Doctor Doom In The Marvel Age: Dataset

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This document refers to the data contained in the Excel Spreadsheet ' Doctor Doom In The Marvel Age: Dataset'. It was collected as part of the PhD thesis 'Doctor Doom In The Marvel Age: An Empirical Approach To Transmedia Character Coherence'.

266 Texts were identified in which Doctor Doom appeared, taken from comics dated November 1961 to October 1987 - 'The Marvel Age' - and from other media texts issued contemporaneously.

From this corpus, a sample of 69 texts was selected using stratified random sampling.

Each text in the sample was examined for signifiers to do with Doctor Doom. The data was recorded using a unified catalogue of transmedia character components which brings together aspects of the models devised by Pearson and Uricchio, Klastrup and Tosca, Marie-Laurie Ryan, Paolo Bertetti and Matthew Freeman within a framework based on Jan-Noël Thon's ideas of Transmedia Character Networks that extends Henry Jenkin's formulation of 'transmedia' in line with Scolari, Bertetti and Freeman's Transmedia Archaeology. Where gaps were identified within these definitions, specifically around the area of 'behaviour', additional definitions were brought in using the psycholexical approach, the Big Five Index, and the idea of character motivations from creative writing practice. Where necessary the components were re-named for clarity, and finally were placed into groups based on Matthew Freeman's classification of transmedia, with 'behaviour' extracted into a group of its own.

The relationship of the final model to the sources is shown in the diagram below.

Transmedia Character Components
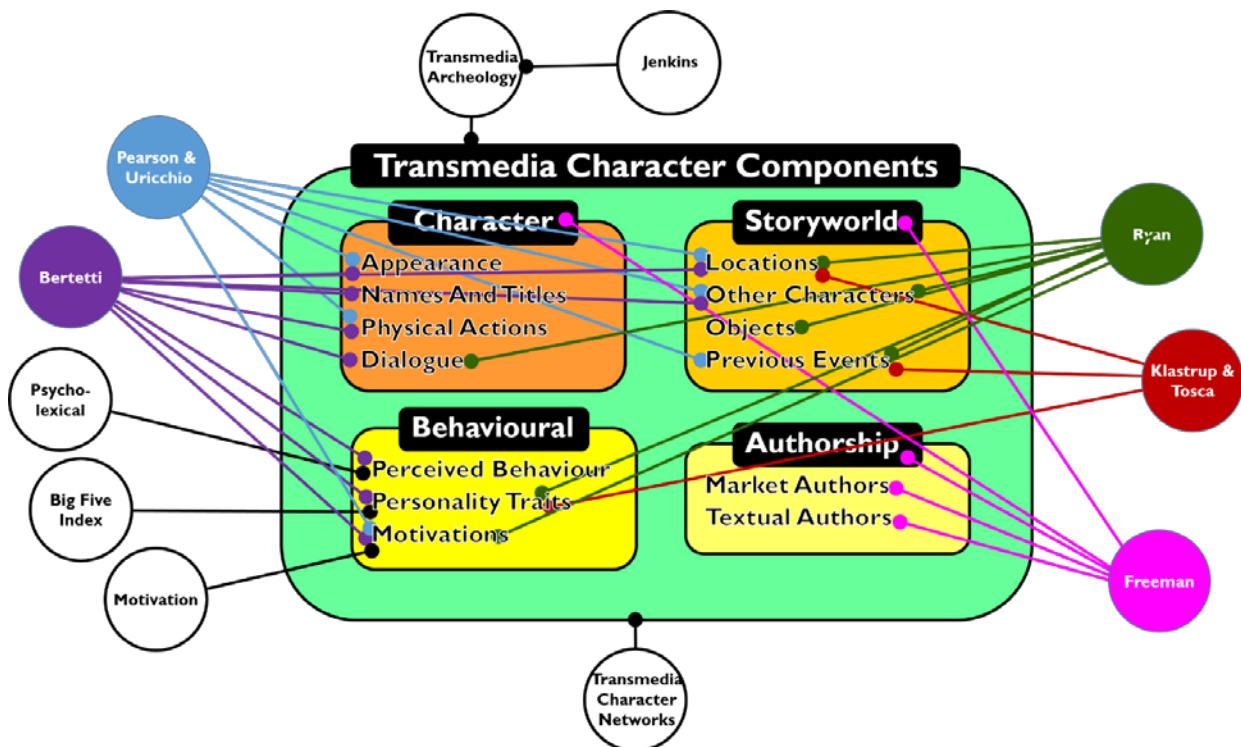
In theory this catalogue can be used as a tool for mapping the coherence of transmedia characters as they move across time and media. Used over the course of a sample of texts, and by recording the signifiers within each component for each text, it should be possible not only to identify a character's core components across time, but also to see whether they vary across different media or storyworlds. This idea is investigated within the thesis itself.

Description of components

Character Components

These components are concerned specifically with the character themselves.

Appearance

This concerns the visual appearance of the character. In the case of Doctor Doom his appearance component would include signifiers such a green tunic, metal mask and suit of grey armour.

Names And Titles

As the name suggests, this records the names and titles used to refer to the character within the text. For Doctor Doom signifiers for this component would include 'Doom', 'Victor', 'Lord Of Latveria' and, of course, 'Doctor Doom'.

Physical actions

These are the physical actions particular to the character which occur within the text itself. Examples for Doctor Doom include smashing mirrors, shooting bolts of energy from his hands, and kicking opponents as they lie on the ground.

Dialogue

This component contains the frequently used phrases, or catchphrases, which are associated with the character and appear regularly in their own speech. For Doom this includes phrases such as 'Dolt!' or 'Bah!' and also his habit of speaking in the third person.

Storyworld Components

These components are the aspects of the overall storyworld that appear in the same text as Doctor Doo. For many of these components the variable 'INTERACTS' records whether Doctor Doom interacts with them.

Locations

This component contains all of the settings which appear in the text, including both time and space. Examples for Doom would be Latveria, Manhattan, and the present day.

Other Characters

This component contains other characters who appear in the text. For Doctor Doom this includes characters such as Reed Richards, Boris, and Valeria.

Here background characters were not usually recorded catalogued if they were not given names. The only exception to this was for much-seen groups of a recognisable type, such as 'Latverian peasants'.

Objects

This component is used to record all of the physical items which appear in the text that are part of the plot, which are not otherwise categorised as part of settings. For example, if Doom strides through Manhattan there may be automobiles in the background, but these would be part of the city location, rather than objects that take part in the story. However, this would change if Doom, or any of the other characters, used a vehicle somehow. Examples of objects for Doom include his time machine, throne and viewing screens.

Previous Events

This component contains all previous events which are directly mentioned within the text. Usually these would be events previously seen in earlier texts, often referenced by footnotes, but in some cases this might apply to events which have not actually been seen before, such as a new aspect to an origin. Examples of previous events that are signifiers for Doctor Doom include the death of his father, the accident that disfigured his face, or his attempt to steal the power cosmic from the Silver Surfer.

Behavioural Components

These components describe the way that the character interacts with the other aspects of the storyworld.

Perceived Behaviour

This component contains the way that the character is perceived, gathered empirically by recording all of the descriptive words applied to the character within the text. Examples of perceived behaviours for Doom include 'arrogant', 'aloof' and 'cruel'.

Personality Traits

This describes the way that the character's personality is perceived by the consumer of the text, using the Big Five Inventory. The Big Five Index is calculated in various ways depending on what tool is used, but gives results in terms of five factors, so that we might say that Doctor Doom scores highly for extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (in that he would loudly proclaim his meticulous plan to overcome the injustices placed against him using a new device he has invented) but low for agreeableness (in that he is, after all, Doctor Doom).

Motivations

The component is what drives the character's overall behaviour. Within the superhero genre, especially for supervillains, motivations are often spoken aloud, and for Doctor Doom examples could include wanting to rule the world, to humiliate Reed Richards, and to be avenged for the death of his parents.

Authorship Components

This final grouping of components is slightly set apart from the others as it is to do with the non-fictional world, although still expressed via information in the texts. It concerns the people, or organisations, that are seen as the creators of these texts.

Market Authors

This refers to named authors who are used to guide the reader, listener or viewer's expectations of what they will find within the text. For Doctor Doom in comics this would tend to mean the authors or corporate owners identified on the cover or story title, such as 'Marvel Comics' or 'Stan Lee Presents', whereas for cartoons Market Authors would be those named in the starting credits, or corporations such as 'Hanna-Barbera'.

Textual Authors

This includes all those creators who are credited within the text itself. Within a comic this would generally appear in the creator credits, while a similar list of names would appear in the end credits of cartoons and radio shows. Textual authors for Doom include Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, John Byrne and Joe Sinnott, among hundreds of others.