

Wold-Newtonry: Theory and Methodology for the Literary Archeology of the Wold

Newton Universe.

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### **Introduction**

This article represents an attempt to lay out a taxonomy of the activities related to Wold-Newtonry, the practice of literary archeology that continues Philip José Farmer's work on the Wold Newton Universe. It is intended to be descriptive, not proscriptive, that is I want to show what we do, not to tell people what to do. The value I intend for this article to have is that it foregrounds our assumptions and provides terminology to discuss our activities.

This is, in essence, the first formal statement of the theory and methodology of the field of Wold-Newtonry. I want it to help to codify the field and to move the field forward toward more of a simulacrum of real scholarship. Many authors contributed to this article; in places, I act merely as an editor, so it can be regarded as a corporate statement of the field by the field's leading practitioners.

My coinage of the term *literary archeology* was inspired by Warren Ellis' use of "mystery archeologists" in *Planetary*. As Ellis' Planetarians investigate and map the "secret history of the twentieth century" ("Nuclear Spring" np), we map and investigate the unknown history of the universe as revealed in novels, pulps, films, comics, legend, myth, epic, and other literary and cultural texts. We treat these literary texts as archeologists treat the artifacts they dig up, as clues to a larger understanding of the world that has to be guessed at and constructed from incomplete pieces.

Although I came up with *literary archeology* on my own, it already existed before I thought of it and it has a variety of meanings. In *Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles*, Elizabeth Ward and Alain Silver seek out and photograph places mentioned in Chandler's novels that are still around; the same has been done for Sherlock Holmes' London several times, such as *Sherlock Holmes in London: A Photographic Record of Conan Doyle's Stories* by Charles Viney. The term is used in this way at the Society of Early Americanists meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, for 2003 as the label for a panel featuring these papers: "Roanoke's Lost Colonies: How Many Ways Can a Story Be Told?" by E. Thomson Shields, "Collecting Utopia: Archeology, Landscape, and the Story of Maryland's Founding" by Julia A. King, and "Completing the Place of the Text: Abandoned Mound Builder Sites and Their Literary Representations" by Lisa West Norwood.

The term has other meanings. In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison engages in a process of "imaginative and reconstructive recovery of the past," which she has labeled literary archeology, by exploring how an escaped slave living in Ohio killed her daughter to prevent her from being returned to a life of slavery in Kentucky (Henderson 66). She based the main character Sethe on Margaret Garner, a real-life escaped slave who murdered her children as slave catchers approached. There is a "Journal of Literary Archeology" called *The Lost Club Journal* that "focuses principally on the unheralded and unsung, any authors and books which lack bestseller status, and take readers' fancy"<sup>2</sup>

Wold-Newton scholars have a different purpose in their literary archeology. We seek to create connections between texts in a game that supposes creative works to be merely an archipelago representation of a world more exciting and interesting than the

one we live in. Creating these connections recreates the “sense of wonder,” in the terminology of science-fiction fandom, that we felt when we first read the texts we work with. As a game, Wold-Newtonry is playful and has rules. In fact, “the Game” is another term for this activity, coined outside the context of and long before the publication of Farmer’s works. In “Did Sherlock Holmes Really Exist?” the Straight Dope Science Advisory Board (a sort of all-purpose answer website) address this question, asked by a writer who wonders if *The Seven Percent Solution* by Nicholas Meyer truly reveals the meeting of Sigmund Freud and a real-life person on whom Holmes is based. The Straight Dope Board confirms the fictionality of Holmes and explains that Doyle based his character on Dr. Joseph Bell, a professor of his at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. They go on to explain that Meyer was engaged in “the Game,” a literary discipline that sprung from the inaccuracies and inconsistencies of Doyle’s willingness to “ignore consistency and even facts for the sake of a good story.” They quote Doyle on this issue, "It has always seemed to me that so long as you produce your dramatic effect, accuracy of detail matters little. I have never striven for it and I have made some bad mistakes in consequence. What matter if I hold my readers?"

The Game goes back to at least 1902. That year an “open letter” to Dr. Watson was published in the *Cambridge Review* criticizing the dates mentioned in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and Arthur Bartlett Maurice wrote an editorial comment in *Bookman*, "Some Inconsistencies of Sherlock Holmes." In 1911, Monsignor Ronald Knox read "Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes" to the Gryphon Club at Trinity College, Oxford, (published the next year in *Blue Book*) that is considered the cornerstone of Sherlockian literature<sup>3</sup> and is credited by the Straight Dope Board as creating this “highly

specialized and possibly unique form of literary criticism.” They quote Dorothy L. Sayers, author of the Peter Wimsey series, on the rules of the Game, "It must be played as solemnly as a county cricket match at Lord's; the slightest touch of extravagance or burlesque ruins the atmosphere."

They go on to discuss the ways that scholars account for the inconsistencies and errors that provide fodder for the Game. They give several possible reasons for inconsistencies such as Watson's claim that "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge" occurred in 1892, even though in 1892 Holmes was believed to be dead at the bottom of Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland:

- Perhaps Watson's bad handwriting caused editing errors and the printer got the date wrong.
- Watson's memory was often faulty. In "The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger" Watson professes to have no recollection of an adventure that he shared with Holmes. So we have internal evidence that Watson may have misremembered the date.
- Watson seems to have had a complete disregard for the calendar. This happens time and again in the Writings. As another example, in "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist," Watson writes, "On referring to my notebook for the year 1895, I find that it was upon Saturday, April 23, that we first heard of Miss Violet Smith." The plot hinges upon the correctness of that recollection, because Miss Smith came into town every Saturday. But April 23, 1895 was a Tuesday.
- Then there's Watson's "Victorian discretion and delicacy." Watson would deliberately conceal a name, a place, a date, or the exact nature of an event, to

protect the innocent or to avert scandal. So perhaps he misdated "Wisteria Lodge" to hide the true events and spare the family embarrassment.

So Wold-Newtonry is merely the Game based specifically upon Philip José Farmer's work in biographies such as *Tarzan Alive!* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* and fictional stories such as *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer* and *The Other Log of Phileas Fogg*.

### **Certain Kinds of Literature**

Scholars of the Wold Newton Universe tend to examine certain kinds of literature, although any individual scholar might be drawn to any individual text regardless of its literary classification. In *Tarzan Alive!*, Philip José Farmer drew on canonical nineteenth and twentieth-century literature such as *Pride and Prejudice*, the Leather-Stocking Tales, *Moby Dick*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses* to expand the Wold-Newton Family, but his main focus, as evidenced by the subjects of his two Wold-Newton biographies—Tarzan and Doc Savage, was on nineteenth-century adventure fiction and twentieth-century pulp fiction, with a single slight brush with the world of comic-book superheroes through the speculation that Margo Lane might have been the sister of Lois Lane, "objet d'amour of Clark Kent" (*Doc Savage* 233).<sup>4</sup> Wold-Newton scholars have followed this emphasis and tend to focus on genre fiction that falls on the formulaic side of John Cawelti's division of literature into mimetic and formulaic. Mimetic literature "confronts us with the world as we know it, while the formulaic element reflects the construction of an ideal world without the disorder, ambiguity, the uncertainty, and the limitations of the world of our experience" (Cawelti 13). Formulaic literature tends to present *moral fantasies*, "in which the world resembles our own at almost every point, presents a protagonist of

extraordinary capacities in a set of circumstances that enable him to face the most insuperable obstacles and surmount them without lasting harm to himself, either morally or physically” (Cawelti 39).

The typical genres of Wold-Newtonian literature—adventure, Western, war, fantasy, superhero, detective, police, crime, spy, horror, and science fiction—all fall within three moral fantasies or meta-genres that Cawelti discusses. The first and most prevalent is the adventure meta-genre, which features “the hero—individual or group—overcoming obstacles and dangers and accomplishing some important and moral mission” (Cawelti 39). The second is the mystery meta-genre, “the investigation and discovery of hidden secrets, the discovery usually leading to some benefit for the character(s) with whom the reader identifies” (42). The third is the altered beings or states meta-genre, “knowing the unknowable through objectification” (49).

Texts seem more “Wold-Newtonian,” or more amenable to incorporation into the Wold Newton Universe, when they suppose a world that operates on slightly different principles of morality and physics than the mundane world we live in; a world in which people and their actions fit into a larger sense of order; and a world that seems larger than what appears in the individual book, where life continues before, off, and outside the page.

Wold-Newtonian texts tend to display the following characteristics:

1. Continuity—more than one book (the *Leatherstocking Tales*, the *Destroyer* novels, the *Doc Savage* pulps), interconnected books (Cooper’s non-*Leatherstocking* series crossover with the *LST*), or the works of authors who set their most of their novels in the same moral and social universe (Jane Austen or Jules Verne).

2. Possibility—the events of the story could have happened in the world we live in. Thus there need to be some limits on the fantastic goings on to explain why awareness of the events has not reached us through the media or become commonly known. Typically, this limitation is achieved by locating the events far away from contemporary life in some isolated time or place. Another method is to involve a very limited number of characters, all of whom either die or have some significant motivation to keep the story secret. When the events of a story clearly would be known, such as the invasion of the Earth by Martians in H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, the text is treated as an exaggeration of a much smaller event that was covered up by the authorities. One of the great appeals of *Tarzan Alive!* is that it offers the reader the possibility that Tarzan is a living person, thereby opening up the possibility that the reader themselves could take part in similar adventures. Because Farmer published *Tarzan Alive!* as a biography and convincingly claimed throughout the work that Tarzan was indeed a living person, many people (myself included) were taken in by his hoax when we read the biography. Wold-Newtonry is, in some ways, an attempt on our part to extend that delicious belief in the romantic and adventurous possibilities of the world we actually live in.

3. Romance/Adventure—the texts answer some need in the reader for a world that is more orderly and offers the possibility of adventure, a life of heightened meaning, risk, and action, but one in which right prevails.

### **Terms**

Wold-Newton scholars use several terms to describe their activities.

Amanuensis: This word refers to a person who takes dictation or copies manuscripts. In Wold-Newtonry, it indicates the person who writes up the adventures

and passes them on to the editor. In the case of Sherlock Holmes, Watson is the amanuensis and Doyle is the editor because Watson records the adventures and sends them whole to Doyle, who performs only editorial work. In the case of Doc Savage, Monk is believed to act as the amanuensis and Dent as the editor, but since the issue never arises directly in the pulp stories, it is possible that Dent works directly from Savage's case file, in which case Dent is the biographer, not the amanuensis.

Biographer: Farmer refers to writers like Edgar Rice Burroughs and Lester Dent as biographers of Tarzan and Doc Savage, respectively. (Dent was the primary biographer, writing under the house name of Kenneth Robeson, but others worked on the series under him).

Consensus WNU: The version of the Wold Newton Universe that is accepted by most people involved in the Wold-Newtonry game. A group of WN scholars, centered around Win Eckert's *An Expansion of Philip José Farmer's Wold Newton Universe*, writes articles that are compatible with each other for the most part. The version that emerges from these largely compatible articles can be seen as the version of the WNU that continues Farmer's work most closely.<sup>5</sup>

Creative mythography: An alternative term for literary archeology that Farmer uses in the genealogy of Doc Savage in *DS:HAL*, "The Fabulous Family Tree of Doc Savage (Another Excursion into Creative Mythography)." Unfortunately, he does not define or explain the term. Presumably it means roughly the same as literary archeology or Wold-Newtonry.

Farmer is not the only employer of this term. On the website catalog of the University of Toronto Press, "creative mythography" is used to refer to Peter Dendle's *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature*:

*Satan Unbound* argues that these open-ended registers in the conceptualisation of the devil allowed Anglo-Saxon writers a certain latitude for creative mythography, even within the orthodox tradition. The narrative tensions resulting from the devil's protean character opaquely reflect deep-rooted anxieties in the early medieval understanding of the territorial distribution of the moral cosmos, the contested spiritual provinces of the demonic and the divine. The ubiquitous conflict between saint and demon constitutes an ontological study of the boundaries between the holy and the unholy, rather than a psychological study of temptation and sin.<sup>6</sup>

Dendle chose this term and explains his use of it:<sup>7</sup>

If "mythology" is the study of myth, then "mythography" is the invention of new myth (or at least the alteration of existing myth). Technically, it should specifically mean "writing about myth," but since most mythology comes from pre-literate traditions, it can imply the genesis of any mythical tradition, whether written or oral.

Thus, the phrase "creative mythography" is perhaps redundant at a certain level, but since people probably aren't used to the word "mythography" in the first place, it is a calculated redundancy. Creative mythography emphasizes that the Anglo-Saxon authors were not only inheriting the received Christian tradition, but were themselves adapting it and changing it to conform with indigenous cultural

and intellectual needs. People don't think of Christianity as a mythology to begin with, and especially in regard to the early Middle Ages people don't necessarily recognize the innovations that local cultures impose on scriptural traditions.

In the case of the early medieval authors discussed in *Satan Unbound*, they would certainly have denied that they were engaging in any sort of myth creation—they were interpreting their inherited sources as best they could, and would have been horrified at the thought of "making up" new directions. This contrasts with authors like H.P. Lovecraft or Clark Ashton-Smith who seem entirely conscious of what they were doing.

Creative mythography, therefore, perhaps falls on the creative side of the creative/scholarly split discussed below, whereas literary archeology falls on the scholarly side. It may be considered as an analog of literary archeology for works of literature, or it could stand just as an alternative to literary archeology given that Farmer used it in a scholarly context and the medieval authors Dendle writes about were not writing fiction in their own view.

Doctor: It is customary for WN scholars to refer to each other by the title doctor or professor.

Editor: The real author who acts as a literary agent for the amanuensis, who puts the adventures of a heroic character into narrative form. Watson wrote up the cases of Sherlock Holmes, and Conan Doyle merely edited them and placed them in *The Strand*.

Enwold: An alternative for the verb "to wold."

Newtonverse: An alternate term for the Wold Newton Universe.

Non-Farmerian Wold-Newtonry: Literary archeology that is not based upon Farmer's Wold Newton Universe but which seems to reflect the principles of Wold-Newtonry.

Post-Farmerian Wold-Newtonry: Wold-Newtonry written after Farmer published his WN related books. Although this term essentially signifies Wold-Newtonry generally, an important distinction should be made between Farmer's own work and the work of those of us who followed him. Farmer sometimes gets blamed for theories and conclusions of post-Farmerian Wold-Newtonry that he has no responsibility for or knowledge of.

Pre-Farmerian Wold-Newtonry: Literary archeology written before Farmer created the Wold Newton Universe but which can retroactively be placed within the WNU. It also includes those studies Farmer drew on, like William S. Baring-Gould's *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* and *The Baker Street Journal*.

Probability magnetism: Farmer uses the term “human magnetic moment” to describe a force that draws highly improbable coincidences into the lives of some individuals. In the voice Lord Grandrith, his stand-in for Tarzan, he explains that some people are endowed with “animal magnetism” and others also have a “human magnetic moment.” Some people are the focus of unusual events, of mathematically unlikely coincidences. “They radiate something—a quality, a ‘field,’ which pulls events together. The field slightly distorts, or warps, the semifluid structure of occurrences, of space objects intertwined with the time flow” (*A Feast Unknown* 35).

Professor: It is customary for WN scholars to refer to each other by the title doctor or professor.

Wold: A verb meaning to bring a character or text into the Wold Newton Universe.

Wold-Newtology: The branch of learning dedicated to study of the WNU.

Wold Newton: According to Farmer, the Wold Newton Family originated when a meteorite landed in Wold Newton, Yorkshire, England, in the year 1795 near two coaches carrying fourteen passengers—five married couples and a brother of one of the wives—and their four coachmen. The ionized radiation of the falling rock caused a beneficial genetic mutation in the DNA of the coach riders, which endowed their descendants with extremely high intelligence, thicker bones, denser muscles, and more daring and driven personalities. Frequent marriages among the descendants of the irradiated eighteen reinforced the recessive and superior genes resulting in generations of great detectives, explorers, adventurers, and villains, some bordering on the superhuman (*Doc Savage* 200).

Wold Newton Universe (WNU): The events and people depicted in the interconnected texts and articles that comprise Wold-Newtology.<sup>8</sup>

Wold-Newton Family:<sup>9</sup> Those who were present at the Wold Newton meteor strike, their ancestors, relatives, and descendants (*Tarzan Alive!* 247-248, *Doc Savage* 199-200). Farmer included non-mutated-WNF members in his genealogical discussions, specifically pre-1795 characters included in his genealogy, and even some post-meteor strike characters such as Ned Land and Sexton Blake. Post-Farmer speculators have included many characters in the WNU who are not necessarily part of the WNF.<sup>10</sup>

Wold-Newtonian: An adjective or noun for describing or referring to characters, texts, objects, places, etc., in the Wold Newton Universe.

Wold-Newtonic:<sup>11</sup> An alternate adjective for Wold-Newtonian or Wold-Newtony. The suffix *-ic* creates an adjective suggesting that the noun modified possesses some of the properties or characteristics of the stem, e.g. "electronic components" are those possessing some of the properties of electricity. Wold-Newtonic suggests that the modified noun is like Wold-Newton in some way, as in, "I think Northwest Smith is certainly a Wold-Newtonic type."

Wold-Newtonics: "Normal" or "systematic" Wold-Newtonry, i.e. using established principles for establishing noncontroversial links between characters. Wold-Newtonics refers to Wold-Newtonry that is accepted by the overall consensus of Wold-Newton scholars.

Wold-Newtonite: A noun referring to characters who inhabit the Wold Newton Universe and to the scholars who write about them. An alternative for Wold-Newtonian

Wold-Newtonology: An alternative term for Wold-Newtonology.

Wold-Newtonry: The practice of studying the Wold Newton Universe.

Wold-Newtony: An adjective used to describe texts that feel like they should belong to the WNU but which have not yet been wolded (e.g. the television show *Veritas: The Quest*, as of this date).

### Problematic Terms

Wold-Newtonism: Wold-Newtonism is occasionally put forward as an alternative to Wold-Newtonry, but it is problematic because the suffix *-ism* implies an orthodoxy that is absent from the principles and practices of Wold-Newtonry. It is possible that a foundational principle of Wold-Newtonry, the principle of writer's fiat, i.e. that each

writer decides on their own version of the WNU, is an example of Wold-Newtonism because it is a bit of an orthodoxy.

**Wold-Newtonite:** Indicates a member of the Wold-Newton Family. This term is problematic because characters can be brought into the WNF via genealogical excursions.

**Wolders/Woldies:** This division emulates the terms Star Trek fans use to divide themselves into more serious Trekkers and less serious Trekkies. This term is problematic because it violates the foundational principle of fun, the idea that this is all a hobby. Dividing Wold-Newton scholars in this fashion creates a hierarchical relationship, privileging some and denigrating others, which seems to violate the egalitarian spirit of Wold-Newtonry.

**Wold-Newtonomics:**<sup>12</sup> Rules and principles of studying the WNU. The suffix "nomics" comes from the Greek "gnomos" meaning laws or rules. This word is problematic because its meaning is subsumed by Wold-Newtonry.

### **Taxonomy:**

There are two types of Wold-Newtonic writing: creative and scholarly.

#### Creative.

Creative pieces are written to be read or viewed for entertainment and are intended to be viewed as fiction. They stand on their own as pieces of literature or within the context of their writing (that is, the Shadow novels can each be read alone, although they gain resonance by being read together). Creative pieces break down into four categories:

1. Unconnected: Pieces written without any attempt to connect them to other characters or novels and without apparent awareness of the concept of the Wold Newton Universe or of any larger continuity.

2. Connected: Pieces written with the intention of connecting to other characters or novels. The Shadow novel *Whispering Eyes* includes a mention of Nick Carter's house; Edgar Rice Burroughs connected several of his novels by having characters from one series appear in another, as when Tarzan went to Pellucidar in *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*.

3. Creative literary archeology: Pieces created to expose the true story behind other pieces of fiction, but unconnected to Farmer's concept of the Wold Newton Universe. *Shadow of the Vampire* tells the story behind the filming of F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*.

4. Wold-Newtonian (creative Farmerian literary archeology): Pieces written with the Wold Newton Universe in mind. Farmer's *The Peerless Peer* and J.T. Edson's Bunduki series are examples.

### Scholarly

Wold-Newton scholarly studies fall into three categories in terms of validity. Some, such as Farmer's *Tarzan Alive!*, claim all three levels of validity.

1. Speculative/deductive are articles in which the published records of adventures and scholars speculate on characters and events and deduce conclusions. Other scholarly works can be given the same treatment and be extrapolated from in terms of deducing and hole-filling. Speculative/deductive articles tend to work from the published record, but go beyond it based upon clues in the text, logical reasoning, and psychological

profiling or character criticism, which assumes that the characters lead realistic lives off the page. In "John Carter: Torn from Phoenician Dreams," Dennis Power and I explain how the psychological damage of the repeated loss of his reincarnated love, Blodwen, caused Phra the Phoenician to create the personality of John Carter and to bury his original self under deep levels of repression. Edwin Arnold's original novel, *Phra the Phoenician*, contained contradictions and lapses in the life of Phra that could not be true on their face but seemed to represent attempts by Phra to repress or deny aspects of his life that were too painful to recall consciously. This pattern of denial fit with the condition of dissociative amnesia and fugue, which led us to the discovery of other historical and fictional characters alive during the time Phra's periods of amnesia who matched his physical description such as King Arthur, Robin Hood, and Norman of Torn.

2. Researched pieces, in which research suggests historical cognates for characters and events related in seemingly fictional adventures, or research is used to flesh out and back up the details presented in the texts. Rick Lai's *Chronology of Shadows* presents evidence showing that Walter Gibson based mobster Nick Savoli in *Gangdom's Doom* on Al Capone and the events of the novel on the 1931 mayoral election in Chicago; and that the kidnapping of a fictional Chinese general named Cho Tsing in *Teeth of the Dragon* was based on the real-life abduction of Chiang Kai-Shek in December 1936. In "Happy Birthday Doc Savage," Chuck Welch uses weather records to dispute the date of November 12, 1901 that Farmer assigned Doc Savage's birthday to and to propose a date a few days earlier, November 7th, that matches the information provided by Lester Dent in *Peril in the North* and *The Golden Man*.

3. Sourced works, which claim to be based upon actual documents written by or interviews with Wold-Newtonian personalities. Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan and John Carter novels are based on this premise because Burroughs claims to have John Clayton's diary and John Carter's manuscript. Wold-Newton scholars sometimes establish sources for their work. In *Some Unknown Members of the Wold-Newton Family Tree*, Jess Nevins makes this claim:

I was going about my business in the archives of the Historical and Genealogical Museum of Brazoria County, Texas, straightening the shelves and ensuring that the books and manuscripts were in good enough shape for the public to go through them (and ruin them themselves), when my eye was drawn to a set of family albums of obvious age that I had never noticed before. Three of the albums were of photographs too faded to be distinct, but one of them had a new leather-bound diary hidden inside it. The diary, written in a cramped and sometimes illegible script, is a treasure trove of information about the Wold Newton family, and my only regret is that many of the pages are missing from it, as some pages containing potentially explosive information are obviously absent. Combined with what is commonly known about the more famous members of the Wold Newton family, some new linkages and associations may be made.

I have deduced the identity of the researcher who wrote this diary and assembled the photo-albums, but for obvious reasons I cannot reveal who he is.

For ease of use I will refer to him as "MN."

Nevins then refers to MN's diary as support for the conclusions he draws about the WNU.

In a sense, validity follows a pattern with deductive pieces having the least, researched pieces the next, and sourced pieces the greatest. Thus, *Tarzan Alive!* has the greatest level of validity because it is based upon Farmer's interview with Greystoke, photostats of the Clayton diary, and "Extracts from the Memoirs of 'Lord Greystoke'" (see *Mother Was a Lovely Beast*). In truth, these levels of validity are merely part of the Wold-Newtonry game as any WN scholar can claim, as Jess Nevins does, to have discovered a source. No etiquette about claiming sources has yet emerged in the Wold-Newton community. It would seem that the main criteria for claiming a source would be credibility, that is, a scholar has to have a credible claim for the validity of their source, although this credibility is fabricated by the scholar due to the practice of scholars putting forth Wold-Newton versions of their lives, e.g. Farmer credibly claims to have met Tarzan; I claim that my great-grandfather was one of the Shadow's agents and that through family contacts I have access to files and records that I use to back up claims I make in Wold-Newtonry articles.

### Canonicity

Canonicity is determined by the relation of a piece to the original series of publication. This idea of canonicity arises out of the Sherlock Holmes scholarship. Doyle's Holmes novels are canonical, but Phillip José Farmer's novels that feature Holmes, such as *The Peerless Peer*, are not. Some novels written after the period of canonicity can achieve canonicity by virtue of authorization (by the original author or publishing company), but authorization does not necessarily confer canonicity, and there can be other means of conferring canonicity. Thus the Nick Carter Killmaster series can be regarded as canon as can the Shadow novels published by Belmont in the 1960s,

although given the disconnect of the Belmont Shadows from the pulp series and the problems Walter Gibson ran into with Belmont that caused him to drop out of writing the series, they can also be rejected. Farmer's Doc Savage novel *Escape From Loki* seems to have become canonical because it relates an event established in the original series and was written and published in coordination with Conde Nast, the Doc Savage copyright holders.<sup>13</sup> The Doc Savage novels authored by Will Murray may not be canonical because they cannot be easily fit into Farmer's chronology (although Rick Lai's *Chronology of Bronze* includes them and in many ways supersedes Farmer's chronology), although they may be considered canonical because they are based upon Dent's outlines.<sup>14</sup> The same is true for *Tarzan: The Lost Adventure* by Joe Landsdale. It has a kind of borderline canonicity because it was based upon an unfinished manuscript by Burroughs, but given the distance in time from the death of Burroughs to its publication and the incomplete state of the original manuscript, its canonical status is arguable.

Generally, though, Wold-Newton scholars regard new works authorized by the copyright holders to be canonical, which means that the events portrayed have to be worked into the characters' chronologies and histories or explained away in some manner. Texts are rejected when they violate the handling of characterization of well-known characters, and therefore carry less authority. For instance, Dave Stevens' *Rocketeer* features an appearance by Doc Savage and The Shadow that has been accepted by many Wold-Newton scholars because the characterization of the two characters is consistent with their original characterization. The version of Doc Savage appearing in DC Comics in the late eighties has less integrity because he is portrayed as marrying F'Teema, a

misnaming of Monja the Mayan princess from *The Man of Bronze*, in 1945 and going off to the other end of the universe for forty years. Although authorized, the series respects neither the characters nor the original feel of the Doc Savage pulp novels, and so is often not considered canonical by WN scholars. Another example is Dark Horse's *Tarzan/John Carter: Warlords of Mars*, which mischaracterizes John Carter. This mischaracterization prompts its rejection, but it can be reconciled by viewing it as a distortion of *Tarzan on Mars* with John Carter in the comic book standing in for Kar Komak's role in the novel.

A deuterocanonical status can be conferred to unauthorized stories published without formal permission from copyright holders but with some other form of authority. *Tarzan on Mars* (1956) was commissioned by Ray Palmer, editor of *Amazing Stories*, and written by Stuart Byrne, a science-fiction writer of some accomplishment. Further the handling of characterization and plotting fits in very neatly with Burroughs' work, and it fits into the chronology of Tarzan developed by Farmer in *Tarzan Alive!* (1972) and since expanded by WN scholars. Had *Tarzan on Mars* been published in book form, instead of being passed around among fans in photocopy form, it would have a greater level of authority. Works of this sort are generally accepted by Wold-Newton scholars. Although unauthorized fiction usually carries little authority, work by authors with personal authority, such as Farmer and *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer*, are typically accepted. Other unauthorized fiction can often be worked into a WNU in some way (e.g. the Barton Werper Tarzan stories: see "Fake Out at Shoot Out" by Brad Mengel; Dennis Power and Mark Brown have also reconciled these stories in a different way by making

them the adult adventures of Richard Lansing Greystoke, the grown up "Boy" of the Tarzan films; see "Tarzan? Jane?").

Fan fiction is not canonical and it carries no authority, except within the author's own version of the WNU. Ideas tried out in fan fiction can be used to fill out scholarly Wold-Newton articles, which raises the level of the authority of the events described but not of the fan fiction itself. Admittedly, this distinction is a tad legalistic, but that's the way things work in Wold-Newtonry.

### Authority

Authority is the stage below canonicity. Authority is conveyed by publication in the case of literary works. Publication also disposes authority on scholarly works, but these must stand up to peer review as well. In general, publication means paper. Paper carries greater weight, literally and figuratively, than does electronic publishing. The ordinary means by which credibility is judged in publishing also carry in terms of publishing authority. A university press will carry greater weight than a commercial press, a commercial press than a vanity press. The original publisher or its corporate descendant carries more weight.

The original medium of publication greatly influences canonicity and authority as well, and media is not universal (that is, no medium automatically conveys canonicity; it depends on which medium the individual series, story, or character appears in that carries the most authority, which is typically its initial meaning). Thus the Shadow pulps are typically regarded as canonical, but the radio shows, comic strip, and comic books are not, and they lack authority.<sup>15</sup> The Green Hornet radio show is canonical, but his comic book adventures are not. On the other hand, the comic book versions of Superman and

Batman, particularly the ones written by the original creators, have authority, but not canonicity since they lack consistency and vary so greatly (comic book superheroes have little canonicity, but some adventures have greater authority than others). For *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the television shows have canonicity, as do all novels or comics that Joss Whedon declares as canonical, which means that the film, despite predating the other versions, is not canonical and lacks authority (although its problems could be resolved and it could be brought into Wold-Newtonian continuity). For *Star Wars*, nearly everything is canonical because George Lucas keeps strict reigns on the continuity of all the ancillary products, including the games.<sup>16</sup>

Integrity of authorship tends to confer authority and lack of integrity tends to dissipate authority. This is especially true in the authority of crossovers established by a character meeting another character, particularly in comics, despite approval by copyright holders. Thus, despite the fact that Lady Death has met Vampirella, who has met Shi, who has met Daredevil, the authority of these crossovers is rejected by most WN scholars. These crossovers seem to have been concocted merely for their sales potential, which lessens their integrity. But when Popeye appears in a cameo in *The Shadow Strikes* #26, it appears that he does so because of Gerard Jones' affection for the comic-strip sailor, and so the crossover has integrity and therefore more authority. Some crossovers fit into both categories, being created for market-driven reasons but accomplished with some care and respect for the integrity of the characters, as with the Batman/Tarzan crossover *Claws of the Cat-Woman*.

## Categories of Creative and Scholarly Pieces

Creative and scholarly efforts fall into several categories (examples are given only for illustration). Any category can be represented by creative or scholarly pieces, such as *Hadon of Ancient Opar* (creative) or *Tarzan Alive!* (scholarly). It doesn't seem possible for a piece to be both creative (in the sense of being literary) and scholarly at the same time.

Reference: Dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, and annotations. I have written a Mangani/English dictionary based upon the Tarzan books and other glossaries that have been published, as well as adding definitions through analysis and deduction. Jess Nevins' encyclopedia sites,<sup>17</sup> such as *Pulp and Adventure Heroes of the Pre-War Years*; *Fantastic, Mysterious, and Adventurous Victoriana*; and *Golden Age Heroes Directory*; provide brief descriptions of characters and information on their publishing histories and authors. Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi's well-researched *Dictionary of Imaginary Places* with its many maps provides brief descriptions of many places written about in World-Newtonian fiction.

Annotation articles identify and explain characters, plot elements, settings, objects, and so forth. Jess Nevins' *Heroes & Monsters: The Unofficial Companion To The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* provides a panel-by-panel breakdown of the graphic novels, an essay on the Yellow Peril archetype, and biographies of the main characters of the books. Similar projects are available online for *Kingdom Come*, *The Watchmen*, *Sandman*, *Astro City*, and numerous other series. Annotations have been published for WNU-related series such as William S. Baring-Gould's *The Annotated*

*Sherlock Holmes* as well as for non-WNU literary novels like Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

**Cosmology:** Cosmological pieces depict large events, such as the formation of the universe or the emergence of cosmic powers. Generally they feature long time frames. In "Aliens Among Us: The Ancients," Dennis Power traces the four-billion year history of a group of races known variously as the Ancients, the Founders, the Old Ones, and the Long-Gones and their attempts to oversee and shape the development of the universe, particularly the development of humanity on Earth.

**Biography:** The first well-known Wold-Newtonian pieces were biographical, such as William S. Baring-Gould's *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street* and Farmer's *Tarzan Alive!* "Supermania" by Al Schroeder traces Superman's biography from his days as Hugo Danner, the protagonist of Philip Wylie's *Gladiator*, to his assumption of the costume and identity of Superman.

**History:** A history details the history of a group, a place, or an idea. It is essentially a biography of more than one person or some other thing. In "The Unofficial Blackhawk Comics Website," Dan Thompson traces the history of the Blackhawks from 1941 to their iteration in the 1992 *Blackhawk Special* #1. In "Rocks and Trees," Dennis Power traces the history of an idea, the meteor strikes that have altered the human genome and brought about the heroes and villains of the Wold Newton Universe. Farmer traces the creation of the Wold-Newton Family to the mutagenic effects of a meteor that struck England near the town of Wold Newton, altering the DNA of the eighteen men and women who were riding nearby in two coaches. Power expands this history to other meteor strikes in Greece, China, Texas, Africa, Polynesia, and so forth to explain the

existence of people with the superior abilities characteristic of Wold-Newton personages who are not of European descent.

Genealogy: A genealogy traces a family lineage and can appear as either a family tree or in a narrative version. In *Doc Savage* Phillip José Farmer included "The Fabulous Family Tree of Doc Savage," a family tree in chart form, laying out the ancestors and relatives of Dr. Clark Savage, Jr. Win Eckert has produced a narrative version of the "Amazing Lanes," a genealogical excursion into the family that produced Superman's Lois Lane, the Shadow's Margo Lane, and Flash Gordon's Dale Arden.

Chronology: A chronology works out the exact time scheme of a character's adventures and is based upon a close reading of the texts. In his impressive "Chronology of Shadows," Rick Lai creates a coherent chronology of the published exploits of the Shadow, taking in all of the novels as they appeared in the pulps and accounting for the contradictions caused by Walter Gibson's hectic writing schedule as well as the inconsistencies prompted by the multiple authors of the series, particularly the fifteen Shadow novels written by Bruce Elliot that move the character away from being a dark avenger towards an Ellery Queen knock off. Farmer produced similar chronologies for Tarzan and Doc Savage. Both these have been expanded upon to bring in other characters by Burroughs, in the former case, and to correct errors and add new stories in the latter.

A chronology can also be larger, plotting the events of a place, nation, world, or cosmos. Win Eckert's "Crossover Chronology" attempts to place chronologically all stories in which two or more literary characters, situations, universes, or, in some rare cases, actual historical personages, are linked together. To some degree it acts as a

master chronology for the WNU. Future chronologies show how events will proceed according to a series or a set of series. Dennis Power's "From Trek to Legion: A History of the Post-Federation and Pre-Legion WNU," does this for the named series and brings in E.E. "Doc" Smith's work. Power's similar effort with Matthew Baugh, "Wasn't the Future Great? A Pulp/Trek Time Line," does the same but more broadly.

**Establishment:** An establishment piece sets a character or series in the Wold Newton Universe. Typically this establishment is confirmed by linkage to an existing version of the universe, a published crossover story, or through a genealogy. In "The Destroyer In The Wold Newton Universe," Matthew Baugh brings the popular Destroyer series into the WNU by explaining the appearances of pseudonymous characters intended to be established WNU characters like James Bond, Mr. Moto, Hercule Poirot, Fu Manchu, and Cthulhu.

**Hole-filling:** A piece fills in a lacuna in the record. As with all these categories, holes can be filled in a creative fashion or a scholarly one. A literary effort is Phillip José Farmer's *Escape From Loki*, which details the adventure during which Doc Savage met his five aides and fills in the hole in the original series of precisely how they met during the war. My scholarly effort, "Pellucidar Lost: Or, The Rise and Fall of the Inner World Empire of David Innes," fills out the history of Pellucidar since its last appearance in *Savage Pellucidar* in 1944 and explains why Tarzan decided to return from Pellucidar, to which he fled at the end of *The Lost Adventure*, and fund the expedition to leave the Earth in *Time's Last Gift* to find an unspoiled wilderness on another world. The existing novels and stories do not provide an explanation for why Tarzan would consider Pellucidar to be insufficiently wild. My article explains how Innes, in Tarzan's view, ruined the inner-

world and thereby necessitated the search for an unspoiled wild land in the stars. Win Eckert and Matthew Baugh's co-created "Shrinking" Violet Holmes to fill a genealogical hole that was implied in *Shang Chi: Master of Kung Fu*.<sup>18</sup>

These categories are non-exclusive, that is, a piece can fit into more than one category. "Chronology of Shadows" by Rick Lai fits into the categories of biography, genealogy, and chronology.

### **Principles**

Each writer comes to Wold-Newtonry with certain principles.<sup>19</sup> These may be formal or informal, stated or unstated, strict or loose. No set of principles seems inherently superior to any other set of principles and a preference for one set over another seems to be just that, a preference; although, for obvious reasons, formally stated principles have inherent advantages in convincing people of their superiority.

Essentially, it seems that scholars approach Wold-Newtonry from what could be termed "disciplinary" perspectives. While working on an interdisciplinary Ph.D., I have seen disciplinary boundaries (between English, history, and philosophy, for instance) become the source of conflict in interdisciplinary programs. Some scholars seem unable to see that disciplinary methods differ (for instance, historians tend to believe that they are doing American Studies when they are merely doing history) and that one discipline should not be privileged over the others, except in that discipline's specialty (for instance, philosophers sometimes do not seem to understand that the word "novel" refers to a specific kind of text and it cannot be used to refer to works that aren't long narrative works of fiction).

WN scholars fall into two basic disciplinary camps, systematic and organic, although no Wold-Newtonian is purely or absolutely in one camp or the other.<sup>20</sup> Systematic Wold-Newtonians try to follow a set of rules to fill in the spaces left by Philip José Farmer in his body of Wold-Newtonian novels and studies. A legalist approach views the rules as conventions that keep the WNU game going. As such, it is not averse to amending them if they pose a threat to the spirit of the game, e.g. the crossover rule might be amended to not include fictional characters merely on the basis of having met famous historical personages, like Hitler, because doing so would force the entrance of characters who did not have a Wold-Newtonian feel. A scientist approach uses the rules more as scientific laws, e.g. if an established WNU character meets another fictional character, that second character must be allowed into the WNU, in much the same way that small objects must be attracted to larger ones because of the law of gravity. A cultural studies approach would let the material dictate the theory, so the principle of distortion might be used in one article whereas another would follow the principle of fictionalization because the materials led the scholar in those directions.

Other Wold-Newtonians, including Philip José Farmer himself, are organic rather than systematic. They introduce characters based on gestalt, intuition, and other methods that make poetic sense. They want to surprise readers with their ingenuity, to tell a story that means just as much to them (and hopefully to their readers) as the stories that Farmer told in his biographies of Tarzan and Doc Savage meant to his readers.

Each scholar has a hierarchy of principles that guides which principles take precedence, but these hierarchies are not necessarily consistent and can vary from article to article.<sup>21</sup> Some scholars have fixed hierarchies, and these set orders determine the

interpretation of texts. If a text states something that fits with one principles, but violates a principle higher up in the order, then that thing is changed in accordance with the higher principle.

### Foundation Principles

These principles form the foundation of Wold-Newtonry. They are generally agreed upon by WN scholars and are in a sense necessary for the game to be played.

#### 1. Principle of Fun

Wold-Newtonry is a hobby, so when it ceases to be fun, it ceases.

#### 2. Principle of Respect and Affection

WN scholars write out of respect for the authors and affection for the characters.

#### 3. Principle of Writer's Fiat or Stewart's Principle<sup>22</sup>

Writer's fiat is the idea that we each do whatever we want. This principle is an extension of the principle of fun. If a writer wants to include or exclude a character or proceed in a certain way, arguing from principles will generally not change a writer's mind, nor do writers feel absolutely bound by any principles, even the ones they devise themselves.

Justice Potter Stewart, in an attempt to define pornography, wrote "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material. . .but I know it when I see it" (Jacobellis v. Ohio, Jun 22, 1964). This principle underlies all our Wold-Newtonry, especially when people work without stated principles or a formal methodologies; that is, we each know what seems right when we see it even if we cannot articulate the criteria for judging something right or wrong.

#### 4. Principle of Adherence to Farmer<sup>23</sup>

Farmer's works, especially *Tarzan Alive!* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, stand as the basic background for our work, along with the biographies by others that prompted him to formalize the Wold Newton Universe, such as Baring-Gould's Holmes biography. Part of Farmer's authority in the game of Wold-Newtonry is based upon the interview he conducted with Lord Greystoke (Tarzan) and the fact that Farmer knows Tarzan's real name, not just the pseudonym of John Clayton that Burroughs created.

Typically, Farmer's work is respected and should not be contradicted lightly, but since Farmer's work is an interpretation of original texts (except for Farmer's "An Interview with Lord Greystoke," which can be viewed as a primary text) and since some of Farmer's theories are at odds with those texts, he can be contradicted when textual evidence or research that indicates another, better interpretation. For instance, Chuck Welch proposes that Doc Savage's birthday be changed from Farmer's date of November 12, 1901, to November 7th, 1901, based upon a close reading of *Peril in the North* and *The Golden Man* and the comparison of the pulp texts with historical and weather records.<sup>24</sup>

Farmer's work can also be clarified. Al Schroeder clarified the relationship between George Edward Challenger, hero of Arthur Conan-Doyle's *The Lost World*, and Sherlock Holmes. Farmer claims that Challenger is Holmes' cousin only on his mother's side. But Baring-Gould says Challenger is Holmes' cousin on his father's side and that Holmes' father Siger strongly resembled Challenger. Because Schroeder respects both sources, he clarifies Farmer's statement and reconciles it with Baring-Gould thusly: Dorothy Swinton, Challenger's mother, was an illegitimate child of one of Siger's siblings, and Challenger's Rutherford father was a cousin of Violet Rutherford, Holmes'

mother. Thus Challenger is doubly Holmes' cousin, and it is easy to imagine Siger looking like Challenger without doing violence to Farmer's thesis.

#### 5. Beauty Principle

This principle is simply the recognition that a good explanation that draws cleverly and elegantly on a variety of elements can be regarded as beautiful. This principle is fairly subjective. Cheryl Huttner's as yet unpublished "Tangled Shadows" piece neatly brings together work by Farmer, Rick Lai, and Win Eckert, and accounts for Street and Smith's "Describe the Shadow" contest, the Shadow Jr. from the comic strip, the Shadow comic book produced by Archie Comics, and the Belmont Shadows.

### Discourse Community Principles<sup>25</sup>

These principles establish a writer's vision of the discourse community they work within.

#### 1. Principle of Compatibility<sup>26</sup>

Articles should agree with the published narratives and the major articles, that is, WNU articles should generally be compatible with each other. This compatibility constructs the consensus WNU.

#### 2. Principle of Scholarly Validity

Scholarly works are somewhat more privileged by scholars because they exhibit a greater degree of internal validity and consistency than do the published narratives. For instance, Rick Lai's "Chronology of Shadows" is much more internally consistent than are the published Shadow novels by Walter Gibson and other authors, which contain continuity errors and multiple explanations for items such as The Shadow's girasol.

Likewise, Farmer is more right about Tarzan than Burroughs because Farmer explains more, amplifies more, and fills in more gaps; the same is true for Baring-Gould regarding Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.<sup>27</sup>

### Principles Regarding the Nature of the Wold Newton Universe

Scholars differ on the nature of the Wold Newton Universe. These principles establish scholars' views of the nature of the universe and its laws of physics.

#### 1. Principle of Beneficial Mutation<sup>28</sup>

The laws of genetics are very different in the Wold Newton Universe, primarily because mutations are much much more likely to be beneficial than in the mundane world we live in. As a result, cells mutate more easily for Darwinian reasons. If this tendency toward beneficial mutation is a universal principle of biology, then it would seem that life is much more prevalent throughout the galaxy because more mutations means a wider diversity of species. Hence, instead of the probable existence of microbial life forms on Mars in our reality, we get Barsoom.

#### 2. Principle of Expanded Normalcy<sup>29</sup>

The people of the Wold Newton Universe are sort of used to cataclysmic events. The field of what is treated as "normal" is enlarged in the WNU and the boundaries of history are wider than in our mundane world. Jean-Marc Lofficier employs this principle in "The Conquest of Space," in which he shows how before 1947 there were explorations of the Solar System, all recorded in credible literary accounts, and then uses notions of aetherspace and CS Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* to rebuild "normalcy" (the world as we know it) thereafter. *The War of the Worlds*, for instance, is a world-transforming

event irreconcilable with World War One; keeping it in the WNU means enlarging the field of what is tolerated as “normal” for the people of the WNU.

### 3. Principle of Real-World Physics

In this view, the WNU follows the same laws of physics as the real world. Farmer essentially followed this principle in *Tarzan Alive!* No other scholar seems to write using this principle as it strips the stories down very far. The Watchmen universe seems to follow this principle until Dr. Manhattan arrives.

### 4. Principle of Real-World Congruence<sup>30</sup>

The characters are placed, as much as possible, in the real world with real-time chronologies, following Farmer’s method in *Tarzan Alive!* In this view they do not exist on any parallel earth, but are more famous under their fictional guises than their real ones. Thus, Clark Wildman, Jr., is a real person whose adventures have come down to us through the Doc Savage pulps. This principle mimics real life—the fictional Sherlock Holmes is much more famous than his real-life model, Dr. Joseph Bell. Physical impossibilities, such as Superboy blowing Earth back into orbit, must be discarded as obvious hyperbole. Similarly, globally or nationally transformative events, such as the War of the Worlds or the Purple Invasion that Operator #5 fights, and events that cannot be covered up, such as Namor's tidal wave attack on New York City, are ignored because they cannot be discounted.

## Source Principles

These principles establish the relationships between the scholar and the texts, the authors and the texts, and the authors and their sources.

### 1. Events Precede Publication Principle

Events depicted in the texts have to occur before the texts were written, typically within the normal time frame of an industry's production schedule. There needs to be enough time for an adventure to occur and the notes be given to the biographer in order to get the story published. This process has to occur in a time frame that fits with the production methods a particular industry uses. For instance, in the comics industry cover dates on comic books are typically three months in advance (April comics go on sale in January), and it takes about three months for a comic book to go from artistic completion through printing and get to the newsstand. While there are stories of entire comic books being produced over a weekend in the Golden Age, usually it takes at least a month for a story to go through the process of being written, penciled, inked, lettered, and colored. To this must be added the time it takes for notes on an adventure to be written and delivered to the biographer. While an individual issue could be rushed, the generally accepted minimum time between event and the cover date of a comic book is seven months, and a year is customary. Pulp magazines might be rushed more, films and television generally less, although turn around time in television can be very short as is shown by docudramas drawn from current events.

The inclusion of time travel and stories set in the future, such as the Star Trek mythos, violates this principle. Many scholars do include such future events and have established a number of ways for knowledge of the events to have been transmitted back through time. One theory posits Dr. Who as the ultimate source of British SF set in the future.

The finale of the 2002-2003 season of *Alias* illustrates one of the difficulties with assiduously applying this principle. In "The Telling," the season two finale, Sydney

Bristow has her final battle with the agent of Arvin Sloan who has taken the identity of her roommate Francie. Exhausted from the battle, she fades into unconsciousness in her Los Angeles apartment and wakes up two years later on a street in Hong Kong. *Alias* had seemed to be set in the present, with events occurring roughly at the time of the episodes being broadcast. But this finale throws out the established chronology. This finale was broadcast in May of 2003, which means that Sydney could have awakened in Hong Kong at the latest in November of 2002, given the lead time necessary for television series production, if series creator J.J. Abrams' source at the CIA called him with news immediately after she was found. The backdating necessary to encompass those two missing years means that Sydney would have fallen unconscious after the fight in November of 2000 at the latest, which also means that some references are inaccurate, such as one mention of the USA Patriot Act, as the law was not passed until October of 2001 and therefore could not have been in effect for use as a threat against the character Will Tippin in an earlier episode.

## 2. Biographers' Principles for Dealing with Characters.

These principles are not employed directly by WN scholars. Rather they are labels given to the practices of the biographers for dealing with the people they write about. The scholars untangle these representations.

A. Direct correspondence. The character "Sherlock Holmes" directly corresponds to the real person Sherlock Holmes throughout Doyle's stories.

B. Division: One real person is divided into several fictional characters. In our forthcoming article, "Shazam! The story of the Marvel Family. . . Not the One You Think!", Dennis Power and I show how Hugo Danner's grandson Joe Marv-El Danner

has been portrayed in the comics as Superbaby, Superboy, Supersnipe, Scribbly the boy cartoonist, Big Words of the Newsboy Legion, Captain Comet, Joe Danvers (Ms. Marvel's father), Captain Mar-Vell, and Mar-Vell's son Genis-Vell.

C. Conflation: Two people are conflated into one character. "Batman" was originally Bruce Wayne. As he aged, Dick Grayson took on the Batman role and Bruce Wayne Jr. took on the Robin role, even though the comics have portrayed Wayne as Batman for over sixty years.

D. Confusion: Two (or more) people are confused for each other. In this case, character A is based upon person A. Character B is assigned some of the adventures performed by person A, and character A is assigned some of the adventures performed by person B. In our forthcoming article "Super Confusion: A Tale of the Supermen," Dennis Power and I show how the adventures, biographies, home planets, and relatives of the Supermen Hugo Danner/Kal-El and Clark Kent/Kal-L have been systematically confused and presented as the adventures of Superman of Earth-1 and of Earth-2, neither character truly corresponding directly to either Danner or Kent but both being a mixture of the two men.

Typically, it is not until we scholars compare the similar works of different biographers that we realize the extent to which they use these principles. As long as a single biographer has a relatively short career documenting a particular hero, there is no reason to believe that the hero is conflated or confused with another unknown hero. But when the second hero is documented, and we can see the similarities, we can analyze their relationship. Likewise, a hero is not divided until a second biographer begins an independent account of his career.<sup>31</sup>

### 3. Principles of Fictionality

#### A. Retelling

This principle views the source texts as straightforward truthful retellings of events, without any conscious attempt to change or shape the tale, outside of the ways all tellers influence their tales. *Scar of the Bat*, written by Max Allan Collins with art by Eduardo Barreto, is an Elseworlds tale of Elliot Ness adopting a Bat-Man identity to take down Al Capone. The story is told by Oscar Fraley, the real-life journalist who interviewed Ness and wrote *The Untouchables* (1957), the source of much of the television show and much of the Ness legend. In *Scar of the Bat*, Fraley interviews Ness the night before Ness' fatal heart attack, and the story seems a straightforward retelling of the events of Ness' Bat-Man identity from Ness' perspective.

#### B. Fictionalization

This principle views the source texts as reasonably accurate but fictionalized versions of events. Thus the names of the characters and events portrayed are treated as occurring pretty much as they did in the texts, with caveats to explain contradictions and to make new events fit into a scholar's established framework. Stories can be viewed as lightly, moderately, heavily or completely fictionalized.

##### i. Lightly Fictionalized

Al Schroeder's *Supermania* generally exemplifies the lightly fictionalized approach. He traces the historical background of early issues of *Action Comics* and *Superman* to events that occurred in Ohio in the thirties—Schroeder posits Cleveland as the initial location of Metropolis until Superman relocated to New York. For example, in *Action Comics* #9, the police chief calls in Detective Captain Reilly from Chicago,

previously successful in tracking down eight hundred fugitives, to put an end to Superman's vigilantism. In "The Untouchable and the Invulnerable," Schroeder presents this story as a fictionalized account of the move of Elliot Ness from Chicago to Cleveland in the thirties and uses Ness' move as a way of dating the story. This approach attempts to incorporate as many of the texts as possible, while privileging those closest to the original authors and to their intents.

Most chronologies follow the lightly fictionalized approach. Scholars composing chronologies note mentions of weather, fashions, time passing, and political and cultural events that help to place a tale in a specific year, season, or month (see Appendix A).

ii. Moderately Fictionalized

A moderately fictionalized account would be one presenting the core events of a story as having really happened and involving the core characters, but the rest of the story and some core elements are fictionalized.

iii. Heavily Fictionalized

Farmer follows the principle of heavy fictionalization in *Tarzan Alive!* by showing how Burroughs greatly modified and exaggerated the life of John Clayton in order to make readers think Tarzan is a purely fictional character and so to disguise the real, living person behind the Tarzan stories.

iv. Completely Fictionalized

Farmer follows the principle of complete fictionalization in discarding Pellucidar, the Ant Men, and other science-fiction elements in the Tarzan stories because they contradict real-world physics and thus conflict with his central conceit that Tarzan is a

living person in our own reality. He does the same for a few Doc Savage stories that he cannot reconcile in his chronology.

#### C. Distortion.

This principle views the texts as great distortions of the events of the World-Newtonites' lives. Names, events, and characterizations can be, and even should be, seen as being greatly altered by writers publishing stories. The idea here is to get as far below the published texts into very well hidden histories and biographies. This approach offers less in terms of material because only certain texts are privileged, typically based upon a scholar's particular needs for a character or based upon a linkage to an overarching back story. The results here can go much farther afield than in the fictionalized approach. Dennis Power's treatment of Green Lantern is an excellent example of this approach. In Power's view Hal Jordan is not a heroic superhero, but an addled former pilot without any superpowers who believes himself to have a power ring.

The distortion position forces one to seek deeper explanations than the fictionalized approach. Dennis Power's explanation in "Marvelous Fantastic Heroes: The Inferior Five" that the Inferior Five are a street theater troupe makes sense in a way that treating them as foolish parodic superheroes does not.<sup>32</sup> Viewing the texts as distortions of real events gives these characters a credibility and reality that the fictionalized principle cannot.

#### D. Germ Theory.

This principle views the texts as gross exaggerations of real events that only serve as the germs for the stories. In this view, the biographers take mere ideas and blow them

up into adventures. This position offers the least material to deal with as most of the texts are simply discarded once the germ is explained.

Jess Nevins' treatment of superheroes follows this approach. In his WNU, Captain America was the code name for an extraordinarily effective commando who never wore a costume or carried a shield and had no super powers. Speedster heroes like the Whizzer and the Flash were based upon several soldiers who were exposed to the human accelerator and died after single uses of their power. *Planetary* also operates from this position as the stories featuring cognates of Captain Marvel, the Hulk, Superman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, and the Spectre demonstrate. In *Planetary*, a Bruce Banner cognate is transformed into a hulking monster by a nuclear blast, but instead of going off and having adventures as a monstrous superhero, the transformed scientist is put in a nuclear missile silo and starved until he dies some 20 years later.

#### E. Transformation

In the principle of transformation, the characters are transformed in significant ways and an alternative WNU is presented. Farmer in *A Feast Unknown* presents Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban, sons of Jack the Ripper, in a struggle against the Nine, an ancient cabal. Grandrith and Caliban are recognizable as Tarzan and Doc Savage but have different personalities, biographies, and genealogies from the two pulp heroes. With this novel Farmer has transformed the characters so that they cannot be reconciled with the accepted WNU versions of the characters and so tend to be regarded by WN scholars as separate people. Farmer presented a much greater transformation of Tarzan in *Lord Tyger*, a novel about a mad millionaire's attempt to test the Tarzan myth by having a child raised as the ape-man was. The character of Ras Tyger is based on Tarzan but

clearly is not Tarzan. In this view, there may be almost no direct relationship between the person on whom the character is based and the stories told about that character in the guise known to readers in our world.

#### 4. Principle of Corrupt Sources and Production

The published narratives represent different accounts that have come back to writers in different ways and been written up differently with different requirements by different editors. In other words, the depictions depend on the sources (which are generally incomplete and corrupted), the writers (who write for money), the editors (who are biased), and the publishers (greedy and ideologically driven) who dictate the way things appear in their publications. Thus the published narratives are not entirely trustworthy and do not directly represent the events they retell.

#### 5. Principle of Objectivity and Subjectivity

##### A. Objective Record

The texts are viewed as a fairly objective record. The amanuensis or biographer has no agenda and is a reliable narrator.

##### B. Author's Agenda

The source, amanuensis, or author has a specific agenda they are seeking to accomplish through the texts. Professor Charles Xavier might view the X-Men comics, cartoons, and films as a way of preparing humanity for contact with mutants, establishing the idea that anti-mutant prejudice is the same as racism, and ensuring that the idea of mutant civil rights is present in the world before the existence of mutants is publicly revealed. Farmer uses this principle in his claim that Tarzan and Doc Savage authorized

their biographers to fictionalize their lives to help prevent the public from realizing that they existed.

#### 6. Historical Method Principle<sup>33</sup>

The closer we get to the original sources, the more "right" we are. For instance, Siegel is more "right" about Superman than John Byrne. If a choice has to be made between the two, Siegel is preferred, just as earlier texts by the monks about Arthur are preferred as being more "historical" than Thomas Malory's much later *Morte D'arthur*. Later stories are acceptable if they do not contradict these earlier texts. This method is very akin to the way historical researchers work on real historical figures. The word of someone who knew Lincoln, for instance, is even more valuable than a later biographer like Carl Sandburg, who of course had his own preconceptions and viewpoint of Lincoln.

A corollary is that the presentation of a character in media other than their original medium is not considered as a continuation of the original character because doing so twists the character too much, just as movies distort novels and biographies because of the nature of the process of adaptation and various constraints of the film industry.

A further corollary of this principle disregards pastiche continuation. Following this corollary strictly would eliminate all of Farmer's WN fiction from a particular WNU.

#### 7. Principle of Primary Authority<sup>34</sup>

The primary or original version of a story has a greater degree of authority than later versions, especially in media that are collaborative, such as television or film, and therefore offer more opportunities for interference and divergence from the original version. Novels tend to be written by one person, and the interference with the original vision tends to be lesser and confined only to the writer's editor. For films, the original

screenplay should be held in higher regard than the film because of the number of people, such as producers and directors, who can mess with the original vision of the screenwriter. For example, in the original screenplay for *Highlander*, Duncan MacLeod was able to sire children, while in the filmed version and all further tales of the Highlander-type immortals, it would be made clear many times that these immortals cannot have children.

Comic books fall somewhere in between novels and film, as, besides the actual scripter, editors and artists tend to be involved to a greater extent in the storytelling process, and much embellishment undoubtedly occurs. Additionally, comic books have historically been primarily a children's medium, and "true events" have often been retold using the comfortable medium of fantasy, eliminating a lot of time-consuming details in favor of presenting a "streamlined" version of the story. Not all comics reflect this simplification and some will more accurately reflect the events they depict than others.

An analogy can be made with primary and secondary documents. Primary documents hold more weight, though every document will have a certain bias due to the witnesses involved. Except for documents such as the cases of Sherlock Holmes written by his aide, Dr. Watson (and edited for publication by Doyle), few fictional characters' cases or adventures are written by direct witnesses and are usually compiled from indirect sources. These stories can sometimes get muddied further when they become films, as directors and producers tend to make many changes to the "original" vision of the screenwriter.

A caveat to this principle is that it does not quite apply to real historical characters as much as it does to fictional ones. The principle of primary authority applies to

fictional characters because the original author is presumed to have the closest relationship to the source of the texts that the stories are based upon. A historical person like Billy the Kid did not supply notes to the biographer in the same way, and so the relationship is different and the level of authoritativeness of the original texts and authors varies.

Dime novels may usefully illustrate this caveat.<sup>35</sup> Dime novels were the first medium to portray Billy the Kid and Jesse James, and their lives barely resembled their dime novel presentations. In fact, if the relationship between the dime novels and the real life characters they portrayed is anything like the relationship between the real life Wold-Newton characters and their biographies, we would have Doc Savage as some sort of alcoholic who ran a kind of sideshow in the lobby of the Empire State Building until the health department shut him down because Monk Mayfair was biting the heads off chickens.

#### 8. Objective Correlative Principle

There are two opposing versions of this principle. The first is that it is not necessary to find an objective correlative for every single instance of a character. That is, the movie featuring Alec Baldwin as the Shadow need not be reconciled with the pulp or radio versions of the character and need not be discussed at all. Texts such as these can be viewed as the products of ordinary creative activity, that is, they are fiction.

The second is the unstated assumption of Wold-Newtonry that writers are not creative, that is they do not come up with characters and stories through their imaginations but rely upon source material and notes supplied by people such as the Shadow with his files or Watson and his recording of the cases of Sherlock Holmes.

Essentially, some real event or person can be found lying behind every story told, although many of the details of the story have been created by its credited author.

#### 9. Principle of Alternative Version

Stories of alternative versions of established characters via the Elseworlds, What-IF?, Imaginary Stories, Alternaverse series can be seen as operating in two ways. In the first, the alternative version tells the true story or provides a significantly correct version of the true story of a character that cannot be told in the ordinary continuity of the Marvel or DC Universe or any other continuity. *What If #5* answers the question, "What If Captain America and Bucky Had Both Survived World War II?" by showing how the Spirit of '76 and the Patriot, members of the Liberty Legion, took on the Captain America identity during Steve Rogers' period of suspended animation. This story reconciles the contradiction of Captain America's sleep in the ice between 1945 and 1963 and the existence of Captain America comics stories published in the late forties and early fifties. John Byrne's *Generations* series provides a similar back story for Superman and Batman by chronicling their adventures in real time, from the teens to the twenty-first century and far into the future. *Generations* has become the base for many WN scholars' histories of both the Kents and the Waynes.

The second way that alternative versions of characters can be used is to view the stories as attempts by creators at the comics companies to hint at the truth, specifically to inform WN scholars of certain hidden facts and to point them in research directions. In *JSA: The Unholy 3* hick farm boy "Clark Kent" is revealed to be Zod, who was rescued from the Phantom Zone by the government and fostered with the Kents. Zod had been placed in the Phantom Zone at the age of eleven for committing mass murder. This story

cannot be reconciled with existing DC continuity or the existing WNU, but it can be seen as conveying the message that the innocent farm boy Clark Kent is in fact Zod, an interpretation that happens to fit neatly with the idea that Clark Kent on *Smallville* is in fact Kalel Zod (see "Same Actor/Same Character" principle below for an explanation).

### Connecting Principles

These principles relate to the way WN scholars connect texts that do not have straightforward crossovers between characters.

#### 1. Principle of Reconciliation<sup>36</sup>

Texts dealt with together in an article should be reconciled without any dissonances or jarring inconsistencies. Matthew Baugh's "Hitler in the Wold Newton Universe" reconciles a large number of texts dealing with Hitler, including two Doc Savage pulps, two Fu Manchu novels, several Marvel and DC Comics series, *Casablanca*, a Sherlock Holmes pastiche, the Indiana Jones films, and episodes of *Star Trek*, *Highlander*, and *Millennium*. Baugh turns this combination of seemingly contradictory texts into part of a larger story of the machinations of Lovecraftian aliens.

#### 2. Principle of Concordant Texts

Texts that build on each other act to wold each other if the first one is brought into the WNU. There are limits, but these limits are determined by things that cannot fit together easily. For instance, an analysis of Mars that includes Wells' *War of the Worlds* would also include Orson Wells' radio broadcast and the 1953 film, and would likely seek to bring in "Mars the Home Front" by George Effinger, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (Vol. II) by Alan Moore, Burroughs' Barsoom series, and Michael Moorcock's Kane of Mars series because of the way that Effinger connects

Wells and Burroughs and the way Moore builds upon this connection and includes Moorcock.

### 3. Principle of Corresponding Resonances

Similarities and correspondences in different novels, comics, movies, and TV shows allow these texts to be connected. For instance, both *Star Trek* and *Stargate: S-G I* feature advanced and abandoned technologies created by people they called “Ancients.” It stands to reason that these Ancients are one people. Likewise, the system of stargates is very similar to the transportation device from the *Star Trek* episode “The City on the Edge of Forever.” A lesser example of this is linking Wolf Larsen to James Moriarty as relatives because of the symptoms of their disorder, their love of the sea (according to the theory that Moriarty is one the men who went by the name “Nemo”), and their mathematical brilliance.

This principle aids in making odd connections, such as linking the Valley of Gold in *Tarzan and the Valley of Gold* with the Valley of Gold Doc Savage finds in the Latin American country of Hidalgo. This connection helps to explain why this *Tarzan* novel, written by Fritz Leiber, does not seem to fit with the ones by Edgar Rice Burroughs—it does not take place in Africa. A broader application of this can be seen in Dennis Power’s “Immortal Befuddled” article, in which he links together the films of Laurel and Hardy with those of Abbot and Costello. He posits that these films all portray a single immortal pair of men, one thin and the other portly. In essence, this principle can be used to conflate different characters. It can also be used in combination with the principle of differing duplication.

### 4. Principle of Differing Duplication

Not all similarities equal sameness, that is, stories told about a character in multiple texts, especially in different media and over a long period of time, might not all deal with the same person but with different people operating under a single identity. For instance, all movies featuring an invisible man are based in some way upon the original novel by H.G. Wells, and Philip Wylie's novel *Murderer Invisible* is a reworking of the novel. But for purposes of Wold-Newtonry, despite the similarities one can also find enough differences to allow the careful researcher to demonstrate that the differences in fact amount to a different set of circumstances, in other words another incident with similar occurrences but dealing with a separate set of people and events. Another example is the three different versions of Nick Carter;<sup>37</sup> some scholars contend that these are the adventures of one immortal man, while others posit that they are three separate Nick Carters.

This principle of differing duplication can be used in concert with the principle of reconciliation to reconcile some of the differences and dissonance that arise from the nature of our speculations. A case in point would be the problem of Captain Nemo. Farmer originally followed Dr. H.W. Starr's theory that Professor Moriarty was Captain Nemo. Rick Lai expanded on this theory but also added the twist that Jules Verne's Nemo, Prince Dakkar, also existed. Jean-Marc Lofficier used original French language texts of Verne's works and speculations of his own to demonstrate that Farmer was wrong, and he added a twist of his own that Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym was both Nemo and Caliglistro. WN scholars were unwilling to discard the Farmer theory, so the identity of Nemo became a source of contention for some time. However, Jess Nevins demonstrated that a third Captain Nemo existed in literature. Win Eckert used this third

Captain Nemo to reconcile the problem. There were three Captain Nemos: the original Prince Dakkar, Professor Moriarty, and Nevins' candidate Harold Duggan who was also known as Arthur Pym.

#### 5. Principle of Contradictions (Logical Inconsistencies)

Contradictions in a text lead one to discover the truth behind the story. For example, in Edwin Arnold's *Phra the Phoenician* the main character "dies" in pre-Roman Britain and "wakes" repeatedly whenever Britain falls to an invasion. Each time Phra awakens, he has no trouble understanding people he meets or being understood by them. Logically this comprehension makes no sense as the language of the people of the island changed greatly over the centuries from the Roman conquest to the attack of the Spanish Armada. This contradiction led Dennis Power to the conclusion that Phra could not have been unconscious for the periods he claims to have been asleep, and thus he must have had adventures that he does not remember or has repressed. This repression gives space to explain how Phra the Phoenician was Edgar Rice Burroughs' medieval character Norman of Torn and also provides a mechanism to explain why John Carter cannot remember his past life as Phra.

#### 6. Meaningful Actor Principle

The actor chosen to play a character can convey a great deal of information and can provide numerous connections. An actor's physique may point a researcher in a direction that reveals aspects about a character that are not readily apparent from the character's profile. For instance, on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Alyson Hannigan plays Willow Rosenberg. Hannigan is obviously of Irish descent, but nothing about the Willow character herself would suggest this ancestry. Hence, Willow's genealogy should trace

back to the British Isles but also be firmly Jewish, perhaps leading a researcher to suggest a connection between Willow and Ivanhoe and his Rebecca.

#### 7. Same Actor/Same Character Principle

If two characters in different films or television shows share many characteristics and are played by the same actor, it is arguable that these two characters are the same person. *Smallville* offers a number of examples.<sup>38</sup> Given the prior existence of Superman in the WNU, *Smallville* cannot depict the childhood and growth of Clark Kent/Superman. The actors chosen to play several roles in the show suggest an alternative explanation. Annette O'Toole played Lana Lang in *Superman III*, Lisa Bridges in *Nash Bridges*, and Martha Kent in *Smallville*. John Schneider played Bo Duke in *The Dukes of Hazzard* and Jonathan Kent in *Smallville*. John Glover played multi-millionaire industrialists Daniel Clamp in *Gremlins 2* and Lionel Luthor in *Smallville*. Terrance Stamp played General Zod in *Superman II* and Jor-El in *Smallville*.

These roles, following the same actor/same character principle, reveal this story: “Lana Lang” in *Superman II* is actually Lana Ross, one of twin daughters of Pete Ross and the original Lana Lang. She and her sister moved from Smallville; Linda to marry Nash Bridges in San Francisco and Lana to marry Bo Duke, who moved back to Smallville with her to buy the Old Kent Farm from Clark Kent, after whom they named the baby from Krypton whom they found after the meteor shower. Daniel Clamp/Lionel Luthor moved to Smallville after the incident at Clamp Towers portrayed in *Gremlins 2*, opened up the fertilizer plant, and brought his son Lex to town. Finally the portrayal of Clark’s Kryptonian father, “Jor-El,” in *Smallville* is at odds to the noble and wise image typically given of the great Kryptonian scientist. He wants his son to rule Earth and is

clearly not Jor-El, but General Zod. This casting points to the conclusion that the Clark seen in *Smallville* is not Kal-El, but Kael Zod, son of the fascist power-hungry criminal from Krypton.<sup>39</sup>

#### 8. Principle of Discordia Concors

This principle is followed to connect two things that do not seem to be connected on the surface. The term *discordia concourse*, a Latin phrase meaning "discord in harmony," has been used to describe the metaphysical poetry of John Donne, Richard Crashaw, Abraham Cowley, George Herbert, and Edward Taylor because of their practice of comparing highly dissimilar objects, as when Donne in "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" compares the union of himself and his lover to a drafting compass.

An example of this principle in action is my claim that Doc Savage's Crime College was turned into the Xavier Academy for Gifted Youngsters (to be made in a forthcoming article, "Professor X and His Uncanny Zoo Crew"). Although at first these places seem completely separate, both are in upstate New York, both contain above and below ground facilities, both are educational institutions, and at the time I minted this idea no one in Wold-Newtonry had yet proposed a history for the Crime College after Doc Savage disappeared in the late 1940s.

### Superhero Principles

Superheroes are a particular point of contention among WN scholars, who have come up with a number of ways to incorporate them into the WNU or to justify their exclusion or limitation (see discussion of Infinite Wolds below).

#### 1. Principle of Universe Integrity

The number of superheroes included in the WNU should be limited, as should their powers, because using too many superheroes tends to cause the WNU's integrity or independence to be overwhelmed by the continuities of the Marvel and DC Universes (MADCU). That is, once a certain threshold is crossed, the continuities of the Marvel and DC Universes tend to drive the WN scholarship and the more pulpy and SF elements get overwhelmed or decentered.

This same effect was behind the rule change by Win Eckert to disallow the use of fictional characters as the sole means of establishing crossovers.<sup>40</sup> If this rule had been maintained, it would have brought in Caleb Carr's *The Alienist* as well as the historical novels of John Dos Passos, E.L. Doctorow, and Gore Vidal, thus seriously diluting the game. The WNU would have been replaced by a bunch of interlocking historical series, perhaps referred to as the "literary universe" or the "fictive universe," and the pulpy characters again would have been decentered.

## 2. Principle of Overwritten Comics<sup>41</sup>

A limited number of Golden Age superheroes appeared but faded out in the fifties. There followed an "Age of Marvels," lasting some ten years, which sputtered out in the 1970s. Individual superheroes showed up independently here and there, but the comics always overwrote the stories and made the superheroes more "well known" in the world than they were.

## 3. Fish in a Barrel Principle<sup>42</sup>

The inclusion of superheroes should be limited because of the "fish in a barrel" problem, the way a principle can make it too easy to wold characters and therefore take the fun out of the enterprise. Originally, Win Eckert included historical figures as

crossover links—e.g. the Lone Ranger met President Grant and James West met President Grant, therefore they are in the same universe. Later, he dropped this because it made the game of establishing crossovers too easy. This principle is often adopted because nearly all superheroes have met each other, even crossing over between different companies' universes, which leads to the WNU being overwhelmed by the MADCU.

#### 4. Limited Superheroes Principle

The Golden Age Superman was the zenith of superhero power, and there were only a few superheroes operating without any superhero teams. Consequently, superheroes are powered down, explanations for their powers are found that resonate with something that was already established in the Wold Newton Universe.<sup>43</sup> The least powerful version of the hero is the often preferred over the original version. For example, the Submariner of the 1950s without wings on his feet and without great strength is preferred for the WNU over the Submariner of the Golden Age.<sup>44</sup>

#### 5. Principle of Pulp/SF Basis

In describing the WNU, Win Eckert wrote:

The Wold Newton Universe is not a mirror of any superhero universe. It is essentially a pulp/explorer/detective/non-powered hero universe. Pulp heroes, Victorian detectives, explorers, hard-boiled private eyes, secret agents and, in the distant past, sword and sorcery heroes, are the mainstays of the Wold Newton Universe

An assumption buried within this view is that idea that a superhero who is linked to a pulp or SF novel, especially one published before 1938, is more acceptable than a superhero who is not so linked. So according to this principle, proposing that Professor

Xavier is actually Odd John from the Olaf Stapledon novel (1935) is inherently better than an Xavier who is merely the Xavier of the comics; adding another connection, such as the idea that Doc Savage's Crime College is the site of Xavier's Academy for Gifted Children, strengthens the inclusion of the X-Men in the WNU. The same is true for linking Superman with Hugo Danner and the Flash with H.G. Well's human accelerator.

### Principles of Inclusion

#### 1. The Philosophy of the Wold Newton Universe and the Crossover Chronology<sup>45</sup>

The Crossover Chronology is built upon the base of the genealogical and historical speculations of William S. Baring-Gould, Philip José Farmer, Prof. H.W. Starr, and Rick Lai. Elements of the Cthulhu Mythos are also incorporated. Taken together, these speculations are accepted as true and constitute the foundation of the Wold Newton Universe.

Using this foundational framework, crossover stories are then integrated to establish that there are other characters who co-exist with the original characters included in Farmer's Wold Newton Family tree. Film, television, or comic book sources are quite acceptable, as long as they do not explicitly contradict a literary source; if a seemingly contradictory source can be shown, through a scholarly article or piece of research, to fit in after all, so much the better.

The Crossover Chronology is a list of crossover stories in which two or more literary characters, situations, universes, or, in some rare cases, actual historical personages, are linked together. A very good example is *The Rainbow Affair*, which brings together Sherlock Holmes, Fu Manchu, Nayland Smith, and James Bond (all already in the Wold Newton Universe, based on Farmer's family tree), with The Men

From U.N.C.L.E, The Avengers, The Saint, Inspector West, Department Z, and Miss Marple (all added to the Wold Newton Universe per this crossover). The crossover stories establish that there are other characters who co-exist with the characters populating the Wold Newton Universe, although the newly-added characters are not necessarily a part of the Wold Newton Family tree.

Crossovers that involve two or more fictional characters and that do not involve contradictions that are too difficult to resolve with what is already included are privileged. Examples of the stories with unresolvable contradictions would be the otherwise enjoyable *Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair*, and *Superman: War of the Worlds*. These stories are instead relegated to alternative WNUs.<sup>46</sup>

For a full elaboration of the Philosophy of the Wold Newton Universe and the Crossover Chronology, see *An Expansion of Philip José Farmer's Wold Newton Universe*.<sup>47</sup>

## 2. Literary primacy<sup>48</sup>

The primary source material for WNU is literary. Film or comic book sources are acceptable, but only inasmuch as they do not explicitly contradict a literary source. Moreover, crossovers may go from literature to comics, but not from comics to comics (e.g. the WNU includes Batman—who met the Shadow, and Spider-Man—who met Doc Savage, but not Geo-Force—who met Batman, or the X-Men—who met Spider-Man).

## 3. Primacy of Farmer Principle<sup>49</sup>

Only characters included by Farmer and those linked to in crossovers can be included. Following this principle strictly excludes much of the genealogical material that has been developed and some of the "slop" moves, i.e. including a character through

a reference when it is not clear whether that reference is to a living person or a fictional character, as when a character in a Shang Chi comic book refers to Dick Tracy and it is unclear whether the character is referring to a Chicago detective he has heard of or a comic-strip character whose adventures he follows on the funnies page (see “Connections Between Texts” below).

Slop moves are not final and every effort should be made to shore them up with more substantial crossovers. This shoring up happened with the Dick Tracy example, where it has been shown that a reference in a Prince Zarkon novel by Lin Carter is a direct reference to a Tracy serial—although Tracy serials would not be as inherently canonical as Tracy comic strips. Slop moves can be used in two ways: First, to get a desired character into the WNU at least provisionally while continuing to look for a stronger connection; and second to provide further evidence of an already strong connection.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4. Codified Rules and Case Law Principle<sup>51</sup>

This principle draws its metaphors from the legal world and uses the principles put forward in jurisprudence. A set of rules is established to guide the interpretation of texts and then these rules are supplemented by examples that expand the WNU. As with any code, there are exceptions, and exceptions to exceptions, and so on.

Rule: Very few superheroes. This is not because some of the powers are unbelievable, but because large numbers of high-powered superheroes would change the nature and outcome of events in the established WNU continuity, eventually resulting in the confusing and inconsistent continuities of the Marvel and DC Universes. The goal of the Wold Newton Universe is to emulate the real world, although it cannot be said to be

the real world. Too many superheroes make it less and less similar to the real world.

And too many super-powered heroes would also overshadow the other heroes like James Bond, etc.

Exception: Superheroes will be admitted if they appear in a crossover with a character already in the World Newton Universe. For example: Batman appears through Tarzan and Sherlock Holmes crossovers. Captain America is in through an appearance in a Green Hornet story. Elongated Man appears through a meeting with Sherlock Holmes, and Plastic Man appears through a connection with The Spirit.

Rule: Superheroes cannot bring in other superheroes through crossovers that take place within their own regular universes. Examples: The Elongated Man's inclusion as the son of Plastic Man does not imply the existence of the Silver Age Flash in the World Newton Universe. This rule also applies to non-superheroes from superhero universes. Nick Fury's presence in the Newtonverse via an appearance in *Sting of the Green Hornet* cannot imply the presence of Iron Man. (This rule is similar to the principle of literary primacy above.)

Rule: Appearances or cameos of a superhero's alter ego are enough to place that alter ego in the Newtonverse, but are not enough to substantiate the presence of the actual superhero. Examples: The mention of Billy Batson in *The New York Review of Bird* is not enough to bring in Captain Marvel. The appearance of Freddy Freeman in Lin Carter's *The Earth-Shaker* does not bring in Captain Marvel Jr. The mention of Tony Stark and Donald Blake in the Doc Savage/Thing crossover do not bring in Iron Man and Thor. The mention of Carol Danvers in the Red Sonja/Spider-Man crossover is not sufficient to bring in Ms. Marvel. The appearance of Bruce Wayne in the Prince Zarkon

novels is not enough to bring in Batman (but Batman comes in anyway through his meetings with Tarzan and Sherlock Holmes).

Exception: A special exception is made for Superman, even though only Clark Kent appears in a Green Hornet story (the exception is made due to a mention of Lois Lane and Clark Kent in Philip José Farmer's *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*). And even though technically only Steve Rogers appears in the Green Hornet crossover, he is definitely Captain America; otherwise, he would be portrayed as the quite scrawny pre-Cap Steve Rogers.

Rule: Once a superhero is already validly included, that superheroes can bring in other characters, as long as the other characters are not from an overly continuity-laden universe like the Marvel or DC Universes. Examples: A reference to the *Daily Star* newspaper from Superman is sufficient to bring in the pulp-like hero, Captain Gravity. Likewise, the appearance of the *Daily Planet* newspaper in a Jon Sable comic serves to substantiate Sable's presence in the Newtonverse.

In this system, "case law" is represented by supporting articles and entries that might change or enhance an interpretation, such as the theory that the Elongated Man is the son of Plastic Man. Rules and exceptions can be carved out in an apparently arbitrary fashion, but the same holds true for the law, which though it is much derided is not arbitrary. It is created by dedicated and intelligent people who are doing the best they can with an extremely complicated set of circumstances. Example: A Superman/Wonder Woman crossover set in the Golden Age was allowed in because the WNU needed more female representation.

Rule: Major superheroes can often fit in through the inclusion of lower powered or continuity-free versions that appear in tales of Elseworlds, What If, Alternaverse, and Imaginary Stories, and only then through crossovers with established WNU characters. As a corollary, the major superheroes who are included *must* be a WNU-version of that hero, e.g. Batman is the WNU-Batman, not the DCU-Batman. Thus the inclusion of a Batman does not bind a scholar to DC Comics' sixty-year history.

Obscure superheroes can be added through crossovers with major superheroes who are already in the WNU because the obscure characters do not have the continuity baggage (generally because they are published by independent publishers); examples are Captain Gravity and Doctor Solar. Even too many of these would change the general character of the universe in which they exist, unless they only operated for a year or two, or even less.

The WNU is an extraordinarily complex set of sources and mysteries that can never be satisfactorily reduced into one over-arching scheme that will always work and always satisfy everyone. In this scheme there is no unified field theory.

#### 5. Case-by-Case Principle<sup>52</sup>

Inclusion of characters into the World Newton Universe is always done on a case-by-case basis, which begins with the crossovers Farmer wrote about in literary and scholarly form. After that, each character is considered for inclusion on their own merits, but not necessarily following the same methodology for each character.

### **Tendencies**

Tendencies are the unconscious practices of the WN community.

#### 1. Prominence Preference<sup>53</sup>

WN scholars have a tendency to start wolding elements or characters from a particular genre with the more popular characters, the ones that are most prominent in the mainstream consciousness. From there, we branch out toward the more obscure edges of the field. This tendency makes it surprising when we collectively “skip over” a very well known character, such as Peter Pan, who has not been wolded as of this writing

### **Connections Between Texts**<sup>54</sup>

WN scholars use several different methods to connect texts with one another. Some, like genealogies, are constructed by the scholar. Others arise from the texts themselves. These textual connections fall into several categories. In the examples below, characters are referred to but the same principles can be applied for objects (the Maltese Falcon, the Holy Grail) and places (Shangri La, Pellucidar).

Series: Where more than one story (either in book, comic or other format) follows the exploits of a character or group of characters. (examples : *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Shadow*, etc)

Spinoff: Where a character from a series (usually minor) becomes the focus of a series of their own (*Angel*, *Able Team*, *The Lone Gunmen*, *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit*)

Franchise Spinoff: This is a sort of spinoff where the characters who are the focus of the new series are only briefly seen in the original series or introduced in their own series by a character from the base series (*Phoenix Force*—Mack Bolan formed the team. *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*—District Attorney Nora Lewin from *Law and Order* appeared in the first episode. In theory every sequel to Star Trek would come into this category).

Special Case Spinoff: Detective John Munch in *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* requires a special mention as Munch transferred from The Baltimore Police Department's Homicide Division (*Homicide: Life on the Streets*) into the SVU. Munch is not the focus of the new show, being one part of the ensemble cast.

Crossover: Characters or from two series interact in a way that is the major focus of the story. (Doc Savage and The Shadow in crossovers published by DC Comics and Dark Horse Comics, Farmer's *The Adventure of the Peerless Peer*, Burroughs' *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*). Crossovers can also occur between characters of the original series and the spinoff (various episodes of *The Six-Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*, or *Buffy* and *Angel*).

Real Person Appearance: A character crosses meets a real person, either living or historical. This type of crossover is generally no longer used by WN scholars as a method to connect two different fictional characters, but it may still be noted.

Cameo: A character from one series makes a brief appearance in a story of another series (Sherlock Holmes meets A. J. Raffles in *R. Holmes & Co.* (1906) by John . Kendrick Bangs). For many reasons, usually copyright considerations, the guest-starring character of the cameo or crossover might be either unnamed (Doc Savage in *The Rocketeer*, The Saint in *The Adventure of the Orient Express*, Hercule Poirot in "Did Sherlock Holmes meet Hercule...?") or under a pseudonym (Herlock Sholmes in the Arsène Lupin stories).

Real References: A character in one text makes a clear reference to a character from another text as a real person (Sherlock Holmes refers to a Dr Thorndyke, a detective series character written by R. Austin Freeman, on two occasions: in Ken Greenwald's

"The Adventure of the Canary Trainer," Holmes mentions working with Thorndike (sic); and in *The Pandora Plague* by Lee A. Matthias, Holmes sends a sample to Dr Thorndyke. Clearly Thorndyke is a real person in relation to Holmes.)

Relative reference: This is a variation of a real reference in that the person referred to is a relative of a character in the series or a relative of a character from another series makes an appearance (examples are: Horatio Hornblower's great-grandson Richard Hornblower in *Holmes and the Loss Of The British Barque Sophy Anderson* by Peter Cannon; Sherlock Holmes' great-grand-niece Shirley Holmes in television show *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes*; Tarzan's adopted grandson James Allenvale Gunn in the Bunduki series by J.T. Edson).

A side rule to this is that fictional descendants or relatives of fictionalized versions of real people can be used to make additions to the Wold Newton Universe, because this type of crossover is not as over-used as the fictional-character-meets-real-person scenario. An example of the fictional relative crossover is in *Alias* when Marshall states that he is the great-nephew of Harry Houdini. Since a strongly fictionalized version of Houdini exists in the WNU, this brings in *Alias*. *Alias* can also be brought in through a relative reference by the appearance of David Carradine, who appears to be playing a descendant of Kwai Chang Caine from *Kung-Fu*. Given that Caine has been shown to have descendants in *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*, it is arguable that Conrad in *Alias* is Caine's descendant, especially as the meeting between Conrad and Arvin Sloane took place in the Himalayas.

Fictional Reference: A clear reference is made to a character from another text, but it is made explicit that the character is fictional (Example: Sherlock Holmes in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, or Scooby Doo in *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*).

Ambiguous Reference: A reference is made to a character from another text, but it is not clear if the character is regarded as fictional or could be interpreted as a real person living in the referring character's universe (Monkey Men of Mongo in *Shang Chi, Master of Kung-Fu*). This is a slop move used to show a possible connection, albeit a weak one. If there is already a solid connection, this slop move may provide more evidence.

Unusable Connection:

a. A character is named, but acts so out of character as to cast doubt on authenticity of the appearance. Inclusion of this sort of crossover is highly subjective. For example, many people do not accept the adventures of The Shadow written by Andy Helfer and drawn by Kyle Baker that were published by DC Comics. Others find them enjoyable and include them.

b. A character is named, but the crossover reference violates established WNU continuity; this also applies to wholesale inclusion of superhero universes into established WNU continuity. Typically, scholars place these references into the category of alternative universes. For example, *Sherlock Holmes and the Hentzau Affair* by David Stuart Davies, is an alternate sequel to Hope's *Prisoner of Zenda*; the events of this novel cannot be made to fit the continuity established in Hope's canonical sequel, *Rupert of Hentzau*. Another example is *Superman and Tarzan: Sons of the Jungle*, an Elseworlds story in which a baby Kryptonian's rocket lands in the African jungle and he is raised by apes.

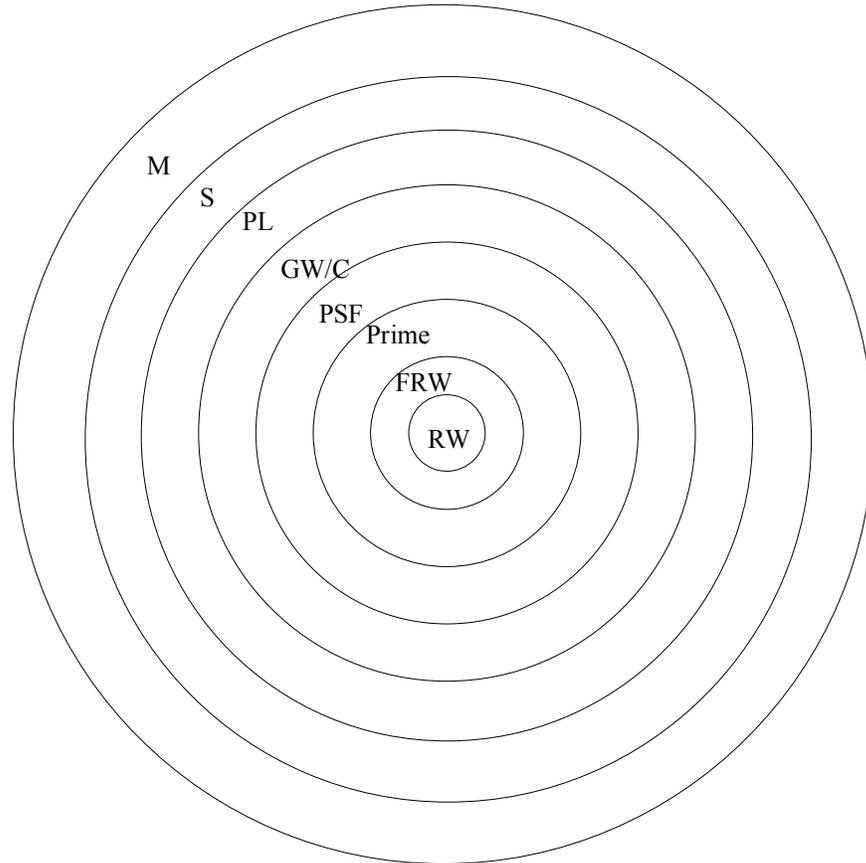
Some series that cannot be reconciled with the WNU are dealt with by considering them to be alternative universes, these include: the Doctor Who universe, the Oz universe, Wonderland, and Narnia.

### **Infinite Wolds**

#### Concentric Circles and Venn Diagrams

Scholars approach the Wold Newton Universe from a number of positions, typically depending on which characters they include in their individual WNUs. These positions can be represented as a series of concentric circles, with each "larger" version subsuming the "smaller" ones inside it.<sup>55</sup>

The concentric Wold circles are: Wold-RW (Real World), Wold-FRW (Fictionalized Real World), Wold-P (Prime), Wold-PSF (Pulp Science Fiction), Wold-GW/C (Great War/Cabal), Wold-PL (Planetary), Wold-S (Superhero), and Wold-M (Matrix).



The different positions scholars take toward the Wold Newton Universe can be seen as a series of concentric circles and where each scholar's stand within the circles determines what is included and excluded. So a scholar writing from the Wold-Superhero position could accept the theory that Spenser from *Spencer for Hire* is the nephew of Philip Marlowe, whereas a scholar writing from "smaller" Wold-Pulp Science Fiction circle most likely would not accept a theory that the Beast (Hank McCoy) of the

X-Men is the son or grandson of Monk Mayfair from the Doc Savage pulps because the X-Men do not fit into their worldview.

Furthermore,<sup>56</sup> while the concentric circles build off each other as they get larger, no writer is bound by the material in any of the circles. That is, in the example above, a writer in World-Superhero might not accept that Spencer is the nephew of Marlowe or might create a genealogy for Spencer that differs from this view, seeing Spencer as Marlowe's son or cousin. And writers working from the same position are not bound by each other's work or conclusions.

These concentric circles are representative of broad positions; any individual scholar's work can be placed in one of the circles, although certain articles may fall into another circle or may overlap into the next largest circle along the lines of a Venn diagram.<sup>57</sup> These circles are descriptive—they describe the basic position of a writer—not proscriptive—the circles are not intended to constrain a scholar's approach to the WNU.

An example of this Venn diagram overlap is the inclusion of Batman.<sup>58</sup> Batman is a superhero, but he can be seen as falling within the orbit of the pulp hero because there is little difference between the early Batman and his pulp cousin the Black Bat. As such, Batman could be easily included within the World-Pulp Science Fiction position and not push a writer's work into the World-Superhero position. On the other hand, if Batman is viewed purely as a superhero and is shown operating among other superheroes, then the writer's position more probably fits within World-Superhero. The same holds true for many pulpy superheroes like the Punisher from Marvel or the Iron Age Vigilante (Adrian

Chase) from DC because these characters straddle the superhero and aggressor vigilante genres.<sup>59</sup>

While Gardner Fox's ideas about the DC Universe and the subsequent development of the DCU obviously served as an inspiration for this scheme, my concentric circles of Wold are not set up the same as the DCU's infinite Earths. That is, they are not different earths vibrating at slightly different frequencies and a character cannot travel from one to the next on a cosmic treadmill as the Flash of Earth-1 did to meet the Flash of Earth-2. Basically, the Wold positions progress through expansion-inclusion. That is, each successive one expands to include more things than the one before it. But articles and stories can be written from any of the positions without the assumption that the other positions exist.

#### 1. Wold-RW = Wold-Real World

This Wold consists of biographies and histories of the real people who served as models for Wold-Newtonian figures and biographies and histories generally. Examples include: Dr. Joseph Bell/Sherlock Holmes; Richard Henry Savage/ Doc Savage and The Avenger; Sidney Reilly/James Bond, model for Allard/The Shadow's Kent Allard identity, Salomon Pico/Zorro.<sup>60</sup> These can be written without reference to the WNU character or to the fictional version of the person; e.g. Sir John Fielding, the eighteenth century London justice and brother of novelist Henry Fielding, is a fascinating figure and could have been the subject of biographies for his role in establishing the Bow Street Runners, a precursor of the London police force before he became the subject of a series of detective novels by Bruce Alexander. Or Jane Austen, who is an obvious subject of

historical interest as well as being fictionalized as a detective by Francine Matthews in novels like *Jane and the Unpleasantness at Scargrave Manor*.

Articles for this Wold position must follow the generally accepted principles of history and biography. No fiction is permitted, although speculation within the normally accepted methods of history and biography is. This position also includes all biographies, including of people seemingly unrelated to the WNU because of the way WN researches continually expand to bring in more and more historical characters.

Examples:

Ely M. Liebow, *Dr. Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes*.

Richard Spence, *Trust No One: The Secret World Of Sidney Reilly*. Reilly was possibly a model for both The Shadow and James Bond.

A second category of models for characters exists, the historical analog.<sup>61</sup> These are people whose lives bear many interesting parallels to Wold-Newtonites, but who were not used as models or known of by the biographers, like Johnston McCulley or Edgar Rice Burroughs. Examples include William Lamport/Zorro and William Charles Mildin and Thomas Llewellyn Jones/Tarzan. Sometimes biographical pieces on these historical figures will assert that they in fact were the models for the fictional characters, but typically other research will disprove this theorizing.

Fabio Troncarelli in “The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro: William Lamport of Wexford” proposes Lamport as the model for Zorro.<sup>62</sup> William Lamport (possibly anglicized from Lambert) was an Irishman who lived from 1615-1659. He lived an adventurous life in Mexico under the name Guillén Lombardo before he was finally caught and executed. His life was the subject of a historical romance written by Mexican

general Vicente Palacio Riva in 1872 titled *Memories of an Imposter*. Professor Troncarelli says that Johnston McCulley read this work and reworked it into *The Curse of Capistrano*. One issue that might be raised about this claim is the lack of reference to Riva's work in biographical material on McCulley. Another issue is the assertion that Lamport has all the characteristics of El Zorro. He was an adventurer, a womanizer, a fighter for independence from Spain, a poet, and a man who learned special skills from the local Indians. While all of these characteristics have been attributed to Zorro over the years, most of them are absent from *The Curse of Capistrano*. McCulley's Don Diego is a poet and secretly an adventurer. Like Lamport he does act on behalf of the local Indians. Unlike Lamport though, McCulley's Zorro is not a rebel against Spanish rule and is not a womanizer. In *Curse* he is strictly faithful to Lolita Pulido throughout. The idea of Zorro as ladies man and the idea that he learned skills from the Indians are fairly recent ideas, created after the last of McCulley's stories. Lamport is much more similar to these later versions than to McCulley's version, hence the linkage of the two.

Philip José Farmer collects several pieces regarding feral children in *Mother Was a Lovely Beast*. Two of these articles propose candidates for the Tarzan model, but neither is conclusive. Both William Charles Mildin and Thomas Llewellyn Jones had adventures that have some interesting parallels to the ape-man's and provide fodder for speculation regarding a relationship between them and the creation of Tarzan. On the other hand, Sarkis Atamain in *The Origin of Tarzan* seems to have definitively tracked down the sources upon which Burroughs modeled his vision of Africa.

## 2. Wold-FRW = Wold-Fictionalized Real World

This Wold position consists of writing new fictional adventures for the real-world models of the Wold-Newtonian characters, that is, writing stories in which Joseph Bell solves a murder or Richard Henry Savage has an adventure in India. Real-world laws of physics apply, because an adventure that bends these laws probably fits in better with Wold-PSF (as has happened with Richard Henry Savage's defeat of Doctor Nikola in the Doc Savage comics mini-series *Doom Dynasty*). The model character can also become a personage within the WNU, as has happened with Richard Henry Savage, who Win Eckert posits as Clark Savage Sr.'s adoptive father. This interpretation reconciled Farmer's genealogy with *Doom Dynasty*.

Fiction written from this position operates at two levels. The first being fiction featuring historical characters, like Sir John Fielding, who are interesting in their own right, and the second being fiction that deals with historical persons primarily because they are the models for WNU characters, like Joseph Bell (which is not to say that Joseph Bell is not interesting in his own right).

Examples:

*Murder Rooms: The Dark Beginnings of Sherlock Holmes* (1999), a BBC production with Ian Richardson as Bell and Robin Laing as Arthur Conan Doyle.

*Blind Justice, An Experiment in Treason, and Smuggler's Moon*, all by Bruce Alexander, tell of cases solved by Sir John Fielding and the Bow Street Runners.

*Mémoires de Monsieur d'Artagnan* by Gatien Courtilz de Sandras is a highly fictionalized account of the real-life D'Artagnan (c. 1615-1673) published in 1700, years before the musketeer was made famous by Alexandre Dumas.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. Wold-P (Wold-Prime)

This version of the Wold Newton Universe was proposed in *Tarzan Alive!*, Farmer's biography of Tarzan that he claimed was non-fiction, and which is the prime model for all other versions of the WNU. Farmer's original construction leaves out nearly all the science fiction and fantasy elements as he intended readers to accept the book as a non-fiction biography. Thus he excludes stories like *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* and *Tarzan and the Ant Men* because they clearly violate the laws of physics. In his genealogy sections, Farmer does make a reference to H. Rider Haggard's immortal She-Who-Must-Be-Obedied, and a reference to Doyle's South American Lost World via Professor George Challenger,<sup>64</sup> both of which fall outside the real world, but in the main *Tarzan Alive!* excludes science-fictional and magical elements. Wold-Prime is the real world, and it hems very closely to the actual laws of physics. The only exceptions to real-world laws of physics are Tarzan's longevity and incidents that fit into Farmer's theory of probability magnetism. The Tarzan of *TA!* is not immortal, but merely long-lived; at 82 he looks 35, but at 150 he will be a very old man ("Interview" 205). Farmer describes probability magnetism (which he refers to a "human magnetic moment") in *A Feast Unknown*, so technically it is not part of the WNU described in *Tarzan Alive!* because it features Lord Grandrith and Doc Caliban, who are significantly different in history and genealogy from Tarzan and Doc Savage. But his vision of Tarzan in the *Tarzan Alive!* is roughly consistent with the theory of the probability magnetism, hence its inclusion here. Probability magnetism is a force that draws highly improbable coincidence into the lives of some individuals, which explains Tarzan's luck and success. These are not truly exceptions to real-world physics, merely instances that stretch

plausibility slightly. Included in Wold-Prime are other similar fictional biographies that claim to be non-fiction, such as those of Sherlock Holmes, Nero Wolfe, and the Scarlet Pimpernel. Some elements of Farmer's other biography, *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, can be included, but most of it has to be placed into Wold-PSF due to the genealogical connections and the science-fiction elements present in Doc Savage stories that Farmer includes in his chronology.

#### 4. Wold-PSF = Wold-Pulp Science-Fiction <sup>65</sup>

This Wold is essentially Wold-Prime plus elements of the pulps and pulp-level science fiction, as well as the dime novel, adventure, and other fiction that preceded the pulps. It is very much the default Wold that WN scholars work out of. Much of Farmer's work is set in this Wold, such as *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, *Time's Last Gift*, and the Hadon of Opar series. Much of post-Farmer Wold-Newtonry is written from this Wold position. Some pulpy superheroes such as Batman and Captain America can fit into this Wold, as well as into the next one, Wold-GW/C. The dividing line for inclusion of the superheroes seems to be their power levels and the number of superheroes included (see discussion of superhero principles above and Wold-S below). The power level has to fit within the context of pulp fiction, particularly the hero pulps. Batman is the best example of fitting a superhero into the pulp world. In the early Golden Age, Batman operates at essentially a human power level, and is very similar to the pulp hero the Black Bat.

Examples include:

In "Kong: His Life and Fall," Arn McConnell tells the story of Carl Denham's discovery and exploitation of King Kong, and of Kong's subsequent death. This article expands Farmer's short story, "After King Kong Fell," clarifying matters such as Kong's species, the location of Skull Island, the news blackout that kept knowledge of Kong's rampage from the world, and the role the King Kong film played in convincing people that his rampage did not happen.

Win Eckert's massive website, *An Expansion of Philip José Farmer's Wold Newton Universe*, hosts numerous articles from a variety of Wold positions, but places itself solidly within Wold-PSF. Eckert includes *The Other Log of Phileas Fogg*, a novel by Farmer that supposes that Fogg is an agent of the Eridaneans, an alien civilization caught in a twilight struggle against a similar intergalactic empire, the Capelleans, whom Captain Nemo serves. While this inclusion would seemingly place Eckert's site within Wold-Great War/Cabal, the struggle between the Eridaneans and the Capelleans is not a recurring theme of his site. Furthermore, Eckert notes many superhero connections and crossovers, which would seemingly place his work in Wold-S. However, his limitations on the powers and numbers of those superheroes, and his rules limiting the importation of superhero continuity with the characters, maintains the general placement of his work in Wold-PSF.

Mark Brown's [Wold Newton Chronicles](#)

Mark Brown's posting of [The Wold Atlas](#)

[5. Wold-GW/C = Wold-Great War/Cabal](#)

The central feature of this Wold is the secret ruling cabal that truly runs the world or the twilight struggle, the Great War, between two powers that occurs behind the scenes. Great powers, either singly in cabals or antagonistically, manipulate mankind, the world, and the universe through agents, breeding programs, and other forms of power politics. This Wold clearly includes Wold-PSF, but it goes beyond that vision to reveal what lies behind much of the straightforward adventure that is the basis of Wold-PSF. This Wold includes the cabals of the Nine from *A Feast Unknown*, the secret Manticore breeding program in *Dark Angel*, the League of Darkness from *The Secret Adventures of Jules Verne*; and the great wars between the Eridaneans and the Capelleans in *The Other Log of Phileas Fogg*, the Arisians and the Eddorians from E.E. “Doc” Smith's Lensmen series, and August Derleth’s expansion of H.P. Lovecraft’s mythology into the Cthulhu Mythos with the war between Cthulhu’s alliance of evil and the Elder Gods.<sup>66</sup>

Jean-Marc Lofficier's [The French Wold Newton Universe](#)

Dennis E. Power's [Secret History of the Wold Newton Universe](#).

### 5.5 Wold-PL (Wold-Planetary)

A WNU based on the Planetary series by Warren Ellis and John Cassady. Jess Nevins is the only person currently working from this position. He includes Planetary, The Authority and the Star Trek future and makes connections with other scholars’ pieces.

Wold-PL largely corresponds with Wold-PSF and in fact links to and comments on several articles written from this position ([The Carters of Virginia: A Tragedy](#).) It also contains multiple cabals—the Companions of Silence, the Four, Spindrift Island—and

also a great war struggle—the Four against the Three (the Planetary organization) ([Secret Wars](#), [The Three](#)). Superheroes are included via the germ theory ([The All-Aces Squad](#)), severely limiting the presence of superheroes, thereby not reaching Wold-S, hence the 5.5. placement.

Examples:

Jess Nevins' [Some Unknown Members of the Wold Newton Family Tree](#)

## 6. Wold-S = Wold-Superhero

Wold-S is the trickiest Wold of all. Introduction of superheroes into the Wold Newton Universe is probably the most controversial aspect of Wold-Newtonry. Wold-S typically encompasses the characters of both the Marvel and DC universes but can also include the superheroes of other companies.

The problems scholars have with the inclusion of superheroes can be summed up in the principle of universe integrity:

The number of superheroes included in the WNU should be limited, as should their powers, because using too many superheroes tends to cause the WNU's integrity or independence to be overwhelmed by the continuities of the DC and Marvel Universes. That is, once a certain threshold is crossed, the continuities of the DC and Marvel Universes tend to drive the WN scholarship and the more pulpy and SF elements get overwhelmed or decentered.

There are two basic approaches to superheroes in the WNU, limited inclusion and full inclusion. The limited approach puts limits on superheroes, their numbers, and their powers. One version of the limited approach is the pulpy superhero position. In this

view, the acceptable superheroes are those that would fit easily into a pulp magazine, like Batman, Daredevil, Captain America, etc., that is heroes with some enhanced capabilities but no significant superpowers. The full approach essentially accepts them as they are in the comics.

As with the other Wolds in the chain, Wold-S contains all the other Wolds, as can be seen in the *Marvel-Two-in-One* team up of Doc Savage and the Thing, and the meeting between Batman and Sherlock Holmes in *Detective Comics* #572. Wold-S also contains Great Wars and Cabals such as New Genesis/Apocalypse, the Dreaming/Sandman family, the Celestials' breeding program in *Earth X*, and the Kree/Skrull conflict.

The Marvel and DC Universes (MADCU), the Amalgam Universe, and the Omniverse<sup>67</sup> can be considered as alternatives to Wold-S if one were to take the position that discussion of Marvel and DC superheroes does not require the Newtonverse at all. That is, articles dealing with Marvel and DC superheroes could be considered exegeses of the joined Marvel and DC Universes and not the WNU. Essentially, this is what happened in the *Omniverse* prozine, which applied Wold-Newtonry principles to the two superhero universes.

A number of arguments can be presented, pro and con, regarding the inclusion of superheroes in the WNU. Arguments for including superheroes are dealt with in the section on principles of Wold-Newtonry. Arguments against including superheroes start with the idea that it just does not feel right to include them. Farmer certainly opened the door to doing so, though, with mention of Margo Lane's possible relationship to Lois Lane, although he might not have meant to imply the existence of Superman with this

throwaway comment (*Doc Savage* 233). But one of the primary attractions of *Tarzan Alive!*, the Wold Newton Universe, and Wold-Newtonry generally is the idea that it all really happened. Of course, this idea is limited to Wold-Prime, but it is what I felt when I read *Tarzan Alive!* as a young teenager. I thought, "Finally, proof that it's all true!" The appeal here is that if characters of adventure fiction really exist, then I too could become an adventure-fiction character. Superheroes and their powers make this belief, however juvenile it might be, untenable. Hence the idea that superheroes should be kept out of the WNU is based upon a certain suspension of disbelief that lies at the heart of the attraction of the WNU for myself and many others. I could accept the idea of certain unexplainable things happening in far away places and distant, but I cannot do so with the idea of superheroes battling in the streets of New York City. The cognitive dissonance is too great.

Another argument is based upon Farmer's vision of the WNU. According to Win Eckert and Dennis Power (whose positions are blended here):

The focus of our version of the Wold Newton Universe remains on pulp heroes, Victorian detectives and adventurers, secret agents, hard-boiled private eyes, and explorers. In keeping with Mr. Farmer's primary source material, *Tarzan Alive!* and *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life*, there are also Lovecraftian horror, science-fictional, and classical literature aspects thrown in. Too many super-powered beings in the Newtonverse tend to diminish and water down the incredible and remarkable accomplishments of their less-powered pulp/secret agent/explorer/ detective counterparts. For example, why would James Bond be

sent after Blofeld's SPECTRE organization in *Thunderball* if the Green Lantern could just make the hijacked atomic bombs inert?

Eckert's solution is to put restrictions on which superheroes get included:

(1) there are not very many of them; (2) the highest threshold of their power is as exhibited in the Golden Age Superman, who could not fly and was not invulnerable; and (3) their main operative time frame was the late 1930s to approximately the mid 1950s, , with a second generation on the 1960s and 1970s.

A few later generations or descendants may still be operating today

Greg Gick proposes similar limits—a limited number of Golden-Agers, who faded out in the fifties, then about ten years of an “age of Marvels” that sputtered out in the 1970s. Of course, individuals showed up independently here and there, but the comics always overwrote the stories and made them more "well known" in the world than they were.

Another argument could be made that pulp characters can fit into superhero stories, but superheroes cannot fit into pulp stories. That is, Doc Savage can join the Thing in a comics story, but if the Thing were inserted into a regular Doc Savage story, it just would not work because a superstrong man made of rocks strains the level of willing suspension of disbelief that operates as one reads a Doc Savage novel. Yes, Doc encountered many science fiction devices and even civilizations, but these always operated at a remove, not in the middle of Manhattan on an on-going basis as the Fantastic Four do. Secondly, pulp characters do not act like they live in a superhero universe, whereas the superhero formula includes all the conventions of the pulp heroes tales.

Batman is the perfect example to discuss this matter. Batman could be a pulp hero, as the Black Bat shows. Batman often operates at a pulp level, but sooner or later he gets involved with characters who operate at a much greater power level. There is a slight, but important, difference between pulp-science and superhero-science.<sup>68</sup> Moving beyond Batman, characters like James Bond and the Destroyer don't act as though they live in a superhero universe. If they did live in a superhero universe, they would likely not express surprise at seeing certain things, such as Monk Mayfair's surprise at seeing dinosaurs.

Inherent in superheroes is a level of exaggeration that does not exist in pulp heroes. That exaggeration, perhaps, is the source of the discomfort people feel at including superheroes or too many superheroes in the WNU. The solution to this dilemma, if there is one, lies in the principles of Wold-Newtonry as well as the acceptance of the idea that different people write about different Wolds.

Al Schroeder's Speculations [www.novanotes.com/specul.htm](http://www.novanotes.com/specul.htm)

Alex Ross' *Earth-X*.

### 7. Wold-M = Wold-Matrix<sup>69</sup>

In many ways, Wold-M can be seen as subsuming all the other concentric circles of Wold.<sup>70</sup> In Wold-M, when a character "awakens" they are shunted off into a simulation that constructs a fantasy world for them to be heroic in, thereby distracting them from fully awakening and exiting the Matrix as Thomas Anderson/Neo did in the film series. This moment can occur when a character begins having adventures (when John Carter transfers to Mars), at the moment of empowerment in a superhero origin, or

when a “dreamer,” such as Little Nemo or Thomas Covenant, passes over into the dream world of their adventures. These simulations can connect, resulting in a crossover or the development of a universe, such as the Marvel and DC Universes. This theory also offers an explanation for different versions of characters, updates, continuity reboots, and so forth. In fact, if we are all truly in the Matrix, Wold-M offers a rational explanation for the WNU, and in this theory Neo himself was merely shunted off into a simulation (Sim-Zion) and all the “reality” in the film is just another program the Matrix has put forward to protect itself from an awakened.

This position also offers entirely new interpretations of texts. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Rupert Giles is typically seen as a heroic mentor and guide. From a Wold-M perspective he can be regarded as an Agent of the Matrix introduced into Buffy’s sim to reinforce the fantasy struggle against the demons that distracts her from awakening to the reality of the Matrix. Conversely, apocalyptic villains such as the First can be regarded as Zion Implant Programs (ZIP) introduced into Buffy’s sim by Zion to attempt to end the sim and thereby break Buffy free to awaken for real.

Likewise, characters such as Q from Star Trek, Marvel's Impossible Man, or DC's Batmite can be interpreted as Irrational Modifier Programs, or IMPs. IMPs have been shown to have free reign to ignore the subroutines that define the rules of any and all sims, including those that establish the borders between sims. Not all documented IMPs have been malevolent; many act mischievously, and occasionally they will aid those trapped within the Matrix, though not in a way that might lead to escape from the Matrix. All seem capable of completely destabilizing sims, but refrain from making lasting changes; this is likely the only restriction placed upon them by the Matrix.

## Wolds Outside the Concentric Circles

### Wold-E = Wold-Eclectic

These are versions of the WNU that do not neatly fit with the vision of the concentric circles for a variety of reasons. Typically they draw on many of the elements of the Wolds but have unique elements or visions of the WNU. Some Wold-Es are merely rewritten versions of the Omniverse-style blend of the Marvel and DC Universes. Some appear to be original attempts to create unified field theories for fiction and have not been inspired by Farmer's work, e.g. the Multiversal Omnipedia-Atlas, which "is intended to, in the end, be a complete catalog of all the people, places, items, events, and other things in all dramatic fiction." Oftentimes the creators of Wold-Es have elaborate principles that define what they include and exclude and how they go about constructing their universes.

Chris Davies' [Wold Newton Universe](#)

Auld Cap'n Ben' s *Brave New Wold*.

<http://www.personal.usyd.edu.au/~benh/rpg/BNW.html>

Multiversal Omnipedia-Atlas:

<http://www.dracandros.com/Jebgarg/Nidoking/moa/index.shtml>

### Future-Wold

All future histories. One popular view is that Star Trek is the future of the Wold Newton Universe, and so it figures prominently in WN scholars' visions of the WNU. A future history can be written from any concentric circle position. Star Trek fits in the Wold-PSF circle, although Wold-S can encompass it, as Dennis Power shows in "From

Trek to Legion: A History of the Post-Federation and Pre-Legion WNU,” in which he traces the future history of the WNU from Star Trek to the Legion of Super-Heroes via E. E. Smith’s Skylark, Triplanetary, and Lensmen series; and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, *Blue Mars*.

Matthew Baugh and Dennis Power: [“Wasn't the Future Great: A Pulp Trek Time Line.”](#)

#### Alternative Future-Wold

A version of WNU writing that tries to trace back and connect various futures that cannot come true in the established WNU. For instance, in *Beyond Thirty*, Edgar Rice Burroughs plots a future history of America based on the assumption that the Great War went on for decades. Since the war did end, this future cannot happen, but it can be connected to other texts, including alternative futures such as Burroughs’ Moon series, and it can be mined for genealogical information on the descendants of characters, especially children born before the point of divergence who are therefore denizens of the consensus WNU.

#### Wold-NOT!

A parodic view of the WNU in which the characters who are heroes in the WNU do not have adventures and typically have to obey real world laws of probability and physics. Often their lives develop weird parallels with their WNU counterparts. I suggested Wold-NOT! on the discussion list one day; the name was inspired by Mike Myers’ character Wayne of Wayne’s World and his use of “Not!” I had forgotten that the satirical newspaper *The Onion* had already featured a news story from this woldview, which I had read previously but had forgotten about. Here it is:

## BOY BITTEN BY RADIOACTIVE SPIDER DIES OF LEUKEMIA<sup>71</sup>

### PETER PARKER, 17, WAS AVID STUDENT OF SCIENCE, PHOTOGRAPHY

NEW YORK - Peter Parker, a 17-year-old high school student bitten by a radioactive spider during an atomic-sciences demonstration August 20, died at New York's Bellevue Hospital Wednesday night of complications resulting from Leukemia.

Parker, who was described by friends as very interested in the sciences—and who had already earned a scholarship to Empire State University next fall—was standing near a display demonstrating the transmission of radioactive beams when an ordinary spider fell through the rays and onto Parker's arm, biting in its death throes. Parker almost immediately felt dizzy and sick and was later taken to Bellevue by his Aunt May.

"This was no ordinary case of Leukemia," said attendant physician Dr. Henry Pym, an expert in the field of radioactive insect induced cancers. "This ripped through young Peter's body almost overnight, affecting his reflexes, destroying his coordination, sapping his senses to the point where all the boy could detect was constant tingling. It's almost as if this hyper-irradiated cancer had the proportionate strength and speed of a spider."

Atomic Sciences Professor Hank Connor, "...He taught us all that the power of the atom is great—and with great power comes great responsibility."

Parker's death marks the sixth atomic-accident fatality in the last month, arriving on the heels of Reed Richards, Ben Grimm, and Susan and John Storm all succumbing to cosmic rays during the maiden flight rocket, and the U.S. Department of Defense scientist Bruce Banner's irradiation by the Gamma Bomb, a weapon of his own devising.

Here are some examples specific to Wold-Newtonry:

Reed Richards, Ben Grimm, Sue Storm, and Johnny Storm are arrested for trespassing on NASA property and thrown into jail as spies. Johnny is taken from Sue's custody and put into foster care, where he takes out his frustration and loneliness by setting fires, earning him the name "the Human Torch."<sup>72</sup>

Lord Greystoke and his wife die in the jungle. Their baby is found by a race of rare, giant apes, who promptly eat him.<sup>73</sup>

Brilliant young aristocrat Victor von Frankenstein sets out on a series of scientific experiments to discover the ultimate nature of life and death. Unfortunately, he's only a student of philosophy, not anatomy, chemistry, or biology, and his bumbling efforts bear

no fruit whatsoever. Caught robbing graves in search of fresh corpses on which to conduct his experiments, he is briefly in trouble with the law, but his powerful and influential family manages to keep him out of prison. However, the living relatives of one of his unearthed corpses are extremely offended at Victor's desecration and hire an assassin to kill him in revenge. Victor will spend the next ten years fleeing across Europe in terror, the assassin always at his heels but never quite able to catch up to him.<sup>74</sup>

Gothamites Thomas and Martha Wayne survive an attack by ruffians. They and their young son Bruce live happy, contented, and well-adjusted lives.<sup>75</sup>

### Wold-Bizarro

An inverted version of the WNU following the model of DC Comics' Bizarro stories. In this world, everything is backwards. Wold-NOT! and Wold-Bizarro are very much the same, although Wold-N has a bit more range and characters often end up paralleling their WN selves in odd ways whereas in Wold-Bizarro they are limited to only the opposite of their WNU lives.

Captain Nemo: During the Great Indian Mutiny, Prince Dakkar and his family stayed faithful to the English crown. After his parents were murdered by sepoys, he fled to England and became an officer in the Royal Navy. Being at the same time a sailor, an engineer, a biologist and an artist, he got from a pedantic friend the nickname "Captain Quicumque" (quicumque meaning "everyone" in Latin). But he proved himself to be quite narrow-minded and conservative, when the first submarine prototypes were tried he swore that they would never work and ridiculed them himself.<sup>76</sup>

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## Appendix A

### How to Write a Chronology<sup>77</sup>

1. If possible, read the series in submission order. Otherwise, read in order of publication.

2. Highlight any references to months, seasons, years, ages of character, continuity problems, historical events, fictional events recorded in the series, unrecorded adventures, etc. This proves useful if a researcher is reading a series as they collect it or in a random order due to its availability to the researcher.

3. Using a word processing or database program, make an entry for each novel and unrecorded adventures, and keep them in a rough order. Then juggle the order if a later novel contradicts previous information. For example, Walter Gibson wrote *The Masked Headsman* in 1937, but the novel seems to be set actually in 1933. This dating necessitates inserting it into the 1933 entries. If juggling the order is not viable, then propose speculation that will reconcile the contradictory events. The section on unrecorded events in the characters' lives usually records those events that took place before the first published novel but it can also record events that occurred during the character's publication history that were not mentioned at the time of their happening. Revise that section every time a reference to a character's early years occurs in a novel.

4. Note the chapter as well as the page number in the entries. Doing so helps readers who do not have access to the same editions or who get their copies off the Web.

It is axiomatic that an event must occur before it can be written about.<sup>78</sup> Check for references to dates, the weather, seasons (including the behavior of animals, insects, and plants), holidays, the time of year, the characters' clothing, the characters' ages,

public events, real-world analogs, and inter-text references that assert sequence. Place stories relative to each other based upon these clues and their composition order. Plot specific dates and use time and season references in each story to help place those that precede and follow it. Track the passage of time within each story to develop an internal chronology in order to establish the length of time the plot takes. Note events the characters are said to have been involved in before the story started or that absent characters are involved in during the story and estimate the time needed for these events. Note cover dates and use industry publishing practices (the discrepancies between cover dates and sale dates, and the minimum amount of time needed to turn a manuscript into a published story). Reconcile contradictory data through interpretation of comments (for instance, a mention of “summer visitors” that indicate that a story should take place in July can be considered to concern “early birds” who arrived at a summer resort in May), by noting ways the author could have added details to make a story more authentic or colorful, and by inferring places in which the author fictionalized or distorted events. Maintain a running chronology and pay attention to empty spaces into which stories can be slotted.

## **Appendix B**

### How to Write a Genealogy<sup>79</sup>

Start with an existing genealogy and expand on it. In Wold-Newtonry, the idea is to make a genealogy that can either be directly branched off from Farmer’s genealogies as presented in *Tarzan Alive!*, *Doc Savage*, and elsewhere. When attempting to connect a character who already exists in an accepted WNU story, such as James West, begin by researching that character's life by viewing and reading the primary texts and reading the

secondary material about him to decide what is suitable for your purposes. Use a graphic program to visually lay out the connections, to show the relationships through the generations, and to show where niches can be filed and other connections made.

If they are given, use firm dates for the character's birth or death as a starting point to find out his age and by extension the age of his parents, unless these facts are also already mentioned in the research materials. Begin researching names for various connections, starting with the same last name as the character you are trying to enfold. Resources such as the *Dictionary of Fictional Characters*, *Imaginary People*, *The Reader's Encyclopedia*, Internet Movie Database's character search, and Google. Find out where characters with the same or similar names exist. Read and view those primary sources and the secondary materials developed about them.

Find correspondences between the characters, such as physical characteristics or personality, vocational, or moral correspondences. Sometime no appropriate person will be found to place in a specific niche. In such a case find a person with a similar name and indicate that the name was transformed to protect the identity of the true person or the spelling of name had changed over time, especially when dealing with characters set back before standardization of spelling was common.

Another way to form connections is through the coded name. Farmer goes into detail about this in *Tarzan Alive!* (in Addendum 2). Basically, all names mean something, so a connection may be established by finding a name with a similar or related meaning, such as Emma Frost in the X-Men and Madame De Winter from *The Three Musketeers*.

Remember that a person has two parents, so the often unmentioned mothers can be a great place to make further connections to main Wold Newton Family. Characters can be created to fulfill genealogical connections not previously known, such as a sister or brother of the character who is the subject of the genealogy. Leave extra spaces in the family trees to allow revisiting the tree for more connections.

One major flaw that WN genealogists fall prey to is failing to take into account chronology.<sup>80</sup> For example, is there enough time for a character who is posited to be a grandfather of another to marry, have a child come of age, and have that child in turn bear a child who is the right age at the time his/her adventures were chronicled? Being aware of typical family marriage patterns of a character's nation or era can help with this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Please write me with comments. By the way, I actually have a Ph.D. in American Studies. My dissertation is titled, "The Secret Origin of the Superhero: The Emergence of the Superhero Genre in America from Daniel Boone to Batman" (Michigan State University, 2002). Some of the Web links and URLs may have changed or been updated since I last edited the piece; I apologize for any difficulties broken links may cause.

<sup>2</sup> <http://freepages.pavilion.net/users/tartarus/lost.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.diogenes-club.com/shlibrary1.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Had Farmer intended to wold superheroes, he likely would have included the family of Bruce Wayne in his genealogy.

<sup>5</sup> Farmer himself has never authorized any scholar's version of the WNU. On his site, Win Eckert provides a list of Farmer's WN work and an analysis of the different reasons to include, or not include, specific works, see <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Pulp3.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.utppublishing.com/detail.asp?TitleID=2214>

<sup>7</sup> Email to the author.

<sup>8</sup> Although commonsensical, this term was in fact coined by Win Eckert to distinguish between the members of the Wold Newton Family and the literary characters who had met documented WNF members whom he was planning on wolding as part of expanding Farmer's project. Farmer himself never referred to the Wold Newton Universe or clearly defined which of his works comprise his body of Wold-Newton work. Eckert offers a listing of Farmer's WN work along with his reasoning for inclusion:

<http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Pulp3.htm> .

<sup>9</sup> Win Eckert.

<sup>10</sup> If one accepts the events of *Time's Last Gift*, everyone in the WNU is part of the WNF.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Baugh

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Baugh

<sup>13</sup> Many Doc Savage fans dislike Farmer's biographical work and his fiction, so they would not regard *Escape From Loki* as canonical. But fan considerations differ from scholarly ones and are not especially germane to Wold-Newtonry.

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<sup>14</sup> Conversely, Murray's Doc Savage novels seem to be more generally accepted by die-hard Doc fans than *Escape* or DS:HAL. But again, fan preferences are not germane in this discussion.

<sup>15</sup> Many people have only been exposed to The Shadow through the radio program and might dispute with this statement, again fans and general readers are not an especially important part of the WNU discourse community if they are part of it at all.

<sup>16</sup> Or nearly so. Lucasfilm did not keep such a strict reign at first and so *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* by Alan Dean Foster, and the various Han Solo and Lando Calrissian novels by Brian Daley L. Neil Smith that came out after *Star Wars* but before *Return of the Jedi* have been negated by the events of the second two films, and so their canonicity is likely negated. The Marvel Comics of the 1970s and 1980s are not regarded by Lucasfilm as canonical. (information from Dennis Power and Win Eckert).

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/jjnevins/pulpsintro.html>; <http://www.geocities.com/jessnevins/vicintro.html>; and <http://ratmmjess.tripod.com/goldopen.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Bond.htm> and <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Shangchi.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Many of the principles and concepts below were posted to the Wold-Newton discussion list on Yahoo Groups by members of the list. I have revised all of the posts that serve as the sources for these materials. I identify the poster in these footnotes, but for ease of reading I do not put their words into quotes. In many ways this article is a group effort. I wrote it in an attempt to elucidate the ideas that lie behind the Wold Newton articles, but I have drawn on a lot of discussion on the Yahoo Wold Newton group and private email with WN scholars.

<sup>20</sup> Art Bollmann. He originally used the label "creative" rather than "intuitive." I changed his label to avoid confusion between the scholarly/creative and the systematic/intuitive divisions.

<sup>21</sup> Al Schroeder raised a question on the Yahoo groups list about precedence order that prompted me to write this paragraph. Loki Carbis supplied the idea of a hierarchy.

<sup>22</sup> Writer's fiat from Jean-Marc Lofficier and Win Eckert. Stewart's principle from Joe Littrell.

<sup>23</sup> Based upon posts by Al Schroeder, John W. Leys, and Joe Littrell.

<sup>24</sup> Welch, Chuck. "Happy Birthday Doc Savage" <http://www.docsavage.info/arch/000527.html>.

<sup>25</sup> The Center for Writing Excellence at West Virginia University offers this definition of discourse communities: "Most people, on any given day, move between and within several communities. They encounter their families, their neighborhood, their friends, their immediate colleagues, practitioners of their profession both local and national, people who share recreational or entertainment interests, and people who share their geographic area. In each community, there are conventions about what can be talked about, what gets assumed, and how one can talk about different things. These conventions shape a discourse community." <http://www.as.wvu.edu/~lbrady/202discourse.html>

<sup>26</sup> Dennis Power

<sup>27</sup> Al Schroeder supplied the Tarzan and Holmes examples.

<sup>28</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Marc Lofficier

<sup>30</sup> Al Schroeder

<sup>31</sup> This second paragraph by Tom Murphy, written as a response to my posting the principles of dealing with texts on the Yahoo! Wold-Newton Group List.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.pjfarmer.com/secret/marvelous/inferior.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Al Schroeder

<sup>34</sup> Kai Jansson

<sup>35</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>36</sup> Dennis Power

<sup>37</sup> Win Eckert

<sup>38</sup> Brad Mengel

<sup>39</sup> Dennis Power reached this conclusion about Zod being Clark Duke's father long before Terrance Stamp took on the role of Jor-El's voice in the second season of *Smallville*; I named him Kalem Zod to reflect the revelation of the name "Kalem" in *Smallville*.

<sup>40</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>41</sup> Greg Gick

<sup>42</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>43</sup> Dennis Power

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<sup>44</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>45</sup> Win Eckert, but based on long discussions with Mark Brown, John Small, Lou Mougin, Matthew Baugh, Dennis Power, Pete Coogan, and the rest of the New Wold Newton Meteorics Society.

<sup>46</sup> These placements can shift. Dennis Power and I have discovered that the Superman of *Superman: War of the Worlds* was in fact Fred Carson, Wonder Man, a son of Hugo Danner.

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Chron0.htm>

<sup>48</sup> Michael Norwitz

<sup>49</sup> Art Bollmann

<sup>50</sup> Win Eckert

<sup>51</sup> Win Eckert

<sup>52</sup> Kai Jansson

<sup>53</sup> Steve Costa

<sup>54</sup> Win Eckert and Brad Mengel

<sup>55</sup> The concentric circles of Wold are analogous to various Christian denominations (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Greek Orthodox, etc), all set up for the same religion (Christianity) but with different interpretations of how to worship rather than as a multiverse of faiths with each one operating as a distinct reality. (Brad Mengel). They can also be thought of as analogous to academic disciplines or to theories of literary criticism.

<sup>56</sup> The clarification of the concentric circles metaphor in this paragraph and the next is from Brad Mengel.

<sup>57</sup> Loki Carbis suggested the Venn diagram metaphor.

<sup>58</sup> Brad Mengel suggested Batman as a character on the border of Wold-PSF and Wold-S. He also suggested the Punisher and the Vigilante.

<sup>59</sup> "Ages" of comics rooted in the superhero genre have long been used to distinguish periods of time that share a nexus of concerns, storytelling techniques, marketing strategies, styles of art and writing, and approaches to conventions. A general consensus regarding the names and starting and ending points of the ages has emerged in the fan community, but any specific starting or ending point is debatable and somewhat arbitrary. The following list is my own but is based upon the existing consensus. Because the ages of superhero comics fit neatly with the stages of genre evolution laid out by Thomas Schatz (37-38), I have included the names of those stages with brief descriptions. The names of the first and last ages of superheroes are my own, as is the name of the final stage of genre evolution.

0. Antediluvian Age (Pre-genre stage: Genre conventions exist, but the genre has not coalesced). The three main streams that led to the superhero are: the science-fiction superman (*Frankenstein*, 1818), the dual-identity avenger-vigilante (*Nick of the Woods*, 1837), and the pulp *übermensch* (Tarzan, 1912).

1. Golden Age (Experimental stage: The conventions of the genre are isolated and established). *Action Comics* #1, 1938; the debut of Superman.

2. Silver Age (Classic stage: The conventions reach "equilibrium" and are mutually understood by artist and audience). *Showcase* #4, 1956; the first appearance of the Earth-1 Flash.

3. Bronze Age (Refinement stage: Certain formal and stylistic details embellish the form). *Teen Titans* #32, 1971; the end of relevance.

4. Iron Age (Baroque stage: The form and its embellishments are accented to the point where they themselves become the "substance" or "content" of the work). *DC Comics Presents* #26, 1980; the debut of the new Teen Titans.

5. Renaissance Age (Reconstructive stage: The conventions of the genre are reestablished and the cycle starts over). *Justice League* #1, 1987; the post-Crisis Justice League. This start date is the least definite because the Iron Age continued in many series well into the 1990s.

<sup>60</sup> These examples are given for the sake of illustration. Some of them are contentious and not settled. For example, Win Eckert pointed out to me that Ian Fleming was strongly influenced by "clubland heroes" such as H.C. McNeile's Bulldog Drummond, and so he asserts that the Reilly connection may not be entirely valid.

<sup>61</sup> A posting from Matthew Baugh prompted me to label and define the historical analog.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew Baugh supplied all of this paragraph.

<sup>63</sup> Information supplied by Vincent Mollet.

<sup>64</sup> *Tarzan Alive!* 249 and 241-243 respectively.

<sup>65</sup> The name for this Wold intentionally suggests Philip JoSe Farmer.

<sup>66</sup> Rick Lai's "Fu Manchu vs. Cthulhu" suggested the Elder/Elder Gods war.

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<sup>67</sup> The Omniverse is described in the prozine *Omniverse*, edited by Mark Gruenwald and Dean Mullaney. Gruenwald defined a universe as a single reality, a multiverse as a series of connected universes, and the omni-verse as the collection of all multiverses. As it was coined in the context of the Marvel and DC Multiverses (both Marvel and DC had multiple, connected realities outside the bounds of their main universes), I intend it to mean the joined Marvel and DC Multiverses.

<sup>68</sup> The exact boundaries between pulp-science and superhero science are murky. In SF circles, distinctions are made between hard SF-which attempts to be more scientifically valid and is more technical and based upon the contemporary understanding of the laws of physics-and science fantasy, which maintains a façade of science reference but does not attempt scientific validity. Superhero-science is likely much looser than pulp-science. I refer to it as "analogical science" because fantastic elements of the genre are usually explained by analogy, as with the analogy made between Superman's titanic strength and amazing leaping powers and the proportional strength of ants and jumping ability of grasshoppers.

<sup>69</sup> Although Wold-M is my creation, Ivan Ronald Schablotski has run with it. Both IMPs and Zips are his as is much of the conception of the Wold-M position put forward here.

<sup>70</sup> In the Dr. Who series, "the Matrix" is a nickname for the APC Net (Amplified Panatropic Compiler Network), the Time Lords' computer network. The fourth Doctor, summoned back to Gallifrey due to a succession crisis, learned that the Master had an insider giving him access to the APC Net and chased this inside man into what we would now call "virtual reality." If the Matrix from the Matrix films were viewed as merely the APC, it would be arguable that Wold-M scholars are mistakenly looking at the WNU through the lens of the Time Lords' virtual reality universe. Therefore, they are truly writing from the Wold-PSF position. This view would fold the concentric circles of Wold in on themselves. Austin Loomis supplied the Dr. Who information for this footnote.

<sup>71</sup> *Our Dumb Century: 100 Years of Headlines from America's Finest News Service* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Peter Coogan

<sup>73</sup> Erik Sieurin

<sup>74</sup> Tom Kane

<sup>75</sup> Andrew J. Brook

<sup>76</sup> Vincent Mollet

<sup>77</sup> Rick Lai. Win Eckert added a few comments to these instructions. These comments represent his method for the "Crossover Chronology" and the Star Trek timeline.

<sup>78</sup> This section is from Farmer (*Doc Savage* 242-246).

<sup>79</sup> Dennis Power

<sup>80</sup> Win Eckert