain; pimping and pandering for all degrees of vicious taste.”^{xlv} The very fact that time and again nineteenth-century writers return to the figure of an all-seeing demon to personify their fantasies of omniscience is telling of their unease as regards to the nature of this fantasy and its potential consequences. The Asmodean motif embodies anxiety as much as it does desire.

Clark Kent and Twentieth-Century Transparency

Of course not all writers during this period used the Asmodean motif to signal their desire for mastery over the urban environment nor their fears of what it would mean if someone could master it, but its recurrence in the cultures of Britain, France and America in this period makes it notable. His adoption as a character and a persona for writers of journalism and social histories as well as a prevalent metaphor for piercing, panoptic vision by journalists in all three countries invites discussion. In the twentieth century, Asmodeus does not disappear entirely, but his popularity soon fades, other figures more suited to the age instead being adopted, which nonetheless recall Asmodeus’s supernatural voyeur.^{xlvi} Of these Clark Kent or Superman is the most notable, both due to its popularity and pervasiveness across different media throughout the century, and the elements the images have in common. Like

Asmodeus, Clark Kent makes use of flight, preternatural vision to uncover crime and corruption in the urban landscape. Like Asmodeus, he appears to have a disability that is in fact a deception, Clark Kent's glasses disguising his super-vision in the same manner that Asmodeus' limp disguises his ability to fly. Both in a manner of speaking are detectives.^{xlvii} Both are represented as models of journalism in their respective eras and both represent the fantasy of knowledge in an increasingly obscure world. Unlike Asmodeus, however, Clark Kent/Superman is an idealized figure, who not only uncovers corruption but is supposed to present an example of moral purity. Asmodean tales both encourage and resist fantasies of order amongst their readership, at once suggesting that the world is still knowable and yet suggesting a devilishness behind such a desire for knowledge. Superman's integrity and his benevolent use of his powers are rarely questioned. Moreover, when they are questioned, it is usually his strength, speed and indestructibility that come under fire.

The story of Clark Kent/Superman's inception is well known. As told by creator Jerry Siegel, the key idea was that of the strong man: "I am lying in bed counting sheep when all of a sudden it hits me. I conceive a character like Samson, Hercules, and all the strong men I have ever heard tell of rolled into one. Only more so."^{xlviii} In this the character has often been read as a fulfilment of Siegel and co-creator Shuster's personal fantasies, two shy physically weak young men who read body-building magazines obsessively. Similarly, Clark Kent's chosen career as a journalist is influenced by the real-life experiences and desires of Siegel and Shuster, both of whom worked on their high-school newspaper, admired and were intimidated (intimidated?) by fellow student reporter Lois Amster, and sought careers in media after graduation, albeit via comic strips rather than news reporting. The media-savvy nature of some of the early Superman stories has been noted on more than one occasion. Superman

made his first appearance in 1938 National Periodicals' *Action Comics* #1. *Action Comics* #6 features a con man who pretends to be Superman's manager and who licenses his image and sells both the film and merchandising rights.^{xlix} Moreover, the newsroom and the news story provide the recurrent setting and structure for the stories both in the original comics and in later media. Costumed superheroes are "the mythic heroes of our information age," as Richard Reynolds puts it. Moreover, they are fundamentally concerned with the growth not only of information technology but also the modern urban environment, thus the creation of a man who can see through the labyrinthine maze of the city, who is not fazed by its hustle and bustle but can pick out a single voice in the hubbub, who is not dwarfed by skyscrapers but rather can leap over them in a single bound.^l Like Asmodeus, Clark Kent/Superman assuages fears over the perceived threat of the urban landscape, by uncovering, unveiling and submitting the city and its inhabitants to detailed, supernatural scrutiny. He embodies a fantasy of an ordered, known universe key to journalism's role in modern society. In the early years at least, this fantasy remains unquestioned. As Matthew Ehrlich notes, Clark Kent was 'labelled an apostle of truth almost from the beginning'.^{li} How does he uncover this truth? He uncovers it through the use of his powers, notably his powers of vision and hearing, often used in combination with the power of flight and speed. The city for Clark Kent is to all intents and purposes transparent. Its transparency for him renders it safe for others. It is only in later years that this is at all questioned. In fact, throughout the majority of his iterations throughout the twentieth century there is very little in any of the Superman stories to suggest any sense of discomfort at the implications of this fantasy.

For Scott Bukatman this is because twentieth-century superheroes "encapsulated and embodied the same utopian aspirations of modernity as the cities themselves." Like Boney,

Bukatman lays emphasis on the conception of the superheroes during a period that saw a radical transformation of the American cityscape with the birth of skyscrapers, the proliferation of automobiles and what he calls a utopian vision of what a city could be in both architecture and wider culture. Citing Le Corbusier, Bukatman writes that as “a walking, flying figure of utopian progress, Superman prefigures his mode of perception and spatial negotiation the development of the city of tomorrow.” In the Victorian imagination, the city may have been “a dark maze or labyrinth, a site of disappearance and murky invisibilities, a giant trap for the unwary” but in the mid-twentieth century this idea of the city lived side by side with notion of it as “a stage for spectacular, kaleidoscopic experience.” It is this city that is embodied in the Superman mythology, one in which “the city [is] open, modernist, and democratic.” Democratic is key here, because in Bukatman’s view although Superman “seems to be an incarnation of Corbusier’s panoramic authority based on perfect transparency, control and knowledge,” he is also Every Man, “carving a space for the little guy.”^{lii}

The work of Glen Weldon and Gerard Jones, in contrast, suggests the transformation of the “magisterial view” from devilish to naturalistic, if not utopian, actually took place after Superman’s inception, and was the result primarily of shifting cultural anxieties emerging around America’s entry into the Second World War.^{liii} As Weldon notes, in Superman’s early days in *Action Comics*, he was far from the morally-pure figure that he has come to be known as in Western cultural memory. He was arrogant, his humor was sarcastic and he used unnecessary levels of violence to get the job done. With America’s entry into the war however this changed. As Jones remarks, “Superheroes turned anxiety into joy. As the world plunged into conflict and disaster almost too huge to comprehend, they grabbed their readers’ darkest feelings and bounded into the sky with them. They made violence and wreckage exciting but

at the same time small and containable.”^{liv} Unable to have Superman actively participate on the front without deviating too far from reality, the writers and illustrators nonetheless wanted to reflect the national crisis in their work. In Weldon’s words, Superman became a symbol and it was this process of becoming a symbol that transformed him into the idealized figure that is known today: “The process of becoming a symbol smoothed Superman’s rough edges and shaped him into something safer, more trustworthy; his social conscience morphed into boosterism; his sardonic smirk became a genial grin; once hunted as a vigilante “mystery man”, he now began working alongside the police.”^{lv} He thus becomes an active agent of law and order in line with the state, his motives always pure, and his powers necessarily used for the good and beyond reproach or question.

This view of Clark Kent/Superman was in keeping with contemporary attitudes to journalism. As Jonathan McDonald Ladd notes: “[I]n World War II journalists were seen as noble soldiers, sacrificing for the war effort like everyone else and embodying a mainstream patriotism.”^{lvi} Similarly, Ted Koppel recalls that in the mid-twentieth-century “much of the American public used to gather before the electronic hearth every evening, separate but together, while Walter Cronkite, Chet Huntley, David Brinkley, Frank Reynolds and Howard K. Smith offered relatively unbiased accounts of information that their respective news organizations believed the public needed to know [...] It was an imperfect, untidy little Eden of journalism where reporters were motivated to gather facts about important issues.”^{lvii}

In both accounts the naturalisation of Superman’s panoptic vision is linked to a sense of optimism: in the first instance of progress and technology, and in the second, in the morality of the American way of life—that they would win out not because of superior strength but the righteousness of their cause: “truth, justice, and the American way.” This is in stark

contrast to the Asmodean tales of the previous century, in which the devilish nature of Asmodeus's powers of perception mirrored the corruption he uncovered. This confidence carries on past the war years into the later twentieth century. The Superman of the Christopher Reeves movies and of the popular television show *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* (1993 – 1997) is a bastion of righteousness and American values, his panoptic vision only ever construed as a positive. Indeed, in the latter this is offset by Lois' less certain ethical code as regards to the gathering of information.

In *Lois and Clark*, and numerous other outings, Lois and Clark fulfil respectively the two recurrent roles in American culture identified by Robert Ray: the outlaw hero and official hero.^{lviii} Lois, the outlaw hero, is the renegade, representing the values of individual freedom and independence. Like all outlaws, she “holds no particular hope for society's betterment [...] views the world and especially the institutions of government and big business as inherently corrupt [and] shuns convention and obligation and scorns officially sanctioned truth and morality.” She holds to her own values and is happy to flout conventional rules and even morality in order to obtain her ends. Clark represents the official hero, he is a “dedicated public servant comparable to the dedicated teachers and lawyers in other popular texts, [who] believes that journalism can facilitate constructive change through careful investigation and reporting of the truth.” Respectable, upright, he holds to the values of his society and works towards the common good: “[H]e is a pillar who helps ensure democracy's proper functioning while embodying the white-collar ideals of public service and social mobility.” But while Ray holds that in the majority of stories these two competing heroes are held in balance, representing different aspects of American culture and identity, in Superman's various incarnations, Lois, the outlaw, is invariably pulled into line by Clark, the embodiment of

American's collective conscience. Both cross ethical lines in the pursuit of truth, Clark through the use of his powers, Lois through deception, theft and disguise, but Clark is seen to do so for the common good, his methodology unquestioned, while constant attention is paid to Lois' methods. It is Lois moreover that is most often punished for her questionable methods, resulting as they often do in life-threatening scenarios, from which Clark/Superman has to save her. And it is Lois that is generally converted to Clark's code of morality and conduct and his view of the world. Through him she is brought round to a more optimistic view of the world, she learns to seek truth for the common good rather than for its own sake or for career advancement, and the means by which she seeks it are moderated through Clark's influence.^{lix}

Clark, of course, also contains within himself an element of that same duality between the outlaw hero and the official hero, between optimism and a more cynical view on the world, between the celebration of transparency and conformity and a belief in the importance of privacy and the sanctity of the individual—a duality embodied not so much in his dual identities of Clark and Superman, but in his two costumes. As Pike argues, there was always an element of “the bohemian, the dandy, the flaneur” in the Asmodean tradition, and this can also be seen, Bukatman argues, in Superman's flamboyant costume: “The city is a permanent costume party, Koolhaas and Johnathan Raban remind us and superheroes have the brightest costumes.”^{lx} Beneath his apparent conformity, Clark hides a brightly-colored secret. Even in Superman's vision of the open, democratic city, not everything is transparent, hiding places still lurk. In Bukatman's view then, there is still something of deviance in Superman despite his smoothed-down edges: “Our costumed vigilante is perhaps something more a dandy, a flamboyant, flamboyantly powered, urban male, who, if not for his never-

ending battle for truth, justice and the American Way, would probably be ordered to ‘just move it along’.”^{lxi}

This paradox is not accidental, but an inherent part of the myth’s appeal – the notion of a world made transparent, while still allowing for the privacy of the good and pure. Superman’s magisterial gaze is only imagined as including the darker elements of the city. The law-abiding, well-behaved citizen remains cocooned in the anonymity of the city. With digitisation, the growth of the internet and social media, this reassurance was no longer enough: Superman in the information age is a much darker affair.

Clark Kent in the Information Age

In 1992 for the first time in the comic books Superman is overpowered by an enemy and dies. Of course, the superhero is later restored, but it marks the beginning of a darker era in representations of the Last Son of Krypton. In the film *Superman Returns* (2006), he is pictured as a lonely god, a martyr for mankind, an essential outsider. While hope is re-established by the end of the film, the character’s melancholy on hearing of Lois’s prize-winning story “Why the World Doesn’t Need Superman” hangs over the entire film. Seven years later, the muted hues of Zack Snyder’s *Man of Steel* (2013) presents a similarly dark vision. In Snyder’s sequel *Batman vs Superman: The Dawn of Justice* (2016) shows Clark Kent misusing his powers of surveillance, focusing upon Batman rather than the real enemy, Lex Luthor, and failing to detect the presence of a bomb in the Congressional hearings that he is attended, leading to numerous deaths and growing public distrust. *Smallville* (2001–2011), the story of Clark Kent’s journey from farm boy to superhero, presents a perhaps more optimistic worldview, but also features a black-clad Clark watching the city from above, a Clark whose privacy is closely guarded and constantly under threat, as well as the corruption of his best friend through her

role as “Watchtower,” and periodic questioning of the means Clark uses to keep Lois in the dark. It is a series in which a broad spectrum of different surveillances techniques are utilized by a variety of different characters, often with ambiguous motives, and in which Clark and his fellow superheroes are branded as vigilantes and as enemies of the state, and in which the removal of the secret identity has dire consequences. Superman in the twenty-first century is a world away from utopian confidence. The American city is once more a place of corruption and vice, the police ineffectual, and Clark’s powers are the subject of anxiety not only for him but for those around him.

Reynolds writes of the figure of the costumed superhero that “it is remarkable that the enduring myth of the information age should have been created so early.”^{lxii} This is perhaps because in many ways the characteristics that define the information age have already been present in our culture for over two hundred years. The information age could be seen as simply an intensification of an already-present facets of Western society—an intensification however with serious consequences. Those hidden spaces that once balanced the otherwise transparent city are no longer so hidden. For overlapping with the built landscape of the city is the digital landscape, where every “footstep” is traceable, quite literally. In a world of camera phones and social media holding down a secret identity might seem impossible. Everyone is equally exposed—white-collar privacy is no longer an inviolable right. There is the potential for a class-based argument here. With newspaper sales declining and traditional journalistic structures struggling to maintain their ascendancy, society’s portrayal of itself is no longer concentrated in the hands of the few but rather distributed amongst the many. Perhaps during the age of journalism, the panoptic gaze could be seen to be a readily-adopted fiction that society could accommodate due to the fact that it was to a certain extent a fiction

– the all-seeing eye was not literally all-seeing. When that fiction starts to acquire a level of truth previously unimaginable, this becomes the source of anxiety. Such anxiety is exhibited clearly in Bruce Wayne’s antagonism to Superman in Snyder’s 2016 film: “He has the power to take out the entire human race and if we believe there is even a one percent chance that he is our enemy, we have to take it as an absolute certainty!”

Alternatively, we could view the internet age as an intensification of unknowability of the nineteenth-century city. For all that critics such as Lyon present the internet as the “world wide web of surveillance,” it also provides an arena for political radicalisation and fomentation as well as criminal activity and its regulatory measures resemble Foucault’s pre-disciplinary era of public humiliation and bodily punishment far more than they do the disciplinary tactics of the late nineteenth and twentieth century.^{lxiii} After all, for all that every “footstep” is technically traceable, such is the volume of traffic on the internet that such attempts to trace activity is in fact incredibly difficult. Like the city, the web has a dark underground. The figure of the hacker, who in television and the movies, can penetrate these dark corners with just a few keystrokes and render it seemingly transparent thus presents a similar fantasy of omniscience to that of Asmodeus. In *Smallville*, Clark’s hacker best friend Chloe figures as his double, she in her digital Watchtower and he stand high above the city cloaked in black. As his powers lead him down a dark path, so do Chloe’s, as her need to keep watch over the city and ensure its safety lead to greater and greater violations of privacy. Like the Asmodean tales of the nineteenth century, *Smallville’s* depiction of fantasies of journalistic omniscience represent a desire for and simultaneous fear of discipline.

Conclusion

The 1956 American National Election Study (ANES) records that 66% of those polled thought newspapers were “fair,” while just 27% thought they were unfair. In two 1964 polls conducted by the Roper Organisation, 71% and 61% said network news was fair, while only 12% and 17% said it was unfair.^{lxiv} In comparison, in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* poll from 2004 just 10% said that they had a “great deal” of confidence in the national news media.^{lxv} Howard Fineman writes: Aren’t there more current stats?

Yes, I know: A purely objective viewpoint does not exist in the cosmos or in politics. Yes, I know: Today's media food fights are mild compared with the viciousness of pamphleteers and partisan newspapers of old, from colonial times forward. Yes, I know: The notion of a neutral “mainstream” national media gained dominance only in World War II and in its aftermath, when what turned out to be a temporary moderate consensus came to govern the country. Still, the notion of a neutral, non-partisan mainstream press was, to me at least, worth holding onto. Now it's pretty much dead, at least as the public sees things.^{lxvi}

Journalism, or “the media,” is now frequently seen as biased, consumer-driven and ruthlessly cynical, or worse, irrelevant. As editor Perry White says in *Superman Returns*, “These are iconic, and they were taken by a 12-year-old with a camera phone. What’ve you got, Olsen?” Fineman continues “With ever growing suspicion by American voters, viewers and readers [...] increasingly turn for information and analysis only to non-[mainstream] outlets that tend to reinforce the sectarian views of discrete slices of the electorate.” Or at least they turn to outlets that are often inherently suspicious of mainstream media and its agenda, and whose own purpose and ethical codes are yet to coalesce, and may never coalesce, given their

multifarious nature. The idea of the journalist as hero is a faintly absurd one in the twenty-first century. Even before the unveiling of large-scale hacking scandals, representations of journalism in mainstream culture presented an ambiguous picture of the profession at best. *Shattered Glass* (2003) is a far cry from *All the President's Men* (1976). *Goodnight and Good Luck* (2005), *The Wire* (2002–2008) with its constant Menckens references, *The Hour* (2011–2012) and *The Newsroom* (2012–2014) all look nostalgically back to an era of journalism that is viewed as heroic, an era when journalism had a clear sense of its own mission and purpose, and when it expounded values to be proud of. As one commentator notes, “Somewhere along the line the Fourth Estate became just the media.”^{lxvii} It makes sense therefore that Clark Kent in the information age is a conflicted figure, more Asmodean than he has ever been, representing anxieties about privacy and knowability in our new digital world, that his mantle as saviour is ever in danger of being torn down, and at the same time he is a nostalgic figure, never quite the threat that he is imagined to be, representing a yearning for an earlier period, in which times are perceived by our current vantage to have been more straightforward, in which authority could be trusted, democratic ideals were unassailable and the world was knowable.

ⁱ Scott Bukatman, “A Song the Urban Superhero,” in *The Superhero Reader*, ed. Charles Hatfield, Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 185.

ⁱⁱ Paul K. Saint-Amour, “The Vertical Flâneur: Narratorial Tradecraft in the Colonial Metropolis,” in *Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism*, ed. Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 227.

ⁱⁱⁱ Alain René Le Sage, *Le Diable Boîteux* (Paris: Eugène Heutte et Cie, 1707) was first translated into English in 1708.

^{iv} Jonathan Arac, *Commissioned Spirits: The Shaping of Social Motion in Dickens, Carlyle, Melville and Hawthorne* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 17.

^v Gary Engle, “What Makes Superman So Darned American?” in *Superman at Fifty: The Persistence of a Legend*, ed. Dennis Dooley and Gary Engle (Cleveland: Octavia Press, 1987), 85.

^{vi} Danny Fingeroth, *Disguised as Clark Kent: Jews, Comics and the Creation of the Superhero* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2009).

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- vii Brad J. Ricca, "Discovering the Story of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster," in *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*, ed. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 198.
- viii Umberto Eco, "The Myth of Superman," in *Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium*, ed. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2004), 163.
- ix Frederic Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1953), 34.
- x See Bart Beaty, *Frederic Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005).
- xi Henry Jenkins, "Should We Discipline the Reading of Comics?" in *Critical Approaches to Comics*, 1.
- xii William Moulton Marston, "Why 100, 000, 000 Americans Read Comics," *The American Scholar* 13, no. 1 (January 1944): 40; Engle, "What Makes Superman So Darned American?," 85; Alex Boney, "Superheroes and the Modern(ist) Age," in *What is a Superhero?*, ed. Robin S. Rosenberg and Peter Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48.
- xiii Dennis O'Neil, "Superheroes and Power," in *What is a Superhero?*, 130; Clare Pitkethly, "Straddling a Boundary: The Superhero and the Incorporation of Difference," *What is a Superhero?*, 25.
- xiv Scott Paul Gordon, "Voyeuristic Dreams: Mr. Spectator and the Power of Spectacle," *The Eighteenth Century* 36, no. 1 (1995): 3.
- xv Greg Polly, "A Leviathan of Letters," in *The Spectator: Emerging Discourses*, ed. Donald J. Newman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 119.
- xvi John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1875), II: 450.
- xvii Tom Wolfe, *The New Journalism* (London: Picador, 1996), 24.
- xviii Audrey Jaffe, *Vanishing Points: Dickens, Narrative, and the Subject of Omniscience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
- xix Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7, 25.
- xx Mark Andrejevic, "Theory Review: Power, Knowledge and Governance: Foucault's Relevance to Journalism Studies," *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 4 (2008): 609.
- xxi Jack Lule, *Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism* (London: Guildford Press, 2001), 37.
- xxii Lule, *Daily News*, 191-200.
- xxiii Franco Moretti, *Signs for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*, trans. Susan Fischer, David Forgacs and David Miller (London: Verso, 1988), 143.
- xxiv Alain René Le Sage, *The Devil Upon Crutches*, trans. Tobias Smollett, ed. O. M. Brack, Jr and Leslie A. Chilton (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), xix.
- xxv Geoffrey Brereton, *A Short History of French Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 111.
- xxvi Interestingly, in evidence of his argument Moretti cites Holmes' own Asmodean flight: '[I]f we could fly out that great window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on' (Moretti, *Signs for Wonders*, 136).
- xxvii See, for example, Henry Morley and Charles Dickens, 'In and Out of Jail', *Household Words* VII, no. 164 (14 May 1853); John Hollingshead, 'First-floor Windows', *All the Year Round* I, no. 14 (30 July 1859); George Augustus Sala, 'Streets of the World', *Temple Bar* (December 1863 – March 1866).
- xxviii Martina Lauster, *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830-50* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 134; David L. Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx: The Underworld of Modern Urban Culture, 1800-2001* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 37.
- xxix Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History* (London: James Fraser, 1837), II: 400.
- xxx Tanya Agathocleous, *Urban Realism and the Cosmopolitan Imagination in the Nineteenth Century: Visible City, Invisible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 82.
- xxxi Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx*, 121.
- xxxii Alain René Le Sage, *Asmodeus or The Devil on Two Sticks*, trans. Joseph Thomas (New York: G. H. Doran Company, 1925 [1726]), 14.
- xxxiii *Revelations of Life in Nottingham; by the English Asmodeus. Reprinted from the Nottingham Telegraph* (Nottingham: C. B. Truman, unknown date), v.
- xxxiv Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Asmodeus at Large* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1833), 2.
- xxxv Harrison G. Buchanan, *Asmodeus, or Legends of New York: Being a Complete Expose of the Mysteries, Vices and Doings, as Exhibited in the Fashionable Circles of New York* (New York: John D. Munson and Co., 1848), 8.
- xxxvi Tom Pepper, *Asmodeus; or the Iniquities of New York: Being A Complete Expose of the Crimes, Doings and Vices as exhibited in the Haunts of Gamblers and Houses of Prostitution, both in High and Low Life! including a*

Sketch of the Life of a Model Artiste, and the celebrated Report of Arthur Tappan Esq. on the Magdalens of New York (New York: C. G. Graham & Co., 1848), 32.

^{xxxvii} Charles Sedley, *Asmodeus; or, The Devil in London: A Sketch* (London: J. F. Hughes, 1808), I: 28-29.

^{xxxviii} J. Bower Harrison, *A Vision of Asmodeus and the Reflections of Dr. Anselmo* (Manchester: Abel Heywood & Son, 1880), 5.

^{xxxix} Harrison, *A Vision of Asmodeus*, 13.

^{xl} *Revelations of Life in Nottingham*, viii.

^{xli} Pepper, *Asmodeus; or the Iniquities of New York*, 5.

^{xlii} 'The Future of Journalism', *The Contemporary Review* 50 (November 1886); 'Government by Journalism', *The Contemporary Review* 49 (May 1886).

^{xliii} Herman Melville, *The Confidence Man* (New York: Dix, Edwards & Co., 1857), 137.

^{xliiv} Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 620.

^{xliiv} Charles Dickens, *American Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 88.

^{xlivi} See, for example, George R. Sims, *Living London: Its Work and Its Play, Its Humour and Its Pathos, Its sights and Its Scenes* (London: Cassell and Company, 1902); G. M. Gordon, *An Iconoclast in India. Plain Tales told by Asmodeus Junior* (Calcutta: Butterworth & Co., 1919) or Samuel Dickson, *The Streets of San Francisco* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955).

^{xlvii} As Alison Jacquet notes "the etymology of the word 'detect' derives from the Latin 'detegere' which means to uncover or unroof" (*The Literary Angel: Essays on Influences and Traditions*, ed. AmiJo Comeford and Tamy Burnett [Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2010], 209).

^{xlviii} Fingerioth, *Superman on the Couch*, 13.

^{xlix} Glen Weldon, *Superman: The Unauthorised Biography* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2013), 31.

^l Reynolds, "Heroes of the Superculture," in *What is a Superhero?*, 51, 56; Boney, "Superheroes and the Modern(ist) Age," 46.

^{li} Matthew C. Ehrlich, "Thinking About Journalism with Superman," *IJPC* 4 (Fall 2012-Spring 2013), 136.

^{lii} Scott Bukatman, "A Song the Urban Superhero," 170, 174, 180.

^{liii} Bukatman, "A Song the Urban Superhero," 180.

^{liiv} Gerard Jones, *Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book* (New York: Perseus, 2004), 231.

^{liv} Weldon, *Superman: The Unauthorised Biography*, 32.

^{lvi} Jonathan McDonald Ladd, *Why Americans Distrust the News Media and Why It Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 72.

^{lvii} Ted Koppel, "The Case against News We Can Choose," *Washington Post* (14 November 2010).

^{lviii} Robert Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 58-65.

^{lix} Matthew C. Ehrlich, *Journalism in the Movies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 8.

^{lx} Bukatman, "A Song the Urban Superhero," 190.

^{lxi} Bukatman, "A Song the Urban Superhero'," 191.

^{lxii} Reynolds, "Heroes of the Superculture," 53.

^{lxiii} David Lyon, "The world wide web of surveillance: the Internet and off-world power flows," *Information, Communication & Society* 1, no. 1 (1998): 91-105.

^{lxiv} Ladd, *Why Americans Distrust the News Media*, 7.

^{lxv} Ladd, *Why Americans Distrust the News Media*, 8.

^{lxvi} Howard Fineman, "The 'Media Party' Is Over (13 January 2005)," MSNBC, accessed 31 October 2004, <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/6813945/>.

^{lxvii} Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 15.