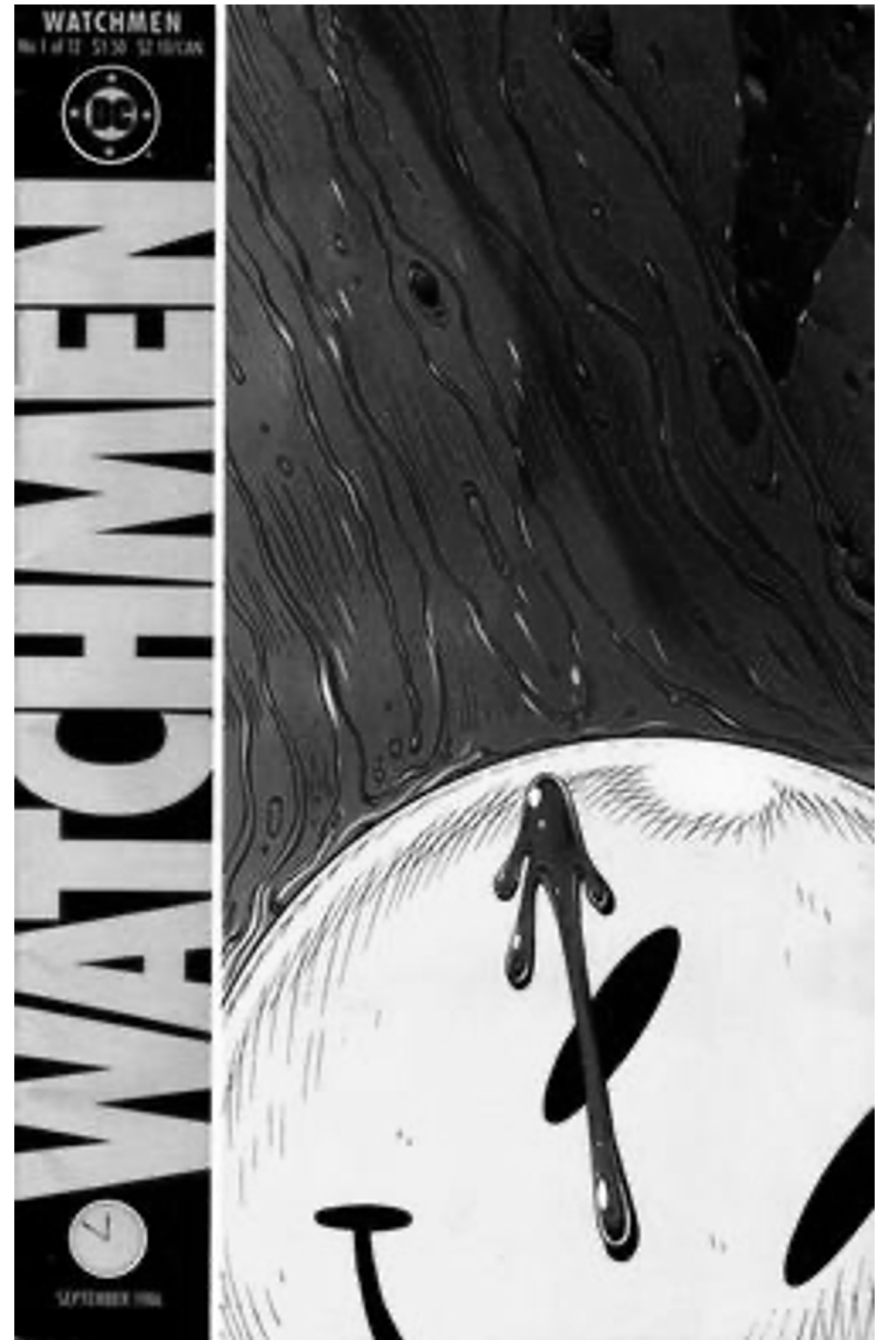


- *Watchmen*
- Created by Alan Moore (writer), Dave Gibbons (artist)
- Published by DC Comics in 1986-87
- Moore's goal:
 - to deconstruct and satirize the superhero concept
- set in alternate reality
- 15:30 – 20:00

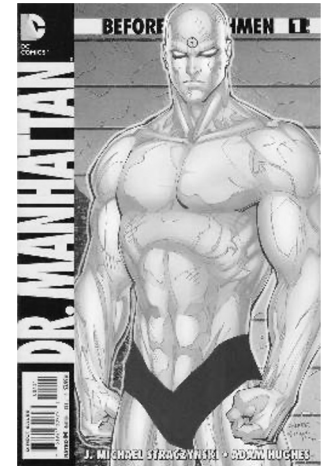


Structure

- set in 'real' world but in alternate reality
 - Action Comics came out in 1938
 - there were actual superheroes (without powers) in the 1930s/1940s
 - JFK, Vietnam war ends in 1971, Nixon president in 1980s
 - Iranian hostage crisis (1980-81)
 - invasion of Afghanistan (1979)
- Structure of Narrative
 - basic story
 - some events in 1930s/40s
 - primary events in 1980s
 - supplemental prose
 - book chapters, letters, reports, articles
 - fills in back story
 - "Under the Hood" by Hollis Mason (Nite Owl)
 - an account of superheroes in their first iteration
 - "Dr. Manhattan: Super-Powers and the Superpowers"
 - stalemate w/ Soviet Union?
 - Mutually Assured Destruction?
 - end of Ch. 4
 - "Tales of the Black Freighter"
 - someone is reading a comic titled *Tales of the Black Freighter*
 - story "Marooned"
 - ocean-stranded man looking for a place called Davidston
 - also account of writing of it (Joe Orlando)
 - Rorschach's case file



- Characters
 - Each character according to Moore represented a “radically opposing way” to understand the world”
 - Rorschach / Walter Kovacs
 - occasional narrator, moral black page
 - Jon Osterman / Dr. Manhattan – hero with actual powers
 - super human being but not emotionless, ability to play with time and space
 - Milton Glass: “*God exists and he’s American*” (Ch. 4)
 - Laurie Juspecky / Silk Spectre
 - age differential
 - Adrian Veidt / former Ozymandias
 - total use of intellect to solve problems, condescending
 - Dan Dreiberg / Night Owl
 - a kind of middle-aged but impotent version of Batman (or even Clark Kent)
 - Edward Blake / The Comedian
 - completely amoral, represents dark side of secret ops of U.S. government
 - Hollis Mason / Night Owl
 - provides history, past
- sometimes heroes were second iterations of old ones
 - Hollis Mason was 1st Nite Owl
 - part of the Minutemen
 - influenced second Nite Owl (Daniel Dreiberg)
 - Silk Spectre
 - her daughter became second Silk Spectre



Plot

- superheroes have become unpopular by 1980s
 - government passes Keene Act which outlaws superheroes
 - Dr. Manhattan and The Comedian act as U.S. government agents
 - Dr. Manhattan helps U.S. maintain strategic advantage
 - Rorschach outside of law
- Based around plot to kill all costumed adventurers
 - who's behind it?
- Book begins w/ murder of the Comedian
- Rorschach wants to warn old comrades
 - Nite Owl, Dr. Manhattan, Silk Spectre, Ozymandias
- Through it we learn histories of earlier (1930s) heroes
- Learn of origin of Dr. Manhattan
- Learn of current status of heroes
 - Dr Manhattan in a loveless relationship w/ Laurie
 - Nite Owl a kind of has been
 - Ozymandias rich tech tycoon
 - The Comedian (Blake) probable rapist (of Laurie's mother), murderer
- Dr. Manhattan accused of causing cancer to people around him
 - exiles himself to Mars, leaves 'girl-friend' Silk Spectre (Laurie)
 - weakens U.S. power in Cold War
- Meanwhile Rorschach framed for killing of former super villain named Moloch
- Personal details revealed: Blake is Silk Spectre's father



- Overall themes
 - deconstruction of comic book genre
 - What if superheroes were in real world?
 - Motivations?
 - Surveillance
 - Fear
 - Ridicule
 - Stardom?
 - What it means to be human
 - promoting superhero narrative to literature
 - Fate vs. agency
 - Time as slippery concept
 - Masculinity
 - Broad historical sweep: Cold War
 - Critique of US foreign policy
 - Apocalypse
 - Amoral
 - Experimental form
 - High art vs. low art
 - Where does this leave 'conventional' superhero narratives?
 - Marvel
 - DC



Doomsday Clock (2017-2019)