PANIC AT THE DISCOURSE

An Interdisciplinary Journal

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Abstract

Western superheroes are often represented as having an inherent loneliness at the base of their character. This paper affectually analyzes Batman and Wonder Woman in *Batman Begins* (2005) and *Wonder Woman* (2017) respectively to illuminate the complexity of loneliness as both a governing principle and a general public sentiment in Western society. Ultimately, superheroes are revealed to be paradoxically fighting against structures of injustice that produce and proliferate loneliness as a governing principle in Western society, while also simultaneously reinforcing said structures.

Keywords: affect, loneliness, superheroes, Batman, Wonder Woman

Superheroes have taken on a new dimension in the Western cultural imaginary, as the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and the DC Extended Universe (DCEU) have both churned out blockbusters which have dominated the action film category at the box office for the past five years. Consequently, their current presence in Western popular culture is impossible to ignore. Superheroes are as popular and powerful as ever, and yet an inherent loneliness lies at the base of their identities. There are many intersecting reasons for this foundational affect. For example, the superhero's mortal identity is erased in favour of their hero persona, thus burdening the superhero with the body-as-symbol. Furthermore, most superheroes experience unjust hardship, trauma, and sometimes oppression earlier in their lives, leaving them overwhelmed by loneliness and a drive to don the hero persona; however, these experiences of oppression and exploitation are not unique to superheroes. In fact, these aspects of existence that lead to superheroes' loneliness are everyday occurrences that are exaggerated for narrative effect. In the case of Batman, he was a child when he witnessed his parents' brutal murder, committed by Joe Chill, an impoverished criminal. When surrounded by men, Wonder Woman consistently experiences sexism not only as her human persona, Diana Prince, but also as her superhero persona. The common denominator between oppressive and traumatizing events and heroes' feelings of loneliness is the societal structures that produce and propagate these occurrences of violence; loneliness is built into Western social structures.

Superheroes have always been considered prismatic, as they reflect the general public sentiment. As loneliness becomes ingrained as an affectual result of neoliberal capitalist systems

of subjugation and exploitation in Western society, loneliness then becomes more pronounced in our superheroes. As examples, I specifically turn to the DCEU's contemporary cinematic representations of Batman in Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* (2005), and the titular character from Patty Jenkins' box office smash *Wonder Woman* (2017). These films share the superheroes' respective origin stories, which begin in vastly different circumstances and yet are linked through the affectual dimensions of loneliness as both a driving and debilitating force in the characters. Both Batman and Wonder Woman are prime examples of the exceptional, mythologized figure of the Western superhero within contemporary cinematic portrayals that illuminate societal loneliness and its affectual dynamics.

The cinematic history of superheroes begins at the end of the 1970s, as they enjoyed a resurgence of popularity resulting from, as Jean-Paul Gabilliet chronicles in his expansive history of American comic books, "the technological progress made in the field of special effects,"[1] as well as "the elevation, in Western mass culture, of the individualist paradigm juxtaposing the legitimacy of established power."[2] Although Gabilliet unfortunately moves on quickly and does not elaborate, the history that is layered within this statement contains many implications for the figure of the superhero. The "individualist paradigm" is a widely accepted social theory that, as defined by a team of psychologists and mental health workers in a comprehensive Australian study of individualism and affect, "is characterised by an independent self-construal, emotional independence, and behaviour regulated by the individual's attitudes."[3] Often associated with "creativity, economic development, and freedom," the individualist paradigm encourages growth of "competitive, achievement focused" individuals who "devalue the role of interpersonal relatedness,"[4] effectively connecting how this paradigm necessitates isolation and loneliness. These qualities fostered neoliberalism as a social system structured around the laissez-faire economic schema that characterized America from the 1970s up to the present day. As neoliberalism began to centre and build upon the qualities of the individualist paradigm, the American body-politic was rife with disappointment and disillusionment: Richard Nixon and the Watergate scandal, constant barrages of information concerning America's slow defeat in Vietnam, and many more events led the American public to distrust their governmental representatives, and, as Gabilliet suggested, question "the legitimacy of established power."[5] Although it was only in the 1989 edition of the *Code of the Comics Magazine Association of America* that the expectation of heroes as societal "role models" and "reflect[ive] [of] the prevailing social attitudes"[6] was materialized, it was always present among readers, publishers, and creators alike. As the waves of discontent and alienation from their political representatives washed over America, the superheroes of the time quickly reflected the prevailing societal affect in their own overwhelming displays of depression, isolation, and loneliness.

As an example, Batman has morphed significantly from the original character in 1939, created to ride the waves of Superman's comic-strip hero success. Though Batman originally used campy humour,[7] the comedic elements were forgone and replaced with the comic and

cinematic portrayals of a tortured, flawed man subconsciously displacing childhood trauma onto the villains of Gotham City, as well as its corrupt police force. Christopher Nolan, the director of the *Dark Knight* trilogy (2005-2012), points out, "Few superheroes have the sense of purpose and destiny that Batman has. He is driven by an incredible sense of rage, sadness and grief because of the tragedy of his parents' murder at an early age."[8] These affects drive him to don the role of Batman, the ultimate model of justice. In these later versions of Batman, the superhero mirrors the sentiment of contemporary American people struggling under the now full-fledged neoliberal paradigm, or as Ann Cvetkovich describes, "the affects associated with keeping up with corporate culture and the market economy, or with being completely neglected by it."[9] In *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Cvetkovich reveals the public nature of "*depression*, as a keyword in order to describe the affective dimensions of ordinary life in the present moment. Such an investigation emerges from important traditions of describing *how capitalism feels*,"[10] as well as "the felt sensations of the lived environment."[11]

In *Batman Begins*, Gotham City is not only a visual representation of the affectual dimensions of capitalism, as every wide image of the city features grey, mundane urban cityscapes,[12] but is also consistently personified through characters' descriptions of the city as 'depressed,' effectively taking on the alienation and pain that the citizens of Gotham experience. Rachel Dawes, Bruce's childhood friend and love interest throughout the film, describes Gotham as "rotting," even though the hegemonic narrative of Gotham is that its "depression […] is history. It's not. Things are worse than ever down here."[13] Batman's origin story channels Gotham's macroscopic 'depression' through the microscopic story of his parents' mugging, a deadly event that Chill alleges he was driven to because of the devastating poverty in Gotham. Indeed, at the prosecution of his parents' murderer, Bruce witnesses Chill express regret for what he did after the prosecutor announces to the court, "The depression hit working people, like Mr. Chill, hardest of all. His crime was […] motivated not by greed, but by desperation."[14] This declaration clearly connects Wayne's trauma and suffering to the larger societal inequities and injustices in Gotham without delegitimizing the pain of losing his parents. The prosecutor's claim clearly aligns Batman's origin story with his character's resulting subjectivity and consistent affective state. More importantly, however, the prosecutor's claim connects the deadly mugging to a broader societal "[e]pidemi[c] of depression, [which] can be related (both as symptom and as obfuscation) to long-term histories of violence that have ongoing impacts at the level of everyday emotional experience."[15]

The ability to explore Batman's affective state in any way is indebted to the labour of women, who have performed the feminized philosophical work surrounding affect, and yet his emotions are considered universal by nature of his affluent white male positionality within society. Therefore, it is necessary to explore other dimensions of loneliness that are specific to superheroes outside of the assumed universal experience of the white male, which is found in the figure of Wonder Woman, and the ways in which the loneliness she experiences is profoundly

shaped by her femininity. Even Patty Jenkins' film *Wonder Woman* begins with a soft introduction to loneliness, as Diana Prince, in the modern day, arrives at the Louvre and gazes at an old WWI-era photo of her in her Wonder Woman armour with a troupe of men.[16] Her eyes begin to tear up as the camera zooms in on a man standing directly beside her in the photo. The Amazonian inability to age, Diana's presence in the modern day, and her nostalgic, reminiscing gaze indicate to the viewer that everyone in the aged, stained photo is dead, leaving Diana as the lone carrier of their memories. Diana is then revealed to be Princess Diana of Themyscira, an Amazon with superhuman powers from the Greek gods and raised by her mother, Queen Hippolyta. As a result of her heritage, Diana never met a man until the American in the photo, Steve Trevor, crash lands his plane on the Amazons' isolated island nation and unleashes a chain of events that lead to Diana leaving Themyscira and hunting down Ares, a god terrorizing Earth in the form of WWI's Axis military powers. Before Diana sets sail for Britain to end WWI, Queen Hippolyta informs Diana, "If you choose to leave, you may never return,"[17] to which Diana asks her mother, "Who would I be if I stayed?"[18] Here, Diana reveals the nature of her existence: to leave, she will be lonely, as the sole Amazon out in an unknown, violent world, and yet to stay would undermine Diana's entire identity, founded upon her belief in a stark difference between good and evil.

Diana embarks on her voyage to Britain with Steve, who remains shocked at her obliviousness to certain Western behaviours and structures, a reaction that foreshadows Diana's loneliness and isolation from the rest of the world. As an example, Steve sleeps beside Diana after initially suggesting that it was inappropriate,[19] an assumption that reflects the constant sexualization of women within patriarchal Western culture. Diana, in response, does not understand what Steve attempts to imply,[20] because she never developed the self-objectifying lenses that are conditioned into women as a result of the hegemonic patriarchal nature of Western societal structures. Furthermore, after their arrival in London, Diana is consistently barraged with moments of objectification and sexism, such as a small group of British soldiers catcalling her, to which she merely looks surprised and confused.[21] The deeper Steve and Diana move into the heart of London, depicted as the strategic epicentre of the Allied effort in the war, the more confusion and isolation Diana experiences when witnessing or being subjected to patriarchal expectations. Another example occurs after acquiescing to Steve's insistence that they visit his military superiors, the Supreme War Council, before heading to the Western Front and completing Diana's mission. In this scene, Diana begins to walk away from Steve with her hands on her hips, revealing her armour underneath her thick cape.[22] Notably, Steve grabs her arms to close her cape, fiercely whispering to Diana, "You can't do that because you're not wearing any clothes," while glancing around, embarrassed.[23] Here, Steve moves Diana's arms from an assertive to submissive position when he grabs her and pulls her back towards him, an active and violent policing of Diana's appearance and body language for not seeming more conventionally feminine under Western standards.

Steve's sexist behaviours continue, as he consistently directs Diana physically through London by holding the small of her back[24] or grabbing her arm,[25] actions implying both male dominance and Steve's lack of confidence in Diana because of her fierce femininity. Steve's apprehension to treat Diana as an equal is additionally evidenced in a telling scene: Steve takes Diana to the office of the Supreme War Council, telling her to wait outside before entering during the middle of a man's speech.[26] Diana does not listen and follows Steve into the room, to which everyone falls silent at her appearance, and someone out of frame bitterly mutters, "There's a woman in here."[27] Steve apologizes to the men and leads Diana out, but not before labelling her as his "blind sister" in an attempt at explanation to his colleagues.[28] After the meeting, Steve's superior berates him for bringing a woman into the council room and ignores Diana completely, even though he clearly offends her during his criticism of Steve.[29] Steve later takes Diana into another meeting of the Supreme War Council, and introduces her as his secretary,[30] marking the second occasion Steve labels Diana according to societally appropriate codes at the time, in which a woman was defined only in relation to the men in her life, such as a sister, wife, mother, or employee. Diana protests when Steve's commander orders him not to return to the warfront, and Steve attempts to interrupt her, forcefully telling her, "Listen, Diana, I know this is confusing," before she cuts him off and asserts, "This is not confusing."[31] Steve then tries to placate the Council rather than Diana, turning to the men and explaining, "She's with me," but Diana interrupts Steve again, pushes him aside, and yells, "I am not! I am not with you!"[32] She eventually storms out of the office, fed up with the unsympathetic men willing to "sacrifice" the lives of the soldiers on the front, "[a]s if they mean less than [the Council's lives], as if they mean nothing."[33] Although this film is set during WWI, it is important to note that some of these experiences with sexism are still common in the modern day; it may not always be as obvious as the Supreme War Council silencing and removing Diana from the room, but many praxes and structures currently in place still work to silence, define, delegitimize, and oppress women, such as 'mansplaining,' school dress codes, and objectifying advertisements. Indeed, Western society's unwillingness to make space for and listen to assertive, intelligent, and powerful women like Diana is merely one facet of Diana's alienation from humanity as a whole.

Diana's loneliness and isolation are also due to her status as an object among a sea of subjects. Among the men at war, Diana is not initially acknowledged as an equal despite the fact that her abilities far succeed any of the soldiers' strengths. It is not until Diana proves herself as a valuable weapon in the war effort that the men finally respect her and allow her to make her own decisions. This dynamic is perhaps best implicitly exemplified in the ways that the relationship between Diana and Steve change. Before Steve was aware of Diana's superhero status, he consistently told her to "stay here" whenever there was danger,[34] but after Diana crosses No Man's Land and takes the enemy's trenches at the Belgian front,[35] Steve accepts Diana's direction to "stay here," behind some cover, while she "go[es] ahead" and clears a way for the men.[36] This flip in respect for Diana is voiced by Sammy, a soldier who objectified Diana upon

meeting her, calling her a "work of art,"[37] but he eventually tells Steve, "We all know Diana is capable of taking care of herself," before joking that he was more "worried that you [Steve] won't make it."[38] *Wonder Woman*, touted and advertised as a feminist championship for Western media upon its release, frames Diana as worthy of men's respect and attention only when she proves her use value to further the war effort in masculinized ways, such as destroying weapons and blowing up enemies.

Importantly, Wonder Woman is interpellated into a violent governing structure that upholds and protects the systems and values in Western society that founded and spread the "epidemic"[39] of loneliness: the military-industrial complex. As a weapon for the Allies, Diana is complicit in fighting and killing alongside soldiers even though, at the beginning of the film, she states, "Amazons were created by the Gods to influence men's hearts with love, and to restore peace to the Earth."[40] Arguably, the Allied powers were also attempting to restore peace during WWI, but this intention does not negate the environmental destruction, neocolonialism, and affectual damage that the military-industrial complex, and therefore Diana, promulgate throughout the film. Diana is even made aware of the effects of war, as she sees the "awful"[41] injuries and shell-shocked states of the men at war, and is told by Chief, an Indigenous man who smuggles her and Steve's team into Belgium, that he has "nowhere to go"[42] as a result of the displacement "[Steve's] people,"[43] the colonizers, imposed upon Indigenous peoples. Diana oddly seems to take Chief's testimony as a validation of war, and the next scene features Diana running across No Man's Land as triumphant and inspirational music plays.[44] This image clearly aligns Diana's rush to war with bravery and justice, despite her complicity in the incredibly oppressive and problematic military-industrial complex and geo-political structures. Furthermore, Gal Gadot, the actress to portray Wonder Woman in the film, is an ex-member and vocal supporter of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and their colonial decimation of Palestine. Here, it is obvious that the dynamics of war in *Wonder Woman* are very real and reanimated into the present day; Gadot's complicity in the violent and colonial military-industrial complex mirrors Wonder Woman's complicity in the same praxis, albeit in different time periods. This dynamic effectively strengthens these systems of inequality that produce and proliferate loneliness as a general societal affect, while also implicating the white feminist tendency to legitimate colonialism as a form of humanitarianism.

Most superheroes are threatening to humanity's overarching economic and governmental structure, as they have the potential and prerogative to dismantle whatever they deem to be immoral societal systems. As a result, the superhero must be reined in and incorporated into Western society in order to ensure that their conception of immorality is one that aligns with Western values and, thus, benefits societal structures that birth endemic loneliness. In "Disaster, Crisis, Revolution," Eric Cazdyn notes, "[C]rises are built right into many systems themselves; systems are structured so that crises will occur, strengthening and reproducing the systems themselves. The boom-bust cycle of capitalism is only one of the more obvious examples of this

logical necessity."[45] Superheroes, as crises-in-waiting, are beings that are incorporated into Western economic and governmental structures and, more broadly, white Western patriarchal values, ultimately fighting to uphold the very hegemonic systems that facilitate everyday injustices. Batman takes on the role of the Gotham City police when mounting a defense against the League of Shadows, who rightly pointed out that Gotham was "a breeding ground for suffering and injustice,"[46] but believed it was "beyond saving and must be allowed to die"[47] at their hands. Ultimately, Batman saves Gotham City from the League, and, in the last scene of the film, Lieutenant Gordan of the Gotham City police asks Batman for help catching the Joker.[48] This scene sets the film up nicely as the primary bookend of Nolan's Dark Knight trilogy and, more importantly, depicts one of Western society's most devastating structures, the prison-industrial complex, interpellating Batman into its scope of power. Indeed, Batman agreeing to help Lt. Gordan put criminals in jail effectively "strengthen[s] and reproduc[es]"[49] all societal structures, as the prison-industrial complex and its contingent powers are deeply interwoven with every level and facet of Western life. Consequently, Batman only reinforces and protects the conditions that led to the affective foundation of his identity: loneliness.

It is necessary to note that, while heterogeneous superheroes are necessary for the purpose of effective and ethical representation, interpellating non-conforming bodies, such as Wonder Woman, into these hegemonic structures of white patriarchal normativity ultimately works to incorporate and nullify the threat of resistant ways of being against established hierarchal systems of power. Wonder Woman stands as a non-conforming body not only because she has superpowers but also because she is a woman moving through spaces that only accept masculine bodies. *Wonder Woman* features a telling scene in which Steve's secretary, Etta Candy, takes Diana shopping for an outfit less "distracting" than her armour,[50] immediately implying that her practical armour is less important than her appearance. She also engages in discourses surrounding women's bodies as shameful, necessary to hide, and inherently sexual objects. For instance, when trying on dresses, to Etta's dismay, Diana continually bends and lunges, asking exasperatedly, "How could a woman possibly fight in this?"[51] After finding an outfit that Diana agrees to, she walks out of the store with her sword and shield, which Steve then directs Etta to take back to his office without consulting Diana.[52] Diana is clearly interpellated into Western patriarchal society in this scene, as she is forced to wear feminine British clothes to quite literally 'fit in,' and these clothes are, as Diana implied, incredibly restricting, a metaphor for the way she feels policed in the patriarchal society she unknowingly entered. Furthermore, Diana is immediately separated from some of the key items she brought from her homeland, her sword and shield, because they do not, as Etta explains cheekily, "match the outfit."[53] Diana's body, feminized by the dress she dons, is thus deemed unworthy to carry her own sword and shield, obvious symbols of masculine power in British society that were historically popularized not only through their usage in war but also through family crests that are still passed down through patriarchal lineages. It is further notable that Etta takes the sword

and shield back to the office of the Supreme War Council, an incredibly masculine space where it is made clear that Diana is not welcome.[54] In these ways, Diana's souvenirs of her homeland are quite literally ripped from her hands, symbolizing the pressure to assimilate into Western society and its patriarchal roles for women that leave Diana feeling offended, ignored, isolated, and, ultimately, lonely.

Clearly, the ways in which loneliness manifests in the lives of Batman and Wonder Woman greatly differ, and yet they share a similar facet of their loneliness, along with all superheroes, as these extraordinary beings experience a drastic Cartesian split because of society's process of idolization. At the beginning of his book, *Loneliness as a Way of Life*, a personal and philosophical exploration meant to dive into the concept of loneliness and alienation, Thomas Dumm reads Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Lear* through the lens of grief, loss, and loneliness. He considers the ways in which Lear's familial ties grow out of "profound sorrow, a recognition that they have suffered something awful already in their lives,"[55] which Dumm locates as the death of the Queen, leaving Lear's daughters without a mother and Lear without a companion. In the play's famous storm scene, which features King Lear physically struggling against the natural elements to reflect the strife in his mind, Dumm points to the ways in which Lear's "struggle is somatic, his body revolting against his soul,"[56] and thus he experiences a severe "Cartesian split between body and mind."[57] Dumm rightly outlines that this split "is a fact of life for sovereign beings, well described in the medieval doctrine of the King's Two Bodies, in which God's chosen sovereign is said to possess both a mortal and an immortal body,"[58] but never elaborates on the *affectual violence* that the Cartesian split entails.

As a king, Lear's subjectivity is radically separated from his mortal body, and his body is then produced as an immortal symbol of sovereignty. In "Affective Economies," critical race and gender theorist Sara Ahmed uses an economic metaphor to explore the ways in which affect is "produced only as an effect of its circulation" and "distribut[ion] across a social as well as psychic field."[59] Extending Dumm's analysis of *King Lear* to analyze the affectual violence of the Cartesian split illuminates how Lear's body, as a representation of sovereignty, accumulates its affectual meaning via its dissemination through society. Consequently, Lear's body is constructed as a representation of sovereignty, and is never fully able to represent his own subjectivity, as his mortal identity is entirely erased and silenced in favour of *symbolic value*. This violent dynamic induces loneliness and isolation, as the king's subjectivity can never be fully articulated, and thus he is always already closed off from meaningful relationships, leaving him essentially stranded in a symbol. Superhero narratives work in a similar fashion, often choosing to highlight the extraordinary nature of the figure and attach a specific meaning to the superhero's body that erases the presence of their mortal identity, which in the case of Batman and Wonder Woman are their human personas, Bruce Wayne and Diana Prince, respectively.

The "immortal body"[60] that the superhero is burdened with is the body-as-symbol, imbued with specific meanings within the cultural imaginary, such as justice or responsibility.

The superhero's body-as-symbol is a theme more thoroughly explored in *Batman Begins* than in *Wonder Woman*, effectively evidenced in Bruce's initial thoughts while brainstorming his masked crusader persona, musing, "As a man, I'm flesh and blood. I can be ignored, destroyed. But as a symbol, I can be incorruptible. I can be everlasting."[61] Further, during one of the film's last scenes, Bruce freely admits to Rachel, "Batman is just a symbol."[62] Batman's presence effectively silences Bruce Wayne and his mortal desires, as Rachel rejects Bruce's admission of love because she cannot be with him while he is Batman.[63] Indeed, for Batman to stand as a beacon of hope for Gotham City, Bruce's mortality and fallibility as a human must be silenced and ignored. Towards the end of the film as R'as al Ghoul burns down Wayne Manor, the family home full of Bruce's childhood memories but the Bat Cave is notably untouched, hidden beneath the foundations of the mansion.[64] This event indicates that Bruce is free of his family's significant influence over Gotham, as well as the tragic and haunting story of his parents' murder. Additionally, Bruce boards up the well that he fell into as a child that initiated his crippling fear of bats,[65] a clear demonstration of Bruce actively erasing his formative history to make room for Batman's overwhelming presence. Similarly, Diana leaves her homeland and family to ultimately become Wonder Woman, a blank slate upon which people project hope, justice, and truth, demonstrated when Diana saves a small Belgian village and stands before the townspeople as they clap, cheer, and give her gifts,[66] like offerings to a deity. Although taking on a superhero persona is technically a *choice*, the two films make it quite clear that it is one that both Bruce and Diana see as necessary to save Gotham and the world, respectively. Just because both heroes willingly and consciously endure the lonely and dissonant nature of societal idolization does not make it less present.

The affectual dynamics of loneliness are vast, political, embodied, and deeper than the well that Bruce fell into as a child. Superheroes, as prisms of the general societal state, allow analysis of the many individual facets that formulate loneliness in its entirety, such as sexism and misogyny, as well as the lonely nature of idolization. Unfortunately, the interpellation of superheroes into Western hegemonic structures that are founded upon inequality strengthens the everyday and historical injustices that occur rather than dismantling said structures. Although there are many routes of analysis beyond the affectual dynamic of loneliness that feed into and intersect with superhero narratives, they all conclude in the startling placation of the body-politic through the affect that sticks to these extraordinary figures. In other words, as long as representations of these superheroes are circulated and disseminated as exceptional beings within Western hegemonic values, traditionally 'positive' affects, such as hope, trust, and excitement, will stick to their bodies. This effectively hides from the body-politic the actual work of strengthening, reproducing, and maintaining inequitable societal structures that these superheroes comply with. As a result, their complicity ironically buttresses the loneliness that is the affectual base of many Western societal structures, such as the military-industrial complex, poverty, and sexism. Ultimately, as superheroes simultaneously fight against and are complicit in the very

systems they purport to fight against, the ways in which loneliness is a necessity for these governing systems is illuminated. Due to the driving force of isolation and loneliness in superhero narratives, it is impossible to escape, and will paradoxically push the superhero further into both their own and others' oppression.

Notes

[1] Jean-Paul Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of American Comic Books*, trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 309.

[2] Ibid, 309.

[3] Greg Scott, Joseph Ciarrochi, and Frank P. Deane, "Disadvantages of Being an Individualist in an Individualistic Culture: Idiocentrism, Emotional Competence, Stress, and Mental Health," *Australian Psychologist* 39, no. 2 (2004): 143-54.

[4] Ibid, 143.

[5] Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men*, 309.

[6] Ibid, 321.

[7] Ibid, 19.

[8] Marc Graser and Cathy Dunkley, "The Bat and the Beautiful," *Variety*, February 8, 2004, https://variety.com/2004/biz/news/the-bat-and-the-beautiful-1117899714.

[9] Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 12.

[10] Ibid, 11. Emphasis in original.

[11] Ibid.

[12] *Batman Begins*, directed by Christopher Nolan (Hollywood, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2005), 1:52:37.

[13] Ibid, 00:26:45.

[14] Ibid, 00:24:21.

[15] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 7.

[16] *Wonder Woman*, directed by Patty Jenkins (Hollywood, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2017), 00:02:37.

[17] Ibid, 00:37:29.

[18] Ibid, 00:37:36.

[19] Ibid, 00:41:50.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid, 00:47:16.

[22] Ibid, 00:47:30-00:48:04.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid, 00:47:00.

[25] Ibid, 00:48:00; 00:52:36.

[26] Ibid, 00:54:33.

[27] Ibid, 00:55:05.

[28] Ibid, 00:55:20.

[29] Ibid, 00:55:45.

[30] Ibid, 00:57:29.

[31] Ibid, 00:59:00.

[32] Ibid, 00:59:16.

[33] Ibid, 1:00:04.

[34] Ibid, 00:52:36.

[35] Ibid, 1:14:07-1:14:29.

[36] Ibid, 1:17:10.

[37] Ibid, 1:01:23.

[38] Ibid, 1:29:45.

[39] Cvetkovich, *Depression*, 13.

[40] *Wonder Woman* (2017), 00:07:17.

41 Ibid, 1:06:58.
42 Ibid, 1:10:45.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid, 1:14:07-1:14:29.
45 Eric Cazdyn, "Disaster, Crisis, Revolution," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106, no. 4 (2007): 647-62.
46 *Batman Begins*, 00:37:29.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid, 2:10:37.
49 Cazdyn, "Disaster," 649.
50 *Wonder Woman* (2017), 00:48:58.
51 Ibid., 00:49:56.
52 Ibid., 00:51:03.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., 00:55:05; 00:59:00.
55 Thomas Dumm, *Loneliness as a Way of Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 3.
58 Ibid., 3-4.
59 Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 120.
60 Dumm, *Loneliness*, 4.
61 *Batman Begins* (2005), 00:42:03.
62 Ibid., 2:06:12.
63 Ibid., 2:07:26.
64 Ibid., 1:49:50.
65 Ibid., 2:06:05.
66 *Wonder Woman* (2017), 1:19:22.