Secondary Publication

Favaro, Marco

Devil in Heaven : The Role of Matt Murdock's Parents and Friends in the Creation of Daredevil's Identity

Date of secondary publication: 24.11.2025

Version of Record (Published Version), Article

Persistent identifier: urn:nbn:de:bvb:473-irb-111584x

Primary publication

Favaro, Marco (2025): Devil in Heaven : The Role of Matt Murdock's Parents and Friends in the Creation of Daredevil's Identity, in: Heroism Science, Richmond, Vol. 10, Nr. 2, 2, pp. 1–34, doi: 10.26736/hs.2025.02.02.

Legal Notice

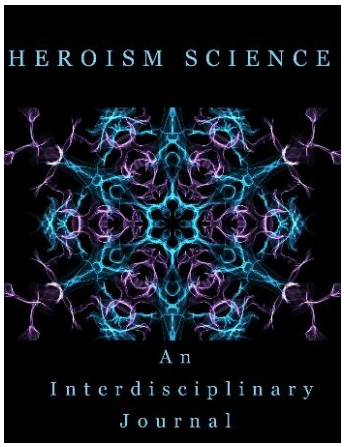
This work is protected by copyright and/or the indication of a licence. You are free to use this work in any way permitted by the copyright and/or the licence that applies to your usage. For other uses, you must obtain permission from the rights-holders.

This document is made available under a Creative Commons license.

The license information is available online:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode

Heroism Science: An Interdisciplinary Journal (ISSN 2573-7120) https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science/

Vol. 10 No. 2 (2025) pp. 1-34



Devil in Heaven: The Role of Matt Murdock's Parents and Friends in the Creation of Daredevil's Identity

MARCO FAVARO[1]

University of Europe for Applied Sciences

marco-favaro@outlook.it

ABSTRACT: Traumas and losses mark superheroes´ lives from the beginning. Often orphans, superheroes start their journey with the loss of a paternal or maternal figure. This tragedy destroys their previous world and identity, but it also gives them a purpose. The superhero character, Daredevil, is no exception; he experiences loss and pain, too. Matt Murdock's life is marked by the death of many people close to him, starting with the loss of his father, which leaves the deepest scar on him. The assumption of the "super" identity is necessary to replace the previous one, shattered by the trauma suffered. Matt, traumatized, needs to create a new persona. This new persona comes with a new worldview and values, a new moral code that conflicts with the mainstream one. Daredevil's story highlights the contradictions of his character involving the balancing of his violent vigilantism with an Übermenschliche morality.

KEYWORDS: *Daredevil, Matt Murdock, Mask, Trauma, Parents, Superhero, Übermensch, Identity*

Article history

Received: October 15, 2024

Received in revised form: May 13, 2025

Accepted: May 22, 2025

Available online: July 1, 2025

[1] Copyright 2025 Heroism Science
DOI 10.26736/hs.2025.02.02
ISSN: 2573-7120 | Licensed under the Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC By-NC-ND)

1 INTRODUCTION

Daredevil is a superhero marked by strong contradictions, whose origins can be traced back to Matt Murdock's relationship with his parents. Matt's strong bond with his parents and his religious beliefs contribute to defining him. At the same time, they highlight the contradictions that characterize the character: son of a violent boxer and a charitable nun, a Catholic believer and an avenging devil, an upstanding lawyer and a criminal vigilante, always in balance between a Catholic and an *Übermenschliche* morality. The contradictions that mark the lives of many superheroes reach extreme levels in Daredevil.

In this article, several relationships will be considered that, in part, reflect the inner struggles that define the identity of the Devil of Hell´s Kitchen. First, the relationship with his father and mother, who, since Matt´s childhood, have created a person torn between two different worlds. This split can also be seen later in the relationships of friendship (Foggy and Stick) and love (Elektra and Karen). We will also consider different classic Daredevil stories, especially Frank Miller's Born Again, Joe Quesada's Father, and Ed Brubaker and Brian M. Bendis' saga. These comics will be compared with the Netflix series *Marvel: Daredevil*.

2 OVERVIEW OF DAREDEVIL

Traumas and losses mark the lives of superheroes from the very beginning. Often orphans, they begin their journey with the loss of a maternal or paternal figure. This tragedy shatters their previous world and identity, but it also gives them a purpose. Daredevil is no exception: he, too, experiences profound loss and pain. In fact, he faces a number of traumas—remarkable even by superhero standards. He grows up without his mother; a radioactive accident leaves him blind; his father is murdered by the mafia. And that is only the beginning of his story.

Although Daredevil's story follows the classic tropes of the superhero genre, the character stands out due to the particularly intense and illustrative nature of the contradictions and conflicts that always emerge between the superhero's civilian and super identities. For this reason, an analysis of how Daredevil's nonhuman identity—his mask—is constructed, especially in relation to the familial and emotional influences in his life, is significant not only for understanding this specific character but also for gaining deeper insight into the structural contradictions inherent in all superheroes. Daredevil thus serves here as a kind of case study: an emblematic and, in many ways, extreme example of tensions and contradictions common across superhero figures.

Matt's life continues to be shaped by the deaths of those close to him: most notably, both of his lovers, Elektra and Karen Page, are killed by Bullseye. Yet it is the death of his father that leaves the deepest scar. In both the comics and the Netflix series, Matt remains haunted by his father's memory long after his violent death. He constantly strives to meet the expectations of a man who is no longer there, but whose presence still looms large—especially in the storyline titled *Father*. In the 2003 film adaptation, Daredevil even adopts the nickname once given to his father, Jack "The Devil" Murdock, as part of his own vigilante persona.

His mother also plays a crucial role in his life. In *Born Again* by Frank Miller (which inspired the third season of *Marvel's Daredevil*), she reappears alive, having taken religious vows and become a nun. She finds Matt when he is psychologically broken and on the verge of madness, and helps him piece himself back together.

Both parents are thus fundamental to the formation of Matt's identity—especially in the creation of Daredevil's mask. As with other superheroes, the emergence of a "super" identity is necessary to replace the shattered civilian self, left behind by trauma. Traumatized, Matt must forge a new persona. He must don a mask—not only to hide, but to reveal a

radically new identity. With this new self comes a new worldview, new values, and a moral code that often clashes with conventional ethics. Matt's parents are not the only influential figures in his life: characters like Foggy Nelson, Stick, Karen Page, and Elektra also shape both his civilian and superhero selves—and at times, intensify the conflict between them.

Daredevil is a superhero defined by stark contradictions, many of which can be traced back to his parents. His deep bond with both parents and his religious faith shape him, but also lay bare the tensions within his identity: he is the son of a violent boxer and a charitable nun; a devout Catholic and a vengeful devil; a principled lawyer and a criminal vigilante—constantly walking the tightrope between Catholic morality and an Übermensch-like ethics. The contradictions common to many superheroes are brought to an extreme in Daredevil's story.

This analysis will examine several key Daredevil storylines, particularly Frank Miller's *Born Again*, Joe Quesada's *Father*, and the saga by Ed Brubaker and Brian M. Bendis. These comics will be compared to the Netflix series *Marvel's Daredevil* and the 2003 film. We have chosen to examine different versions of the character to highlight the consistent, underlying elements that persist across adaptations. Although each author and medium portrays Daredevil differently, there is a shared "core" to the character. In all the versions considered here, Daredevil's identity is inextricably shaped by his father's influence, and the complex contradictions that define Matt—reflected in his relationships with his parents and others—transcend any one interpretation and point to the very essence of the character. If we were to outline an essential, recurring version of Daredevil's biography—one that remains largely consistent despite variations in detail—it might look like this (readers less familiar with the character can refer to this summary):

Raised by his single father, Jack Murdock—a boxer entangled with the mob—Matt promises to pursue a nonviolent life devoted to study, only to see his father murdered for

refusing to throw a fight. Struck in the face by radioactive waste, he is rendered blind, but the accident enhances his remaining senses and grants him a radar-like ability akin to that of a bat. His sensei, Stick, trains him to harness and control these newfound powers. Shaken by his father's murder and seeking justice, Matt assumes the superhero identity of Daredevil, using his heightened abilities to bring the killers to justice. Meanwhile, he begins practicing law, opening a firm with his friend and colleague, Foggy Nelson. There, he meets the great love of his life, Karen Page, initially hired as the firm's secretary. Another great love is Elektra, the deadly ninja. In many versions of the story, both women are murdered by Bullseye—a deadly assassin with perfect aim and one of Daredevil's most dangerous foes. Matt's mother, long believed to be dead, reappears later in his life, revealing that she had left the family to take religious vows. This reunion marks a pivotal moment in the character's story. Around the same time, Wilson Fisk—also known as the Kingpin, Daredevil's most iconic nemesis—uncovers Matt's secret identity. This revelation permanently alters the course of Daredevil's narrative: from that point onward, Matt's double life is constantly at risk, and the liminal space between his civilian and superhero selves becomes increasingly unstable—an aspect that forms the core of the Bendis and Brubaker run.

Although certain details vary—such as Matt's age when his father dies or whether Karen and Elektra are killed—these plot points can be considered key milestones in the character's mythos. To analyze the contradictions that define the identity of the Devil of Hell's Kitchen, we will draw upon several key concepts—central not only to the superhero genre, but also to the broader relationship between the individual and their mask. The first is the concept of the mask itself. This is a central theme in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy, and it will be crucial here in interpreting the mask not as a "false" identity, but as one equal to the civilian self—an identity created to impose meaning on an otherwise absurd world.

Continuing with Nietzschean philosophy, understanding the mask also means understanding the tension between order and chaos—between absurdity (which, according to Nietzsche, reveals the Dionysian essence of reality) and the meaning imposed on it by humans through illusions—masks—crafted as survival strategies. A concept related to that of Dionysian, which we will briefly explore, is the Jungian idea of the Shadow. Similar to the Freudian Id, the Shadow—representing often destructive and repressed aspects of the self—can be compared to the Dionysian qualities that individuals suppress through Apollonian illusions. Just as the Dionysian embodies both destruction and creativity, the Shadow also does not solely unleash negative chaos but can offer a path to liberation and positivity.

The Shadow also offers us a cue to view the identity of the individual not as something univocal and fixed, but rather as something fragmented—an aspect that is evident in the dual identity typical of superheroes. Indeed, closely tied to the mask is another key concept: liminality. As we shall see, a superhero can only exist as such by remaining in a liminal state: between human and nonhuman, legality and illegality, civilian and superhuman identities. Once this liminal state collapses, the superhero ceases to exist as such, becoming indistinguishable from either the villain or the antihero. Let us begin here.

3 HONOUR THY FATHER

Superheroes are inherently contradictory figures, suspended in a liminal state—divided between the human world, represented by their civilian identity, and the inhuman realm of the mask, where the "super" self emerges. As Kaveney notes, "Superheroes […] exist at the threshold between states – it is the threshold that is important rather than the states it lies between, which is why liminality […] is a useful descriptive term here" (Kaveney, 2008, 5). It is precisely this state of in-betweenness that defines the superhero, rather than either of the two identities in isolation. Liminality expresses itself not only in their dual

identity, but also in their relationship with society, their interaction with the human world, and in their moral and ethical choices (see Favaro, 2022, 47–71; 115–119).

Daredevil is no exception; on the contrary, the tension between his two selves is particularly intense. He is both an upstanding lawyer and an outlaw vigilante, a devout Catholic and an avenging devil, blind and yet gifted with echolocation, and heightened senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The Devil of Hell's Kitchen is a profoundly complex and contradictory character. It is precisely this concentration of contradictions—more explicit and radical than in many other superheroes—that makes Daredevil a particularly effective case study. By analyzing him, it becomes possible to better understand the internal tensions that define the superhero figure in general.

Matt's contradictions are already evident in his relationship with his father. Jack "Battlin'" Murdock is undoubtedly the most influential figure in his life. Left to raise his son alone after Matt's mother abandoned them, Jack does his best to offer Matt a future different from his own. As an aging boxer entangled with the mob, Jack dreams of a better life for his son and pushes him to focus on education: "I promised your mother, before she died, that I wouldn't let you grow up to be an uneducated pug like me!" These are the first words exchanged between father and son in *Daredevil #1* (Lee and Everett, 1964). Jack makes Matt promise that he will never fight.

Matt devotes himself to studying in order to make his father proud. But the example Jack sets is deeply ambiguous. "I made a promise to my father that I wouldn't solve things with my fists. Like he did. The greatest guy in the world, and he didn't want me to grow up to be like him" (Loeb and Sale, 2011). Night after night, Jack returns home bloodied and bruised, only to step back into the ring again and again—each time "letting the devil out" (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2015, S.1, E.1). Watching this, Matt—though committed to his books—secretly trains himself. Like his father, he is a fighter: "Matt cannot get out from his father's

shadow. His father, a boxer, doesn't want his son to become a fighter. […] In fact, they both have become fighters" (Langley, 2018, 197).

But there is more. Though Jack teaches Matt values like honesty and justice, he also works as an enforcer for a local mob boss. Matt idolizes his father for his courage in the ring, but when he discovers that Jack is also a thug for hire, he feels both rage and sorrow: "I discover that dad also made a bit of spare charge roughing up the locals on behalf of the neighborhood wise guys. As a kid, I saw a lot of bad stuff" (Quesada, 2007). And yet, Matt never stops loving or admiring him. Jack remains a central figure in his life: "My father was a good man. A good man caught up in a bad situation. A bad situation that eventually brought him loneliness. Loneliness that introduced him to the bottle. Which made him do bad things. Which brought him right back to the bottle. This place, this place was a turning point for both of us. My father, my hero, beating on the local butcher, extorting money for the neighbourhood wise guy. It was the first time my father ever saw himself through my eyes. It was the beginning of my seeing the world through his" (Quesada, 2007).

The lifelong conflict between Matt's two identities originates in this relationship. Jack passes on to his son a fighter's spirit—his passion, his rage—yet demands that Matt suppress it, study hard, and become something different. As Langley and Hanefalk put it: "He struggles to suppress his inherent nature in order to concentrate on his studies to satisfy the father he admires" (2018, 19). In many ways, Matt's "daredevil" nature is inherited directly from Jack.

Another element that defines their relationship is guilt. In the Netflix series especially, young Matt feels personally responsible for his father's death: "It's my fault. I did it. I killed him," he yells at Stick during training (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2015, S.1, E.7). Disappointed and angry, Matt implores Jack to make the right choice. In a role reversal, Jack attempts to make

his son proud. He battles with everything he has, wins the match he was supposed to lose—and is killed for it.

"Perhaps he just couldn't stand the sight of his own reflection in his little boy's eyes. But one day Jack Murdock dug deep and found that part of himself that used to be noble and good and uncompromised by the world. He found his soul. And with that.....he saved mine," remembers Matt in *Father* by Joe Quesada (2007). For this reason, Jack is murdered. Executive producer DeKnight explains:

> there's a massive amount of guilt that he feels for his father's death because they have a conversation right before his dad is supposed to throw this boxing match. Young Matt […] is pushing his dad not to throw the fight, not to take the dirty money. And that's what really gets to Jack. He wants his son to be proud of him. […] Matt carries that around with him all the time – that if he hadn't said that, his father would still be alive (Langley and Busch, 2018, 47).

It is not after gaining his power through the radiation accident that Matt chooses to be a superhero; instead, it is his father's assassination that gives rise to Daredevil. Like other superheroes, Daredevil's origins are marked by a traumatic, painful, and unacceptable event. After his father's death, Matt's world falls apart, and his life loses meaning. Confronting this inconsolable grief and dull suffering, Matt feels powerless to ease the pain, suddenly feeling emptied and drained. His world makes no sense anymore; his daily dimension falls apart, and so does his identity.

Friedrich Nietzsche clarifies the connections between grief and the search for meaning. He writes: "Man, […] does not deny suffering as such: he wills it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of

suffering, not the suffering, was the curse which has so far blanketed mankind" (Nietzsche, 2014, 411, trans. Carol Diethe). Suffering disrupts the balance and rekindles the human need to find a reason to survive in the world. Pain is unacceptable and senseless in itself; if you cannot avoid it, then you must find a way to justify it. You need to find meaning in the chaos. The creation of a new identity symbolizes the will to establish meaning despite loss and affliction; it is a reaction against the absurd, which has violently torn apart the meaning of the hero's existence up to that point.

An original trauma from which the "super" identity is created is common to all superheroes. Indeed, a dramatic origin story unites heroes and villains, as pointed out by Peter Coogan, who writes, "Villainy and heroism proceed out of the same confrontation with absurdity" (2006, 106). Several authors indicate that trauma always plays a key role in the superhero narrative (I.a. See Langley, ch. 3, 2012; Duggan, 2016, 47-67; Favaro, 2022, 71-80; Travers, 2023, 215-28). However, compared to other superheroes, Daredevil stands out because the "Daredevil" identity is already partly present inside Matt, embodying the fighter's soul that his father wanted to repress. The Daredevil identity also takes shape to bypass the promise Matt made to his dad: "one of the reasons he adopts a costumed identity is to circumvent his childhood promise to his father that he will not resort to fighting and violence: Daredevil is not the one who made the promise, he argues to himself" (Sharp, 2018, 188-189).

The choice of giving his mask the look of a devil is meaningful. On the one hand, it connects him to his father: especially in the 2003 movie, the father's nickname in the ring was Jack "The Devil" Murdock, not "Battlein" (Daredevil, 2003). By dressing like a devil, Matt follows in the footsteps of Jack, the boxer and fighter. His first costume is indeed made from his father's old yellow robe (Loeb and Sale, 2011). On the other hand, Matt's costume frees his personal devil and inhuman side. The devil inside him takes shape. "Donning a mask can

be liberating" (Langley and Hanefalk, 2018, 24-25), not only because of the anonymity: the mask of Daredevil not only hides but also reveals a new identity. The mask wants to be seen. Matt is not just hiding behind the mask; he is showing his inner devil and becoming it. "That mask lets him unleash the daredevil side he long ago learned to hide" (Langley and Hanefalk, 2018, 24-25).

By wearing Daredevil's mask, Matt embarks on a mission and establishes a new meaning for the world. While he gradually distances himself from the human identity his father wanted for him, Matt liberates his shadow, his inner devil—who was also, despite his intention, influenced by his father. "Murdock is a character both tormented and liberated by his Shadow side," writes Laura Vecchiolla (2018, 185).

Vecchiolla uses the Jungian term "Shadow" to describe Matt's masked identity. In Jung, the archetype of the Shadow represents the repressed part of our personality (1969). Although we are our shadow ("The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow" (Jung, 1969, 37)), it appears monstrous - in fact, it takes on the appearance of a devil in Matt's case. However, the shadow is not only monstrous: "Just as the ego contains unfavourable and destructive attitudes, so the shadow has good qualities - normal instincts and creative impulses," writes Henderson (1988, 118). Wearing the mask, then, means for Matt to liberate his Shadow and is experienced as liberation. Yet the shadow exists insofar as it is repressed; the relationship with it is inevitably tormented and painful.

This suffering can be traced back to Jack. Daredevil comes into being because Matt represses his "fighter" side to honor his promise to his father. Indeed, by setting free his inner devil, Matt betrays his father's wishes—while at the same time, he is closer to him, thanks to the burning passion that his father passes on to him. "Be careful of the Murdock boys. They got the devil in 'em," tells Matt in the confessional in the first episode of *Marvel's Daredevil* (2015, S. 1, E. 1).

According to Nietzsche, we can interpret human life as a tension between two seemingly opposing realities, exemplified by the Greek deities Dionysus and Apollo. The former embodies absurdity and chaos, while the latter represents the rules and meanings imposed by humans. Creating a mask is to create new meanings, rules, and values. Nietzsche discusses Apollonian masks, crafted as a means of escaping the Dionysian chaos. He uses the figure of Dionysus—the god of wine, as well as intoxication, ecstasy, and ritual madness—and contrasts him with Apollo—the god of the sun, the figurative arts, and rational thought—to illustrate two fundamental impulses of human existence.

The world, for Nietzsche, is fundamentally Dionysian; that is, chaotic, painful, and nonhuman. The trauma that heroes and villains experience reveals this reality. The meaning that man ascribes to the world—that is, the Apollonian masks—is a way to survive this truth and make sense of chance and suffering. However, it is from the force of the Dionysian itself that the Apollonian is generated: the chaotic Dionysian force creates the Apollonian masks. A mask can be useful for surviving the Dionysian chaos, but it is also a means to set Dionysus free.

The civilian identity is a mask that society compels the individual to wear. Nietzsche defines this mask as "decaying," a means to evade the chaos without confronting it, a mask utilized by the weak. In contrast, a mask crafted by the individual himself after confronting Dionysus signifies strength; this mask acknowledges the absurdity of existence and imposes meaning upon it. It is the mask of Daredevil.

Matt cannot escape absurdity: his father's death throws him into a world without meaning. This does not imply that his father's death was random—the Mob kills him specifically to send a message—but that the trauma of the loss forces Matt to confront Dionysus. For Matt, his father´s death "makes no sense," regardless of the message the Mob intended to convey. Pain and loss are, in this context, scandalous experiences—senseless in

themselves—but they compel us, in an effort to alleviate the pain, to attribute to them a meaning that might, in some way, justify them.

While in the comic, Matt is already grown-up when he faces his father's death, in Netflix's series, he is still a child. Matt Murdock in the comics is – at least at the beginning – less angry and more connected with his civilian identity and friends. That is because, when his father is killed, Matt's civilian identity is already defined and stable, as are the values his father taught him. As we shall see, the permanence in the liminal state, poised between the human–civil identity and the inhuman – the mask – makes Daredevil a superhero rather than an antihero or a villain. In Marvel's Daredevil, by contrast, Matt is only a child without certainties, left utterly alone. He becomes a very young orphan, suddenly alone in a meaningless world. At this moment, Daredevil's identity begins to be formed, a mask to impose a new meaning on the world. At the same time, Stick enters Matt's life – we will see it later.

It is clear that in all versions of the character, not only is Jack, Matt's father, a key figure in his life, but he also plays a fundamental role in the creation of Daredevil's identity. This identity is not only created as a result of the trauma of his father's murder but also embodies the fighter that Matt sees in him—an aspect that is repressed (generating Shadow), since it is the father himself who asks his son to be different from him. By wearing the mask of Daredevil, Matt is honoring his father, releasing the part of himself that is most like him, while at the same time breaking the promise he made to him. The struggle and conflicted relationship with the mask mirrors the suffering and conflicted relationship with his father. The bond with the mother is equally complex.

4 REBIRTH

Matt's mother appears in his life for the first time in the story Born Again. It is a dramatic moment: Matt's ex-secretary and girlfriend, Karen Page, after becoming a porn actress and a junkie, sells Daredevil's secret identity to a criminal to buy some drugs. The drug dealer, in turn, will sell it to the Kingpin. The lord of crime makes good use of this information, slowly destroying Matt Murdock's life. First, he uses his power to freeze Matt's bank account. Then, he causes him to lose his license to practice as a lawyer. With Matt's reputation ruined, Fisk blows up his apartment. Everything related to Matt's civilian life is taken away from him. Kingpin looks delighted by his work: "He faces poverty and public shame. He will be hounded by doctored tax files, deprived of his very home. Survival will become his only concern" (Miller and Mazzucchelli, 2010).

Matt's progressive physical and mental breakdown is visually evident at the start of each story, as he transitions from waking up in his luxurious apartment to a squalid one-room flat, ultimately ending up abandoned in an alley. While his civilian life is devastated, Daredevil becomes increasingly brutal, violent, and aggressive—slowly evolving into a monster. Matt is losing his connection to humanity and ultimately embraces his mask and devil. Matt shuts out his friends, even viewing Foggy as a traitor.

Severely wounded, bleeding, and on the brink of madness, Matt returns to his father's gym. His identity has fallen apart. Only his shadow has survived: the devil, the fighter. "I become a fighter. Just like you. Now every other part of me is dead. Only the fighter lives. Only the fighter…" (Miller and Mazzucchelli, 2010). It is his last thought before he loses consciousness. It is at this moment that his mother finds and rescues him.

We find out that Matt's mother, considered dead up to this moment, had actually abandoned Jack and his son. After experiencing overwhelming postnatal depression, in the middle of a spiritual crisis and fearing she could hurt the baby, Maggie chose to leave Matt

and take vows; she became a nun, Sister Maggie. The same occurs in the third season of Netflix's series, which is directly linked to Frank Miller's saga. Here, the relationship between mother and son is more turbulent than in the comics. Matt is furious with his mother; he holds on to too much resentment.

While in the comics, Matt grows up with his father until his university years, in the series, he remains alone at a very young age, forced to live in an orphanage. For these reasons, Daredevil has much more pent-up anger in this version, and his relationship with his mask is more morbid than in the comics. During the third season, his anger is especially clear in his conflicted relationship with Maggie. It is difficult for them to reconcile with each other. In contrast, the comics' Matt Murdock is sympathetic to his mother; he understands her and is ready to forgive her (Langley R., 2018, 131).

Matt had already met his mother while he still considered her dead. Right after the radiation accident, Matt's powers began to arise. However, his super-senses torture him: "When I first got my powers I lived through a night of utter agony. My senses were wild. Everything hurt me. Every sound and smell" (Miller and Mazzucchelli, 2010). At that moment, a mysterious woman visits him at the hospital: she gives him hope and helps him accept his new condition as a blessing rather than a curse. More than that, she makes him promise to keep his new powers secret and to hide them even from his father.

In Born Again, Matt, on the brink of death, is reborn in his mother's arms. Thanks to his fighter's soul that comes from his father, Matt stands up again: "Everything else in my life is gone. Except the lesson I learned from my father. Never give up. Never" (Miller and Mazzucchelli, 2010). However, Maggie's aid is decisive: while Jack creates a split between two realities in Matt, his mother tries to reconcile them instead. Maggie helps Matt rebuild his devastated life, not only through his civilian identity but also his role as Daredevil. Since their first meeting, she has encouraged Matt to use his powers and see them as blessings. In

the comics, it is not immediately explicit whether Maggie knows her son's double identity; in the series, however, it is clear from the start. In both cases, she is aware of Matt's powers and urges him to use them for good. "So many need him," she begs at his side while he is unconscious, probably referring to her son's double life.

In the third season, Matt is closer to being only Daredevil: "Somebody once told me that warriors were meant to be alone. That caring for people would make me weak […] he was right, of course. I let people in, I paid a price. I won't make that mistake again. […] I'd rather die as the Devil than live as Matt Murdock." (Marvel's Daredevil, 2018, S. 3, E. 1). Facing his son, who is determined to fully embrace the mask, Maggie encourages him to reconnect with his friends, Foggy and Karen. She helps him restore the balance between Matt and Daredevil and re-establish the liminal state that defines the superhero. Unlike Jack, Maggie does not try to repress the fighter; however, she warns Matt about the dangers that renouncing his human identity will involve:

> Maggie: "So, what are you gonna do?"
> Matt: "I don't know. Maybe I'll stop him. For good this time."
> Maggie: "Well, just be careful that you don't become the monster." (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2018, S. 3, E. 1)

Matt cannot find peace by repressing his inner devil, but wholly embracing it is not the answer either. Villains and antiheroes separate themselves entirely from their former civilian identities. They become one with their masks – Frank Castle, for example, is not the Punisher's secret identity; he does not have a double life. Becoming his own shadow means becoming the monster himself. In both the comic and the series, Matt must fight against a killer who wears Daredevil's costume to reconstruct his lost identity. In the series, he is

Bullseye (Poindexter), Daredevil's Doppelgänger. This is significant: to reconstruct his identity, Matt must fight against his monstrous aspect, against his Shadow, his Doppelgänger. However, he must not only defeat it; he has to take it back.

"Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become a monster in the process. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you" (Nietzsche, 2014, 90, trans. W. Kaufmann). Gazing into an abyss means confronting the nonhuman, monstrous Dionysian chaos. The danger is becoming a monster in turn, but that does not mean one should look away. Escaping the chaos through Apollonian illusions is suffocating: for Matt, this would mean giving up his fighter's soul, the force that sustains him. Using Nietzsche's concepts, Matt Murdock's identity serves as his Apollonian mask, while Daredevil embodies the unleashed Dionysian chaos, a creative and destructive force.

Without Dionysus, the Apollonian mask is an empty shell, a cage. "At the end, Apollo speaks the language of Dionysus," writes Nietzsche (2015, 40). This suggests that the Dionysian chaos not only destroys but also creates the Apollonian masks, giving them energy. However, the Dionysian force, without any control, creates monsters.

The answer lies in the balance between these two principles. On one hand, Matt sets free his inner monster, Daredevil, who expresses his Dionysian force, which is violent and destructive but also creative. On the other, he needs his human, Apollonian identity: Matt Murdock, with his job, his friends, and his feelings. Thanks to this equilibrium, which his mother helps him rediscover, Daredevil can be a superhero, not a monster. This is a continuous struggle: the abyss must be faced repeatedly. The greatness—characteristic of a superhero—is to do it constantly without being consumed by it, without becoming a monster. Maggie helps Matt find balance in his religious faith; although Matt is Catholic, at times his faith vacillates (for example, in the third season of Netflix's series).

> Maggie: "You might hate God right now, but the feeling is not mutual."
>
> Matt: "No, I don't hate him. I've just seen his true face, is all. And, for the record, I had friends. I had a life. I care about people, and I'm choosing to let them believe that I'm gone because I am. I'm not Job" (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2018, S. 3, E. 1).

The creation of Daredevil's mask is of an "übermenschliche" nature, the action of a beyond-man. After the Death of God – the loss of all certainties and truths – the beyond man must create new masks and new values. He must impose meaning on a meaningless world, relying only on himself. In contrast, the civilian identity relates to the world as it possesses inherent meaning. It is not surprising, then, that by embracing Daredevil's mask and giving up his human identity, Matt also abandons his faith, favoring a more nihilistic (in the Nietzschean sense of the term) worldview.

However, 'abandons' is not the right word. 'I´ve seen [God´s] true face', claims Matt. Indeed, within the Catholic faith itself, there is a double soul, which is far from the edulcorated and loving one that is generally shown. Religion, and in particular the Catholic religion, is intimately linked to violence, as Matthew Cresser points out: "Pain, rage, sacrifice, and violence […] do not conflict with Catholicism. Indeed, in certain historical contexts they are constitutive of it" (2022, 128-9) He talks about a "Catholic culture of violence" (Cresser, 2022, 127).

In the relationship with the mother, we see a reflection of Matt's relationship with his faith. Again, the Mother reconciles Matt's two souls. She urges Matt not to abandon his 'human' identity, but at the same time, by encouraging him to be Daredevil, she makes him a sort of avenging Devil, an expression of the Wrath of God, of his frightening and violent appearance. Cresser notes in this regard that "the archetypal Catholic comic book hero embodies this history of violence" (2022, 127).

His mother's role is to help restore balance within Matt's religious sphere; reconciling Daredevil and Matt Murdock also entails balancing his faith with his übermenschliche strength, as well as navigating the two dimensions of Catholicism—the loving and the violent. Moreover, if, as Duggan observes, orphanhood is central to the superhero identity (Duggan, 2016, 53), and if it is within this original trauma that we must locate the roots of their "fragmented nature as well as [their] ability to self-fashion their own identities" (Duggan, 2016, 60), then it is significant that Matt's mother, being still alive, plays a crucial role in helping him restore balance and begin to reconcile his fractured identities.

5 SENSEI

Stick is Matt's sensei, a martial artist who teaches him to fight and control his new powers. Like his mother, Stick tells Matt he should view his abilities as a gift: "you know how they call stuff like that? Gifts. The special kind" (Marvel's Daredevil, 2018, S. 1, E. 7). By teaching him to use them, Stick helps Matt accept his new reality. "Stick doesn't just teach Matt how to use his super senses and to fight; he teaches him that people without sight can be even stronger and more capable than those with sight" (Johnson J., Johnson L. and Currie, 2018, 34). Quoting Stick himself: "What's it gonna be Matty, you going to spend your life crying and rocking yourself to sleep at night or are you going to dig deep and find out what it takes to reshuffle those cards life dealt ya. Your call." (Marvel's Daredevil, 2015, S. 1, E. 7).

In the series, the old sensei takes Matt under his wing after Jack's death; in the comics, Matt's training begins when his father is still alive, shortly after the manifestation of his powers. In both cases, Stick becomes more than just a teacher for Matt: he serves as a father figure. Matt attempts to form a father-son relationship with his sensei, particularly in the series, where Stick is the only parental figure in Matt's life after Jack's assassination.

Matt "hopes to form a new family of choice with Stick as his pseudo-father and himself as the avenging son. But Stick has other plans" (Garski and Mastin, 2018, 74).

Their relationship is entirely unbalanced: while Matt is seeking a father, Stick sees him as a soldier rather than a son. Consequently, like a soldier, he issues orders. Stick instills in Matt a sense of order and discipline; he provides him with purpose but lacks in affection. He trains Matt to fight, harness his skills, and control the fighter's soul within him—but solely to equip him for battle. Stick states it clearly: "I needed a soldier. You wanted a father." Matt's bitter reply is, "Then I guess we were both disappointed" (Marvel's Daredevil, 2015, S. 1, E. 7). Matt and Stick go their separate ways—luckily. Stick's influence over Matt is the opposite of Jack's:

> Matt: "You're gonna help me?"
>
> Stick: "No, I'm gonna train you. How to control your gift, make it work for you, use it, and how to fight."
>
> Matt: "My dad never wanted me to fight."
>
> Stick: "Your dad ain't here. You'll need skills for the war (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2015, S. 1, E. 7).

While the father tries to repress Matt's inner devil, Stick teaches him to set it free and control it. Jack makes Matt promise he will never fight; Stick wants to turn him into a warrior: "If you are good enough, I'll make you a warrior" (Miller and Romita, 2018) tells him at the beginning of the training. However, we do not find the same balance between the mask and civilian identity that Matt's mother helps him reach.

Stick incites Matt to identify entirely with his shadow, to become one with the mask. Morally, Stick is more similar to the Punisher or Elektra than to Matt: killing is not a

problem, the guilty deserve to die, and – sometimes – an innocent's death could be necessary. Like Frank Castle and Elektra Natchios, Stick has chosen only the mask: only his worldview matters, only his mission. His moral stance resembles that of a Beyond-Man: no compromise is possible with society. He cannot take half measures, as he calls Daredevil's choice not to kill. What he is planning for Matt is a lonely path without friendships and affection:

> "Cut it loose. All of it. Cut yourself free from the women, the comforts, the fancy job," tells Stick to Matt in the series "Do you have friends, people you care about? Cut 'em loose, for their sake." Concluding "relationships are a luxury men like you and me can't afford" (*Marvel's Daredevil*, 2015, S. 1, E. 7).

Becoming one with the mask means abandoning Matt Murdock's world, embracing Daredevil's mission, and leaving behind his humanity to become the Übermensch completely. "His mentor Stick tells Matt that attachment to others is weakness. Matt does not accept this as true because he values attachments" (Langley, 2018, 124). Matt moves away from Stick's path and remains bound to his civilian life and his promise to his father. Had he followed Stick, Daredevil would not have been a superhero; through Stick's dark road, he would have become an antihero, even a villain – like Elektra or Frank Castle.

Stick, in his misguided attempts, urges Matt to control his Shadow, but his efforts only lead to Matt denying his humanity. The struggle is real as Stick encourages Matt to find balance, yet he fails to comprehend that this can only be achieved by embracing both identities, human and superhuman. It parallels the mistake (of the opposite sign) that Foggy Nelson makes, adding depth to Daredevil's internal conflict.

6 DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

The relationship between Matt and Franklin "Foggy" Nelson is crucial, contrasting sharply with that of Stick. Foggy, Matt's best friend since college, roommate, and partner at the "Nelson and Murdock" law firm – at times even Matt's defense attorney – represents Daredevil's strongest connection to his human identity. The narrative highlights the instances when the two friends "break up": without Foggy, Matt gradually loses his humanity, and Daredevil becomes darker, more violent, and more antiheroic, resembling Stick increasingly, which underscores Foggy's significance in Daredevil's life.

As mentioned, the liminal state, the split between the mask and civilian identity, characterizes all superheroes' lives. "The defining feature of the superhero and the superhero genre is the liminal state: superheroes must remain on the borders" (Gaine, 2011, 127-8). In Daredevil, this split originates from his father's influence. Thanks to this liminality, Daredevil is a superhero: the connection he maintains with society allows him to be a hero within it. Villains and antiheroes ultimately embrace their masks; without a double identity, they cannot find meaning beyond the one they try to impose on the world.

Matt, on the contrary, "keeps his Daredevil persona separate from his life with his new family of choice, creating two selves: one who fights and another who connects. […] Daredevil follows the path laid out for him by Stick while Matt Murdock follows the rules of his family of origin" (Garski and Mastin, 2018, 76). His liminality allows him to maintain balance between the two worlds and be a superhero.

As mentioned above, the superheroes are compelled to create a new sense of identity; however, they remain partly tied to their former existence. The superheroes' double identity emphasizes this conflicting and ambivalent nature – the human civilian persona faces the super one. Surely, superheroes invent new identities and, as a result, reveal new

Weltanschauungen, but they are still bound to the society in which they operate. Their human side makes them heroes because they never allow their perspective on the world to stray from the common persona.

In the recent saga initiated by Brian Michael Bendis and later resumed and concluded by Ed Brubaker (illustrated by Alex Maleev), we see an example of what occurs when this liminal state fails. Daredevil's identity is revealed to the press. The liminal state collapses, and Matt and Daredevil's lives are turned upside down. As the story progresses, the Man Without Fear appears less and less like a superhero: he must commit perjury in court to protect his secret, and he sues the newspaper that exposed his identity, even though they published the truth; he slowly distances himself from all his friends and coerces them into lying for him too (see Wolk, 2007, 113-4). "The story´s gap between what´s just and what´s legal keeps widening," states Wolk (2007, 115). As Daredevil, he too gets his hands dirty by intimidating the FBI officer who reveals his secret or by proclaiming himself the new "Kingpin" of Hell's Kitchen (Bendis and Maleev, 2016/2017, Book 2). Moreover, he becomes more violent and menacing: his violence "isn´t grand or bloodless: it´s quick, confusing, and horrible, and its victims are haunted or ruined by it" (Wolk, 2007, 115).

Bendis and Maleev's run ends with Daredevil being arrested like a common criminal (2016/2017, Book 2). Brubaker goes even further, closing his story with Matt as Hand's leader – an ancient and powerful ninja clan, usually Daredevil's archenemy (Brubaker, Lark and Azaceta, 2009). This example shows how the dual identity is essential for superheroes, who must navigate between two worlds: legal and illegal, human and inhuman, Apollo and Dionysus.

Matt's friendship with Foggy and Karen is crucial; these relationships keep Daredevil connected to society. Foggy prevents Matt from crossing the line that separates him from the

monster. “Foggy shows good insight and provides another chance for Matt to see the devil in himself” (Sharp, 2018, 196). Thanks to him, Matt does not become one with his mask and remains in the liminality between devil and man.

During the third season of Marvel’s Daredevil, one can observe Matt’s growing identification with his mask. At the same time, he distances himself from his friends: he lets them believe that he died after the collapse of a palace in *Marvel's The Defenders*, and then he pushes them away repeatedly. Just as Stick taught him, Matt wants to renounce his friends, not only to protect them, but also as a consequence of his decision to become one with the mask.

Comparing Daredevil and the Punisher can be useful. Both in the series and in the comics, Frank entirely relinquishes his civilian persona; he is always the Punisher, with no split between two realities. In the second season of *Marvel’s Daredevil* and in *Marvel’s Punisher*, even though he feels affection for Karen, he continually pushes her away. She cannot be part of his life. Frank views the world solely through his masks; he cannot accept any compromise. “There is good and there is evil, and evil must be punished,” to quote another famous antihero. In the third season, Daredevil becomes more similar to the Punisher: he contemplates killing the Kingpin – he almost does it in the last episode. The decision to spare him signifies a reconciliation with his human side, with Foggy and Karen. It is indeed with the three friends, united once more, that the third season concludes.

It is possible to find the same dynamic in *Born Again* after Kingpin discovers the identity of the man under the mask, and something similar occurs in Bendis and Brubaker’s saga. Every time Daredevil distances himself from Matt Murdock’s identity, his friendship with Foggy suffers. Despite their strong bond, every time Matt dons Daredevil’s mask, it drives them apart.

Foggy is Matt's family – "I'm the closest he has for family," says himself in the series (Marvel's Daredevil, 2015, S. 1, E. 6). He embodies Matt's promise to his father; he even tries, at times, to persuade Matt to leave behind Daredevil. In Out, at the beginning of Bendis' run, Foggy tries to convince Matt to give up Daredevil's persona after his identity goes public. "It's over – don't you think? You need to retire. […] The life you have chosen is only a vicious circle of pain. That starts again... every time you wear that costume. It is a circle of pain that you can interrupt" (Bendis and Maleev, 2016/2017, Book 1).

Overall, Foggy cannot contain Matt's inner devil, though he plays a fundamental role in balancing him and preventing him from crossing the point of no return. Thanks to Foggy, Matt does not turn into a monster himself: "Foggy is essentially Matt's moral compass, at times almost single-handedly keeping Matt out of dark places that consume Elektra" (Wood and Henderson, 2018, 168).

7 LUST AND LOVE

A separate study would be needed to cover all of Matt Murdock's romantic interests. In both the comics and the series, women are fascinated by Matt, possibly because of the burning passion inherited from his father or the attachment issues stemming from his mother abandoning him; either way, Daredevil jumps in and out of bed almost faster than genius, billionaire, playboy, and philanthropist Tony Stark. "He hasn't really been with anyone for more than a month or two," tells Foggy, condemned to always be the third wheel (Marvel's Daredevil, 2015, S. 1, E. 5). Even so, of all his lovers, Matt has two great loves in his life: Elektra and Karen.

Elektra and Kare are two very different women, bonded by their love for Matt and their tragic fate. Elektra, a skilled assassin and former pupil of Stick, is Matt's first love. He wholly reveals himself to her, exposing his hidden self for the first time. "Elektra is literally

born in tragedy: her mother Christina gives birth to Elektra with her dying breath after being mortally wounded in an assassination attempt. […] Elektra's adverse childhood exposure parallels Matt's, with the loss of one parental figure, the strained relationship with the remaining figure, the death of the other parent, and the intense exposure to violence" (Wood and Henderson, 2018, 167).

Matt and Elektra are similar. Both grew up without their mothers and both violently lost their fathers during university (Miller, McKenzie, Michelinie and Janson, 2016). "Both of their childhoods are defined by tragedy, and their respective adult lives are defined by secrecy and violence. They are perfect for each other in all the wrong ways" (Wood and Henderson, 2018, 166).

Once Stick's students, both go their separate ways, but for different reasons. Matt chooses to remain connected to the men's world, while Elektra – like Stick – becomes one with her mask. There is no liminality, no double identity. If Elektra once had a connection to the civilian world, it would have died with her father. However, the beautiful ninja takes an even darker path than Stick, to the point where he warns Matt about her: "that girl is poison. She's on her way to the worst side and she'll drag you down with her. […] Stay away from Elektra" (Miller and Romita, 2018).

The relationship between the Men Without Fear and the Greek ninja is a passionate one; it is almost correct to say that Daredevil, and not Matt Murdock, loves Elektra. With her, Matt releases his wilder self. Her influence over him is stronger and more dangerous than the one Stick had: while his old mentor taught Matt to control his personal devil instead of repressing it, with Elektra, Matt's shadow is unrestrained.

Elektra Natchios follows her own path, re-entering Daredevil's life as a villain, and, thanks to Matt's influence, she will, in part, redeem herself and become an antiheroine. In Frank Miller's original Elektra saga, we see the ruthless assassin sparing Foggy's life—just

before she is killed by Bullseye (Miller, McKenzie, Michelinie and Janson, 2016). Elektra's death unleashes Matt's darkness; Daredevil breaks Bullseye's neck, paralyzing him, and right after that, in one of the darkest moments for the character, he plays Russian roulette with his Doppelgänger. The long saga concludes with Elektra's resurrection; Matt succeeds in purifying her from the Hand's evil influence. In the end, Daredevil's humanity prevails over the monstrous side of the lethal and beautiful ninja.

Karen Page contrasts sharply with Elektra. One is a ruthless ninja, while the other is a timid secretary who often embodies the damsel in distress, at least in the initial stories. Karen enters Matt's life and begins working at the law firm Nelson and Murdock. While Foggy reminds Matt of his promise to Jack, Karen influences Matt in a manner similar to Maggie. If it is mainly Matt's passion that connects him to Elektra, Karen is equally loved by both the lawyer and the masked vigilantes. Like Maggie, she serves as a link between the two identities, Matt Murdock and Daredevil -- even though, at the outset, she places them in competition. In *Daredevil Yellow*, written by Loeb and Sale, for example, we see Karen flirting with the Devil of Hell's Kitchen, while Matt, "playing" the blind lawyer, does the same with her, almost jealous of his alter ego: "you're not jealous of Daredevil, are you, mister Murdock?" (Loeb and Sale, 2011).

Karen's influence on Daredevil is highlighted by his decision to change his costume colors from black and yellow – his father's colors – to red, as Karen suggests: "If you're going to be a devil, wouldn't red be more appropriate? It's my favourite colour…" (Loeb and Sale, 2011). However, Karen is particularly bonded to Matt's human identity: like Foggy, she is essential for Daredevil to remain connected with his civilian life. Matt's relationship with Karen mirrors that between him and his mother. In the series, Maggie persuades Karen to reconnect with Matt, helping to re-establish the balance between Daredevil and Matt Murdock. "Everyone in Matthew's life abandoned him. Including me. When someone in need

tries to push you away, you have to find the strength to hold on tighter," says Maggie to Karen (Marvel's Daredevil, 2015, S. 3, E. 6). In *Born Again*, Maggie helps Matt rebuild his life after Karen's betrayal. A similar situation occurs in *Guardian Devil*, where Matt, confused and scared, turns to his mother for help, just as Karen returns to him hopelessly and in tears (Smith and Quesada, 2010).

While Matt "saves" Elektra, his relationship with Karen is more balanced. Matt and Karen continuously save each other. "Two broken souls who, united, can return intact. I need you now, yes --- more than ever. But you need me too - just as much," thinks Karen as she runs back to save him in *Guardian Devil* (Smith and Quesada, 2010). Daredevil rescues Karen when she is held prisoner by the Owl or Purple Man (Loeb and Sale, 2011), and Matt helps Karen get clean (Miller and Mazzucchelli, 2016). Simultaneously, Karen means everything to Matt: "a daughter. A friend. A lover. An object of desire. A client. A night listener. And then there is that man, the only one for whom you have been all this, and even more," as Karen states (Smith and Quesada, 2010). Her relationship with him saves Matt from himself and his inner devil. She neither suppresses it nor sets it free without control. Simply put – and this is very close to Matt's relationship with his mother – Karen provides a balance between Matt and Daredevil, making him whole. She loves the man, but she does not want him to remove his mask: "never stop Matt. Whatever happens" (Smith and Quesada, 2010).

After Karen's death, Matt's world falls apart like never before. "After the assassin Bullseye murders her, Matt starts drinking, fighting, and considering suicide. However, the memory of his promise to her and the realization of the impact he has on the people of Hell's Kitchen cause Matt to reconsider his behaviours and reclaim his role as Daredevil" (Scarlet and Adams, 2018, 14). Only by remembering Karen and the promise he made to never stop – can Matt put his mask back on and rediscover his identity. The third season of *Marvel's*

Daredevil has a less dramatic end than the comics: Karen survives and, thanks to her, Matt Murdock and Daredevil find their balance again.

8 CONCLUSION

Daredevil's conflicts and contradictions are evident in Matt's relationships, which can either accentuate or mitigate them. Since his promise to his father, Matt develops two distinct personalities: the fighter and the student. After Jack's death, Matt's inner devil grows and takes shape in Daredevil's mask. Stick and Elektra focus on this aspect of Matt: the old sensei seeks to teach Matt to control it to transform him into a warrior and a soldier; the Greek ninja drives Matt to unleash his passion without restraint. Both fail to recognize Daredevil's humanity. Foggy represents the other side: he embodies Daredevil's strongest bond with his civilian identity. However, he cannot accept Matt's double life and often attempts to persuade his friend to renounce Daredevil. Foggy represents the Apollonian aspect of Daredevil's life; even though he fails to convince Matt to completely abandon the mask, his influence is crucial in curbing Matt's Dionysian force, helping to balance his monstrous side.

It is with Karen and his mother, Maggie, that Matt and Daredevil's identities find equilibrium. The two women consider Matt as a whole, encompassing both the man and the devil; thanks to them, the student and the fighter achieve stability. The same occurs between Apollo and Dionysus: alone, the two principles are pointless, but in their dynamic, meaning emerges. Similarly, the meaning of Daredevil's life lies not only in the mask or solely in his humanity, but in the balance between the two, between man and beyond man. This balance allows Daredevil to remain in a liminal state, thus becoming a superhero, a guardian devil.

9 REFERENCES

Bendis Brian Michael (Writer), Maleev Alex (Artist), *Daredevil. Ultimate collection. Book 1*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2016/2017.

Bendis Brian Michael (Writer), Maleev Alex (Artist), *Daredevil. Ultimate collection. Book 2*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2016/2017.

Bennett, Dawn, Efthimiou, Olivia, Allison, Scott T. "The role of heroic creativity and leadership in creative work". In A. de Dios & L. Kong (Eds.), *Handbook on the geographies of creativity*. Edward Elgar, 2020.

Brubaker Ed (Writer), Lark Michael, Aja David (Artists), *Daredevil. Ultimate collection. Book 1*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2016.

Brubaker Ed (Writer), Lark Michael, Aja David (Artists), *Daredevil. Ultimate collection. Book 2*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2015.

Brubaker Ed (Writer), Lark Michael, Azaceta Paul (Artists), *Daredevil. Return of the king*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2009.

Coogan Peter, *Superhero: The Secret Origin of a Genre*. Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2006.

Cressler Matthew J., "Daredevil: The Man Without Fear and White Catholic Masculinities, *CrossCurrents (72)* 2, University of North Carolina Press, 2022, 112-136.

Daredevil, Mark Steven Johnson, USA 2003.

Duggan Jennifer, "Traumatic Origins: Orphanhood and the Superhero," in *Good Grief! Children and Comics*, edited by Michelle Ann Abate and Joe Sutliff Sanders, Columbus: Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum and The Ohio State University Libraries, 2016, 47-67.

Favaro Marco, *La Maschera dell´Antieroe*. Milan: Mimesis, 2022.

Gaine Vincent M., "Genre and Super-Heroism. Batman in the New Millennium," in *The 21st Century* Superhero, edited by Richard J. Gray II, Betty Kaklamanidou, Jefferson-London: MacFarland, 2011, 111-128.

Garski Larisa A., Mastin Justine, "Nelson & Murdock. It's all in the family," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 64-79.

Henderson, Joseph L. "Ancient myths and modern man," in: *Man and his Symbols*, edited by Carl Gustav Jung. Anchor Press, 1988, 104–157.

Johnson, Jeremy, Johnson, Lisa, Currie, Erin, "More than a montage: development of a super identity," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 30-39.

Jung, Carl Gustav, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, translated by R. F. C. Hull. Princeton University Press, 1980 [1969].

Kaveney Roz, *Superheroes! Capes and Crusaders in Comics and Films*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2008.

Lee Stan (Writer), Everett Bill (Artist), *Daredevil #1*. Marvel Comics, April 1964.

Langley, Rebecca M., "Mother superior, feeling inferior: post-partum depression and the mother he didn't know," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 125-137.

Langley Travis, *Batman and Psychology. A Dark and Stormy Knight*, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

Langley, Travis, Busch, Jenna, "Interview with Marvel's Daredevil executive producer Steven S. DeKnight: Running the show in Hell's Kitchen," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 40-49.

Langley, Travis, Hanefalk, Christine. "The truth about the dare: who seeks thrills and chills?" in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 18-29.

Loeb, Jeph, Sale, Tim, *Daredevil. Yellow*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2011.

Marvel's Daredevil, Drew Goddard USA 2015-2018. Season 1-3.

Marvel's The Defenders, Petrie Douglas, Ramirez Marco, USA 2017.

Marvel's The Punisher, Steve Lightfoot, USA 2017-2019. Season 1-2.

Miller Frank (Writer), Mazzucchelli David (Artist), *Daredevil. Born again*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2010.

Miller Frank, McKenzie Roger, Michelinie David (Writers), Janson Klaus (Artist), *Daredevil by Frank Miller & Klaus Jason Omnibus*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2016.

Miller Frank (Writer), Romita John Jr. (Artist), *Daredevil: the man without fear*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2018.

Miller Frank (Autor), Sienkiewicz Bill, (Artist), *Elektra: Assassin*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2012.

Moore Alan (Writer), Gibbons Dave (Artist), *Watchmen*. Salem: DC Comics, 2014.

Nietzsche Friedrich, *Also sprach Zarathustra. Kritische Studienausgabe herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari*. München: DTV de Gruyter, 2016.

Nietzsche Friedrich, *Der Fall Wagner. Götzen-Dämmerung. Der Antichrist. Ecce Homo. Dionysos-Dithyramben. Nietzsche contra Wagner. Kritische Studienausgabe*

herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari. München: DTV de Gruyter, 2014.

Nietzsche Friedrich, *Die Geburt der Tragödie. Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen. Kritische Studienausgabe herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari*. München: DTV de Gruyter, 2015.

Nietzsche Friedrich, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Zur Genealogie der Moral. Kritische Studienausgabe Herausgegeben von Colli G. und Montinari M.* München: DTV de Gruyter, 2014.

Nietzsche Friedrich, *Morgenröte. Idyllen aus Messina. Die fröhliche Wissenschaft. Kritische Studienausgabe herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari*. München: DTV de Gruyter, 2011.

Quesada Joe, *Daredevil: Father*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2007.

Scarlet, Janina, Adams, Travis, "Learning to see the hero you are: posttraumatic growth after physical injury," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 80-89.

Sharp, William, "Why being blind to the devil inside stunts emotional growth," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 187-198.

Smith Kevin (Autor), Quesada Joe (Artist), *Daredevil: Guardian Devil*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2010.

Travers Sean, "Hear Me Roar": Representations of Catwoman's. Trauma in Comic Books and Cinema from 1983–1995," in: *Batman's Villains and Villainesses. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Arkham's Souls*, edited by Marco Favaro and Justin Martin, London: Lexington Books, 2023.

Vecchiolla, Laura, "What lurks in shadow: Jung's notion of the devil and evil in Daredevil," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 175-186.

Wolk Douglas, *Reading Comics. How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*, Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2007.

Wood, Mara, Henderson, Jeffrey, "Making relationships work," in: *Daredevil Psychology. The devil you know*, edited by Travis Langley. New York: Sterling, 2018, 163-171.

10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.