

The 'Man of Tomorrow' as Copy Template – Male Hegemony and its Reproduction in Superhero Comics.

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In *The Last Days of Superman* from 1962, the superhero gets an devastating diagnosis: He will die and there is no one to replace him – not even a diverse line-up of surrogates and doppelgangers. Only Supergirl, who has comparable characteristics, seems to be a true alternative, but the comic disqualifies her even on the level of presentation and gender. She cries, she must pull herself together and fails in this duty because of her emotionality. The comic uses this initial situation to portray its protagonist as an irreplaceable male prototype of all superheroes. In addition, it interconnects two processes: On the one hand, Superman is a copy template in a technical process of reproduction, which is typical for comics in general (from image to image) and superhero comics in particular (Clark Kent is a negative from the original Superman, Supergirl is a faulty surrogate). On the other hand, heteronormative and sometimes progressive gender images result from these processes of reproduction: The search for surrogates in 1962 justifies a naturalized and original intended male hegemony, which subordinates female characters and marginalizes those male characters, who are no accomplices of superman's hegemony (Connell 1999, Scholz 2004). In 2006, author Grant Morrison and illustrator Frank Quitely use the same initial situation in *All Star Superman* (2006–2008), Superman's imminent death, to remeasure sex and gender of superheroes and -heroines. *All Star Superman* as a project of telling the best stories about Superman again, tries to clean the genre from heteronormative gender images to find the new 'Man of Tomorrow', which is one of Superman's nicknames. Thus, the comic performs a balancing act of saving the superhero's state as a heterosexual male copy template and withdrawing the protagonists from male hegemony to open the genre for diverse concepts of gender. Superman's friend Jimmy Olson is a symbol of this process: At first, the comic ironizes him as a drag queen with a bad fashion taste. After he has saved Superman from the influence of red kryptonite, he wears a rainbow-coloured coat while he declares his love to his girlfriend Lucy. This contribution will show, how the comic rejects heteronormative reproduction and heredity by using several other processes of reproduction (cultural tradition, cloning, creation, etc.).

Kurzbiographie

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