



LUND UNIVERSITY

Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

Centre for Languages and Literature
English Studies

The Dream of Morpheus:

A Character Study of Narrative Power

in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*

Astrid Dock

ENGK01

Degree project in English Literature

Autumn Term 2018

Centre for Languages and Literature

Lund University

Supervisor: Kiki Lindell

Abstract

This essay is primarily focused on the ambiguity surrounding Morpheus' death in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*. There is a divide in the character that is not reconciled within the comic: whether or not Morpheus is in control of the events that shape his death. Shakespeare scholars who have examined the series will have Morpheus in complete control of the narrative because of the similarities he shares with the character of Prospero. Yet the opposite argument, that Morpheus is a prisoner of Gaiman's narrative, is enabled when he is compared to Milton's Satan. There is sufficient evidence to support both readings. However, there is far too little material reconciling these two opposite interpretations of Morpheus' character. The aim of this essay is therefore to discuss these narrative themes concerning Morpheus. Rather than Shakespeare's Prospero and Milton's Satan serving metonymic relationships with Morpheus, they should be respectively viewed as foils to further the ambiguous characterisation of the protagonist. With this reading, Morpheus becomes a character simultaneously devoid of, and personified by, narrative power.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Birth and Death of Morpheus	3
Shakespeare, and Morpheus as Prospero.....	7
Hell, and Morpheus as Satan	12
Morpheus as Narrative Personified	16
Conclusion	20
Works Cited.....	21

Introduction

This essay will examine the character of Morpheus in Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*.¹ There will be comments on what makes the character special in the medium of superhero comics, but the essay will primarily focus on how this protagonist relates to the narrative, as either author or victim of his fate. The essay takes into consideration comparisons made on two opposite fronts. First, there will be a discussion about Shakespeare as Gaiman's authorial counterpart in the story and Shakespeare's relationship to Morpheus as author and muse. This topic will be expanded upon with an examination of how Morpheus relates to Shakespeare's Prospero from *The Tempest*, and how these characters can both be viewed as masters of their respective narratives. Secondly, the essay then contrasts this reading with a discussion of Gaiman's depiction of the freedom of choice. This theme of freedom is then connected with the similarities between Morpheus and John Milton's Satan from *Paradise Lost*, and how they both can be portrayed as victims and prisoners of their narratives. Lastly, by examining the idea of Morpheus' self-deception concerning his influence over the story and Gaiman's intentionally ambiguous storytelling, this essay will try to reconcile these two opposite readings of the character.

Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* is a comic book series with its original run consisting of ten volumes and seventy-five single issues, which were published between January 1989 and March 1996. *The Sandman* was first published by DC Comics, but shifted to Vertigo Comics on their creation in 1993, which ever since have published more mature storytelling within the DC universe. The series is often compared to the newly invigorated Batman with stories such as Frank Miller's *The Killing Joke* and Mark Millar's *The Dark Knight Returns*, alongside Alan Moore's creations, like *The Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta* and *Swamp Thing*.² All of these titles helped to breathe new life into the stagnant comic book medium of the 1980s, which is seen as the time when the American Comic came into its own. The medium matured from a being a monthly enjoyment for children into a medium capable of storytelling with recognised literary value. This new wave of authors signalled "the ushering in of the self-reflexive, more complex and multi-layered trends of semi-experimental storytelling and sensitive social awareness" (Camus 155) in the comic book industry. The trend at the time was to write stories about

¹ About referencing the original run of *The Sandman*: This essay will be referencing the single issues of the series separately and not in their collected volumes, although the references are taken from said volumes. These chapters will all be cited separately.

² *Swamp Thing* is a comic book series to which Gaiman also contributed.

imperfect heroes navigating more realistic settings, usually with more mature and darker content compared to what had previously been published by mainstream comics. Although the main character of *The Sandman*, Morpheus, certainly fits these requirements, Neil Gaiman chose to take things one step further in the development of the superhero.

The first thing to note about *The Sandman* is that it is not a traditional superhero comic, despite the fact that it exists in the same universe as Superman and Batman. Likewise, Gaiman's Morpheus is not a traditional superhero. He is Dream of the Endless, the personification of dreams and stories, alongside his six siblings; Destiny, Death,³ Destruction, Desire, Despair and Delirium. He rules the Dreaming, which is the place where people go when they sleep. His duties include taking care of all the denizens of this land while also protecting the Dreaming when it is threatened. At the same time, Morpheus is responsible for all stories ever imagined and therefore has a library, not only with all books ever written, but also all books ever thought up. (Which is why there are titles in the Library of Dream like "*The Bestselling Romantic Spy Thriller I used to think about on the bus that would sell a billion copies and mean I'd never have to work again!*" ('The Castle' 2)) Morpheus therefore does not concern himself with trivial disasters, such as burning buildings or alien invasions, which normal superheroes try to prevent. Instead Morpheus is solely focused on his duties to the Dreaming and the dreamers, and is portrayed more like a prideful and petty god than that of a traditional superhero. Since he takes the name Morpheus after the god of sleep in the Greek mythos, there is more sense to liken Morpheus to one of the polytheistic gods than to the stereotypical mould of the comic book hero. By extension, *The Sandman* as a comic also follows the frame of the classic epic of a demigod far more than it does the exploits and heroics of a man in tights. The fragmented perspective of the comic certainly supports this simile, since Morpheus is rarely the point-of-view character. Instead, he stands as a godlike entity above the world, almost like an author overlooking his stories being told.

Yet, because Morpheus is portrayed as something godlike, with his motivations and actions at times left unexplained, the character is a somewhat ambiguous figure for the reader. At the time of his death in the ninth volume of the series, the question of whether or not he made it happen is left unanswered. It should be simple. Either he killed himself or he didn't. Yet Gaiman never explicitly explains the issue one way or the other.

³ Death with a big 'D' will always refer to Morpheus' sister, who is the anthropomorphic personification of death.

Since Gaiman ended the series with the chapter about Shakespeare writing *The Tempest*, some critics are convinced that Morpheus has complete control of his narrative.⁴ This choice of ending highlights the similarities between Morpheus and Prospero, and suggests that they are both puppet masters of their respective narratives. Yet since Shakespeare only appears in three chapters, and *The Tempest* is only mentioned in one, Prospero might not be the best literary counterpart to Morpheus within *The Sandman* universe. Instead, the figure who serves as a proper foil for Morpheus throughout the series would be the character of Lucifer. If one were to compare Morpheus' story to that of *Paradise Lost*, his story arc then becomes about his inability to escape fate. With Milton's Satan being restricted to the role of villain, he is positioned at the exact opposite end of the scale to Prospero in terms of narrative influence.

In order to gain a better understanding of Morpheus' character and the symbolism of narration concerning his death, this essay will examine these opposite views. In comparing these hypotheses with one another and the source material, this essay proposes that Morpheus' own influence in the narrative is in fact what traps him inside it.

The Birth and Death of Morpheus

One key thing to note about the character of Morpheus is that he is not the first character in the DC universe that has carried the title of 'the Sandman'.⁵ This icon has its roots in the golden age of comics, as the superhero Sandman first appeared in 1939. When Gaiman first showed an interest in writing another comic after his work on *Black Orchid*, he pitched an idea about revitalising the series *Sandman*.⁶ Yet since the character was already being used in another series, and because the editors liked Gaiman's pitch, he was instead asked to write an original

⁴ When examining *The Sandman*, this essay will take in consideration the multiple layers of narrative that Gaiman introduces in his series. To say that Morpheus has agency over narrative, does not imply that he has control over Gaiman's narrative as the author, even though Morpheus can be considered as his alter-ego. There are several narratives to consider in *The Sandman*, but when this essay claims that Morpheus has agency over narrative, it does not refer to the overarching narrative of the whole comic but rather his own story arc and his position within the genre. Morpheus does have considerable sway over the plot, but when considering his command over the stories, alongside with this comics nature of nesting stories within one another, the term 'narrative' serves a more encompassing purpose of defining what Morpheus' influence symbolises in Gaiman's storytelling than does 'plot' or 'story'.

⁵ Although Morpheus himself almost never gets referred to the pseudonym of 'the Sandman', despite the title of the series.

⁶ Not to be confused with *The Sandman*. Due to copyright reasons, Gaiman could not write a comic under the name *Sandman*, but as long as a 'the' was added to the title there was no problem.

character to go with the title. What Gaiman came back with was the outline for the first eight issues of *The Sandman*, with the newly created character of Morpheus as protagonist.

Yet Gaiman still incorporated a few characters from the *Sandman* series into his creation, including Wesley Dodd and Hector Hall, who both respectively have carried the mantle of the Sandman.⁷ Hector Hall has a whole story arc and takes the prominent role as the husband of Lyta Hall and the father of the young Daniel Hall, who later turns into the next incarnation of Dream of the Endless when Morpheus dies. As an effect, Gaiman constructs a pattern of intertextual influence with the different incarnations of Dream when he reuses elements from the original Sandman mantle. However, Christopher argues that Gaiman incorporated these previous incarnations of the Sandman as parodies or lesser versions of the character when compared to Morpheus. Christopher refers to the moment when Morpheus first meets Hector Hall and he introduces himself to Morpheus as the Sandman, which causes Morpheus to spend six panels laughing at Hector and his statement (175-176).

All of this might suggest that Gaiman attempted to free himself from the influence of previous material written about the character, while at the same time acknowledging the greater history from which his protagonist is born. But Gaiman also shows a trend of the time by rejecting the traditional conventions of the perfect superhero, and even ridiculing it a bit, as he does with the appearance of Hector Hall. By taking the narrative of these comics into relative reality, Gaiman is pointing out just how silly these superhero constructs truly are. While writing within the genre, Gaiman is bringing new themes into an old medium and forcing it to mature. The most prominent of these themes are of course the theme of death, which Gaiman brings to its conclusion by killing his protagonist and ending his series without resurrecting Morpheus.

Although death is quite common in the genre of superhero comics, the hero of the story is almost always brought back in one way or another. Gaiman is critiquing this convention by not only killing his main character, but also by cementing Morpheus' death by making another reincarnation of Dream of the Endless to take his place. By filling the vacuum that Morpheus left behind with another personification of dreams, Gaiman ruined the chances of another writer taking up the story (which often happens in the comic book industry). "DCs unprecedented step of allowing the title to end at the height of its popularity because Gaiman felt it was finished" (Castaldo 98) can also be seen as Gaiman's unprecedented influence over an otherwise stale and rating-controlled medium.

⁷ Metaphorical mantle. The costume of the Sandman has changed over the decades and it does not always include a cape.

The story format of the superhero comic, with bad-guy-of-the week and the continual return to the status quo, was a format that Gaiman challenged with *The Sandman* as the series was the first comic book that told a continuing story over seventy-five issues. Gaiman allowed his main character to progress naturally through the series, but also brought the character to his natural conclusion without feeling the pressure from DC Comic to continue on with a profitable product. Gilbert, who was killed by the Furies in their quest to destroy Morpheus, makes perhaps the most fitting commentary concerning this subject. When Dream, who only wishes to return the Dreaming to normal after the siege of the Furies, tries to resurrect Gilbert, the character refuses to come back to the realm of the living;

If you bring me back to life, my death will have no meaning. I had a fine existence. I was a good place. I spent a little time walking the waking world. I even fell in love, once, a little. I lived a good life and it ended. Would you take that away from me? ('Chapter One' 20)

Although Gilbert's plea to Dream is a comment on the treatment of death in superhero comics, it can also be read as a request to DC Comics not to continue the series. Simultaneously, on the surface layer of the narrative, this statement is an endorsement of Gilbert's – and by extension Morpheus' – claim on their identities. And no matter what role Morpheus plays in term of narrative power over the plot, there is no arguing that his dedication to responsibilities and his attachment to identity plays into the nature of his demise.

In the ninth volume of the series, Morpheus is hounded by the Furies until he is forced to summon his older sister Death to end his life. He does this to ensure that the Furies will not take their vengeance out on the Dreaming and its inhabitants. Yet this is not his only option in this situation. Other characters are pleading with him to leave the Dreaming behind and flee the Furies. Another option that Morpheus himself states to the Furies is that he can take a stand against them and fight it out. Yet the Furies point out that this will not stop until he dies and that if Morpheus does choose to fight them, they will rip him and his world apart. In short, Morpheus can fight, flee, or die. Yet since the first two options would result in the destruction of the Dreaming, Morpheus chooses to die. Choice, responsibilities, identity and fate, are all closely interlinked in Gaiman's universe. As Morpheus points out before he goes to meet the furies:

Rules and responsibilities: these are the ties that bind us. We do what we do, because of who we are. If we did otherwise, we would not be ourselves. I will do what I have to do. And I will do what I must. ('Part Eleven' 24)

Morpheus dies because it is his only choice to save the Dreaming and its inhabitants, since it is his responsibility to do so and because Morpheus would be someone else if he chose otherwise.

Morpheus' three options can also be interpreted in the form of the meta-narrative with Gaiman's choice for the continuation of *The Sandman*. Fight, which would mean to continue the series and changing the ending he had planned. Flee, which would mean abandoning the responsibilities of the series and handing it over to another author. By choosing the third option and killing Morpheus, Gaiman was protecting the series' integrity just as Morpheus was protecting the Dreaming. Similarly, just as Morpheus makes a fierce claim on his identity as it correlates to his responsibilities to the Dreaming, Gaiman's refusal to hand the story over and ending it with himself as the author, was also a claim of identity.

However, whether Morpheus can be considered as Gaiman's alter-ego or not, it is unclear if Morpheus was in control of these happenings and actually summoned the Furies. This would function as an elaborate excuse for a suicide, since Morpheus attracted the Furies' attention in the first place by killing his own son.⁸ Even McConnell, in his introduction to the ninth volume of the series, suggests that Morpheus did indeed kill himself. Yet McConnell does not draw this parallel to Prospero's influence of plot and narrative, as most critics do. McConnell instead refers to Hamlet, and to the inevitability of heroes of tragedies to die tragically (2).

This would be in complete opposite to what Prospero represent, with his control over the actors on the island. *The Tempest* as a play is often referred to as Shakespeare's tragicomedy, since it begins with the traits of a tragedy but ends as a comedy with a happy ending. Morpheus and Prospero both share a similar beginning with their forced exiles, but Morpheus' story arc clearly follows that of the tragic hero to the very end when he dies while Prospero manages to escape his island. This influence that Prospero has over the plot extends further than a normal character since his actions not only change the outcome of the story, but most prominently over the genre which was first introduced. Morpheus' story on the other hand follows the pattern of a tragedy, from beginning to end.

⁸ The furies are only allowed to hound someone if they have spilled family blood.

Morpheus was trapped by the consequences of the tragedy and his death was inevitable from the moment he killed his son Orpheus.⁹ The question of course is whether this narrative is dictated by Morpheus or the Furies. The story makes both possibilities plausible, since the guilt of having killed his son is enough to bring him to despair. The motive for suicide is there. Yet, this despair might also hint that Morpheus merely accepted the death that came for him and did not put up a fight. His sister, Death, pushes him on this exact issue in their final meeting. She tells him that he made preparations for his death, and that if he wanted to, he could have fought it: “The only reason you’ve got yourself into this mess is because this is where you wanted to be” (‘Part Thirteen’ 5).

The story points the reader both ways and does not give any of the characters understanding of Morpheus’ true intention. Instead, the narrative is intentionally vague and presents two opposite images of Morpheus with no middle ground:

Are you a spider, who’s spun a web of cunning and deceit and now waits patiently for his prey to come to him; or are you a deer, frozen by the light of a hunter’s flame, as disaster comes toward you. (‘Part Seven’ 8)

Shakespeare, and Morpheus as Prospero

Of the seventy-five issues from *The Sandman*’s original run, the character of Shakespeare only appears in three. Although he is merely introduced as a minor side character in ‘Men of Good Fortune’, the other two chapters that contain Shakespeare are famous for different reasons. ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ is considered as one of the best single-issue stories that the series has produced and is the first and only graphic novel to receive the World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story.¹⁰ The third and last encounter with Shakespeare occurs in the final chapter of the series, ‘The Tempest’, and cements Shakespeare’s importance for the narrative. Gaiman’s decision to end the series with Shakespeare and *The Tempest*, inevitably elicited the response amongst critics that Gaiman is evoking the popular autobiographical reading of the play, with Prospero as Shakespeare’s alter-ego, and interpreting the play as Shakespeare’s swansong. With this reading of *The Tempest* in mind, these critics subsequently create a metonymic relationship

⁹ Although it might be significant that Orpheus did request Morpheus to kill him because he had gotten sick of living as a dismembered head for centuries.

¹⁰ The rules changed the following year to prevent a comic book from ever winning the award again.

between the two works, with Morpheus as Gaiman's alter-ego and a subsequent reading of the chapter as Gaiman's farewell to *The Sandman*.

This common autobiographical reading of *The Tempest* concerns the character of Prospero and how he is viewed as Shakespeare's counterpart in the play. Prospero's magic and control of the island is read as representing Shakespeare's narrative power over the stage. When Prospero discards his magical crafts at the end of *The Tempest* and returns to Milan, it is representing Shakespeare leaving the Globe and playwriting behind him. Yet because of this metaphor of Shakespeare's craft as literal magic, it becomes all too easy to compare the figure of Prospero with Morpheus. They both have relative omnipotence over their 'islands'.¹¹ They both have considerable powers over the supernatural in addition to being able to control multiple spirits and manifest narratives.¹² The connection between the two characters would be overwhelming if Prospero made a literal appearance in *The Sandman*. However, Prospero's only appearance exists in Shakespeare's writing of *The Tempest*. There is no interaction between the characters of Morpheus and Prospero. Instead, the character that represents Shakespeare's art in *The Sandman* saga is Shakespeare himself.

Through the three appearances that Shakespeare makes in the series, Shakespeare progresses from being an upstart playwright with minimal talent into a tired old man who writes the finishing touches to Prospero's final speech in *The Sandman*'s final chapter. Shakespeare's story begins in a 16th-century tavern, where he laments to his fellow playwright Kit Marlowe that he desires the ability "to give men dreams, that would live on long after I am dead" ('Men of Good Fortune' 12). Morpheus overhears the conversation and takes advantage of Shakespeare's wish when he proposes a bargain: Morpheus will make him into the vessel of the great stories and Shakespeare will in turn write two plays for him. Shakespeare is therefore commissioned to write *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which he later performs for the inhabitants of Faerie. The second play Morpheus wants is *The Tempest*, about which Shakespeare remarks on its completion "the first play I wrote as a gift for... your friends... But this is... your play. For you" ('The Tempest' 22).

Despite the fact that Gaiman's use of the character of Shakespeare is scarce, the playwright's significance is heightened in *The Sandman*, seeing that he serves as the thematic counterpart to Gaiman as an author. Just as Shakespeare's plays were at first not recognised as

¹¹ Prospero lives on a literal island, while Morpheus' island is symbolised by the Dreaming.

¹² In Prospero's case, this takes the form of the masque with the goddesses. With Morpheus, he is the prince of stories and can twist the characters to do whatever he wants merely by telling them the right story, as he does with Caesar in the chapter 'August'.

serious art, Gaiman struggled to turn the medium of superheroes into a credited literary artform. As Pendergast describes it, there was a transition in the medium from being treated as merely “comic books” to later being labelled “graphic novels”, once their literary potential had been proven by Gaiman and his contemporaries (187). Shakespeare’s story in *The Sandman* can therefore be likened to Gaiman’s own gradual growth within the comic book industry.

Another interesting point connecting Gaiman and Shakespeare is that Gaiman’s interest in Shakespeare primarily focus on the figure as an author and his craft, rather than on Shakespeare’s stories (Pendergast 190-191). In the chapter ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, it is demonstrated how the actors argue, what trouble it is for them to get paid, and how they get in and out of costume backstage. This suggests Gaiman’s interest lies in Shakespeare as a tradesman, rather than as a genius. Gaiman writes this struggle between the physical work and the inspiration as a literal confrontation between the characters in the final chapter. Morpheus argues that Shakespeare has nothing to do with his reasons behind the plays and does not need to know, which causes Shakespeare to get outraged and he responds:

I wrote your plays. And if you “opened the door” then I still did the work. I put each word down, I made the actors talk. I gave your stories the form in which they will be remembered. (‘The Tempest’ 36)

This interaction is that between an author and his muse, which certainly symbolises Shakespeare’s and Morpheus’ relationship. However, by having Shakespeare voice his displeasure at Morpheus for not respecting his efforts, Gaiman is once again dismantling the notion of Shakespeare’s genius in favour of his craft. This suggests that the work an author puts into his creation deserves higher praise than the inspiration behind it. This inspiration is Morpheus’ role as the prince of stories and as the ruler of the Dreaming, while Shakespeare takes on the mantle of the craftsman of the story.

Yet this reading of the character would be in direct opposition to what Katsiadas argues in his article, when he considers both Morpheus and Shakespeare as alter-egos for Gaiman in the style of the Romantic hero. Instead of invoking Shakespeare’s efforts as a writer, he argues that Gaiman has taken the opposite view because he focuses on the genius and ‘magic’ of Shakespeare as a storyteller. Katsiadas consequently fixes “[t]he general consensus of Romantic theory positions artists as bearing responsibilities to guide and empower humankind” (77) onto both Morpheus and Shakespeare as Romantic heroes.

From the elements that Gaiman uses for his worldbuilding, Katsiadis certainly has his points when comparing Morpheus to this criterion for the Romantic hero. Since Gaiman tells of the personification of dreams and stories, with a myriad of intertextual references scattered throughout the text, it is quite clear that *The Sandman* is a story about stories. Also, the Romantic notion of imparting great stories to society aligns perfectly both to what Morpheus personifies and what Prospero accomplishes. When Katsiadis dissects the two characters, he even finds a way to link their similarities in power back to the superhero genre:

As books empowers Prospero, The Library of Dream is located in a ‘heart’ of The Dreaming, within Morpheus’ castle. [...] The Library of Dream contains sources for Morpheus’ (Gaiman’s) power: books. It is also important to acknowledge how Gaiman draws attention to Lucien as Morpheus’ most loyal and trusted assistant – the Alfred to Batman. (75)

Katsiadis continues with this analogy of Lucien as Ariel, who is the keeper of Prospero’s ‘art’ in the form of the spirits that Ariel commands under Prospero’s orders, just as Lucien, in turn, is the keeper of Morpheus’ power in the form of stories (75-77).

However, for Katsiadis this also means that the series represents Morpheus’ commitment to his duties to the Dreaming, and Shakespeare’s dedication to imparting great stories to his fellow men, as the highest form of heroism (73). Yet Gaiman does not depict Shakespeare as a heroic character within the narrative, but rather as one of the most grounded. This is made clear when Gaiman contrasts Shakespeare with Ben Johnson in ‘The Tempest’. When comparing them side by side, Ben Johnson certainly experienced more and fought harder for what he believed in than Shakespeare did throughout their lives. Yet when Ben Johnson makes the claim that because of this he has gained a better understanding of people than Shakespeare, he is immediately contradicted by Shakespeare: “I would have thought that all one needs to understand people is to be a person. And I have that honor.” (‘The Tempest’ 13). Once again Gaiman seems to have put forth a human version of Shakespeare, rather than the celebrated genius. Or perhaps it is more accurate to see this depiction of Shakespeare as Gaiman placing Shakespeare’s genius and heroics in his humanity. Yet what about Morpheus’ heroics?

The single most heroic act that Morpheus performs in *The Sandman* is when he sacrifices himself for the sake of the Dreaming and its inhabitants, which aligns with Morpheus dedication to fulfil his responsibilities. Yet, Katsiadis claims that Morpheus, in his alter-ego relationship with Gaiman, made authorial preparations to protect the Dreaming even as he

planned for his own destruction (77). In this interpretation, with Morpheus-as-Gaiman, Morpheus needs to die in order for Gaiman to finish the series. And as Gaiman's representation in the narrative, Morpheus is able to prepare and control events to make sure that he does indeed die in the fashion of his choice.

This seems to be the most popular reading for Morpheus' demise, and there are solid arguments to be made for Morpheus being in full control of the narrative. The Morpheus-as-Prospero link that is suggested by the final chapter is perhaps the most obvious piece of evidence. There is also the convergence of multiple elements in the narrative web in Morpheus' demise that all, in one way or another, tie back to one of Morpheus' actions. It is all too perfect not to have been planned, and Morpheus is the perfect suspect for constructing such a plot.

Lucien, who arguably is the character who knows Morpheus the best, hints at Morpheus being involved in his death when questioned about the subject by Morpheus' raven Matthew:

“Why did he let it happen?”

“Let it, Matthew? I think he did a little more than let it happen... Charitably... I think... Sometimes, perhaps, one must change or die. And in the end, there were, perhaps, limits to how much he could let himself change.” (‘Chapter Two’ 19)

Lucien's statement strengthens the argument for Morpheus-as-Gaiman being in full control of the narrative, but it also addresses Morpheus' character and his refusal to change. This phenomenon is in turn explained by Straub, when he claims that change is something universally despised. That people would rather stay in hell than leave it (4). This sentiment also ties in with Katsiadas' point about the Romantic alter-ego wanting to 'author' both their life and death (64). These arguments seem to suggest that Morpheus wanted to exercise his narrative power and end his life to maintain his identity, rather than let it continue without his narrative influence.

Yet, this autobiographical reading of Morpheus-as-Gaiman becomes troublesome when considering Morpheus' reason for wanting Shakespeare to write *The Tempest* in the first place. Since Morpheus brings forth the differences between himself and Prospero as the reason why he wanted the play, the similarities between Morpheus and Prospero seem less obvious. As a consequence, the interpretation of Morpheus as Gaiman's alter-ego and, by extension, Morpheus' influence over the narrative, is put into question with this reasoning:

I wanted a tale of graceful ends. I wanted a play about a King who drowns his books, and breaks his staff, and leaves his kingdom. About a magician who becomes a man. About a man who turns his back on magic. ('The Tempest' 35)

This statement from Morpheus seems to suggest that, rather than serving a metonymic relationship with Prospero, Shakespeare's wizard is instead meant to serve as a foil for Morpheus' character. The similarities between the two characters further highlight the one subject in which they differ. Prospero has the ability to change and leave his narrative construct, while Morpheus does not. Yet, with the creation of Prospero, Morpheus does get the chance to vicariously escape his fate and death.

It is worth noting that Prospero goes through immense change at the end of *The Tempest*. Not only does Prospero throw away his magic, but he also chooses to spare his enemies. It is Prospero's change of heart that twists the narrative from a potential tragedy into a story with a happy ending. Morpheus never escapes his tragedy, and perhaps this was his choice, but the inclusion of *The Tempest* suggests a different story, because Morpheus requested a tale of a wizard that resembles himself, but who specifically escapes the tragedy that he himself is unable to avoid. If 'The Tempest' proposes this schism between the characters of Prospero and Morpheus, then perhaps it also suggests that Morpheus was not in control of the narrative at all.

Hell, and Morpheus as Satan

A theme that appears in the first volume and continues to have an impact throughout the series, is Hell and the Devil.¹³ The series contains multiple references to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and it is not farfetched to speculate that the hell that Gaiman depicts is in some measure built from the hell that Milton first created.¹⁴ The two works also adopt some of the same ideas concerning suffering and redemption in their narratives, although their depictions of free will seem to diverge. In Gaiman's *The Sandman*, the themes of narrative, free will and identity are all closely linked. The narrative role of the characters is therefore determined by their choices, and their

¹³ This essay compares the two devils from Gaiman's *The Sandman* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. When doing so, Milton's devil will be referred to as Satan, and Gaiman's will be Lucifer, as to avoid confusing the two. When the two are compared together, they will be referred to as devils.

¹⁴ Lucifer references Milton directly in 'Episode 1' of *Season of Mist* and both Gaiman's and Milton's depictions of the devil's fortress in Hell are called Pandemonium.

identity is constructed by these choices. If the character were to choose differently, their identity would be different and their predetermined role for the narrative would as a consequence also change. As a result, while Milton's depiction of hell still rings true in *The Sandman*, Gaiman also disrupts the Miltonic interpretation regarding the predestined roles of good and evil.

When Milton's Satan considers his redemption after he has left hell, he laments "Me miserable, which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? / Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;" (Milton, Book 4, Line 73-75). This idea that "hell's something you carry around with you. Not somewhere you go" ('Episode 4' 23) is directly mirrored in the comic by a soul that just has escaped hell, although this view is immediately contested by his new friend: "I don't think I agree. I think maybe hell is a place. But you don't have to stay anywhere forever" ('Episode 4' 23). Jahlmar argues that damnation in *Paradise Lost* is depicted as fundamentally unchangeable. When you're damned, you're damned and there is nothing you can do about it (282). While Milton's narrative has this predetermined idea of good and evil, Gaiman on the other hand quite literally offers up a hope in hell. The possibility of change is always present in *The Sandman*, a hope to change the role one has been given by the narrative.

In the ninth volume, *The Kindly Ones*, we can see a simplified demonstration of predetermined narrative when Lyta Hall requests assistance from a cat. The cat replies that she cannot since she is on her way to a castle. When the cat arrives, she will challenge the ogre that rules the castle to change his shape into three things of her choosing. Lyta then asks if the third shape will be that of a mouse. To this the cat replies "of course". Yet when Lyta questions this, asking why the ogres never learn this trick, the cat explains that "They can't. They're part of the story, just as I am" ('Part Four' 10). Just as Milton's Satan is trapped in being the devil of the narrative, the ogre is the ogre and the hero remains the hero. The villain cannot refrain from playing his role in the narrative any less than the cat can deviate from her path to the castle. Yet while Gaiman does acknowledge the crippling power of narrative over the characters, he demonstrates a priority of individual will above narrative expectation.

The idea of change as salvation and as the escape from narrative, appears the first time Morpheus goes to hell, where he is forced to play the oldest game with a demon in order to retrieve his helm of office. In order to win this game, the combatants have to change their form whenever it is their turn. If they can't come up with a form that can overcome their opponent, or if they hesitate, they lose. This of course strengthens Gaiman's later argument that the only chance for redemption lies in personal growth and change, but it also takes a quite literal form by the end of the game. The demon Choronzon takes the form of "the Anti-Life, the Beast of Judgement [...] the dark at the end of everything. The end of universes, gods,

worlds... of everything.” (‘A Hope in Hell’ 19) The demon then goes on to mock Morpheus, since he believes that he has won the game: “And what will you be then, Dreamlord?”

At this point, Morpheus is facing two narrative layers of danger. The first danger lies in the narrative of the game, and that he has to change his form into one that can face something that by its very definition is both inevitable and unbeatable. In the greater scope of the story, if Morpheus loses this game, he will be trapped in hell forever. Yet Morpheus simply answers: “I am hope” (‘A Hope in Hell’ 19). To this, the demon Choronzon is speechless. In the game’s narrative, Morpheus did abandon the offensive in order to force Choronzon into a corner. In this case, Morpheus was the one that influenced the game’s framing in order to make Choronzon take the form he wanted the demon to take, and once again demonstrating the power he wields over narrative constructs.

Yet this interaction is also key to understanding the means of redemption and showing the flaw in those that find themselves unable to escape the hell of their making. It never even occurred to Choronzon that Morpheus might be able to escape his final form, nor can he think of anything to change into afterwards. The reason for all the suffering in Gaiman’s hell is because they have not chosen to leave. It is subtle, but Gaiman is here providing the reason why hell is full to begin with even before the subject is explored in the fourth volume, *Season of Mist*. If the demons left hell, they would no longer be the ones that were trapped there in the first place, since the only thing that is holding them captive in hell is themselves. If the devil chooses to change, there is nothing to stop him from walking away from his role as the advisory and leaving hell behind. Which indeed is what Gaiman has Lucifer do.

Jahlmar claims that Gaiman’s decision to give Lucifer the ability to choose is a critique of Milton’s depiction of free will, since his Satan seems to have an unchangeable destiny that he is unable to escape (280). Since “true damnation is being unable to leave any given situation or place. In other words, free will necessitates continuous option for change” (Jahlmar 282). Because Satan is continuously denied the possibility to change, Satan is effectively trapped within God’s narrative.

This is where *The Sandman* and *Paradise Lost* diverge, since Milton’s Satan serves as a foil for Gaiman’s Lucifer. Milton’s portrayal of Satan was for his time quite a radical change from his previous depictions, but his role remained unaltered in the grander story. Milton did expand upon Satan’s characteristics, yet Gaiman allowed his Lucifer to grow beyond the mould of a Devil. In *The Sandman*, Lucifer quits. He gives up his responsibilities, empties hell of all the demons and suffering souls that reside there, cuts off his wings, and leaves hell behind. As he does so, Lucifer hands Morpheus the key to Hell to do with what he wants, and

this subsequently causes quite a problem for Morpheus.¹⁵ But the key also symbolises that Morpheus has been handed the burdens that Lucifer has left behind. Just as Milton's Satan lamented that he couldn't leave Hell behind because he always carried it along with him, so Morpheus tries to throw away the key, only to pick it up again while lamenting "If only it were that easy. If I could just throw it away" ('Episode 5' 24). It is possible to play with the idea that Satan could leave Hell behind in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, just as Morpheus might throw away the key. Yet, whether dictated by fate or merely unable to face the consequences of such an action, they are both incapable of choosing differently than they do. This, of course, is where Gaiman's Lucifer chooses differently from both Morpheus and Milton's Satan.

The Lucifer depicted in *The Sandman* is a far cry from the Satan of *Paradise Lost*, and, just as Milton's Satan serve as Lucifer's foil, so does Lucifer serve as a foil for Morpheus, but for the opposite reason. Morpheus has the exact same problem as Satan, when it comes to being unable to redefine their predetermined roles in their stories, despite them both being incredibly powerful characters. Both Gaiman and Milton seem to suggest that the reason for their characters' downfall is their inability to change themselves. In Satan's case, he puts forth his argument that he has gone too far to turn back; that he is what he has done and could never have chosen otherwise. In Morpheus' case, as Jahlmar points out, "Dream himself stubbornly remains unchanged until he reaches the point where he is finally destroyed" (283). Morpheus wishes to be himself, and, as such, chooses to die as himself instead of changing. These two characters are both trapped in who they are and what they are meant to do and therefore solidify their fates. Gaiman's Lucifer on the other hand leaves hell and all his responsibilities behind him, choosing a different path and cheats fate by changing himself.

Later in the series, Lucifer comments on his escape from Hell. This can be seen as an act of redefining one's role in a predetermined narrative, a freedom which Lucifer has exploited and which Morpheus has ignored:

I told him, you know. I told him years ago. It was at the end of my reign. I closed the final door to Hell, and I told him... I told him that I owed him much for having given me the impetus to go. I told him that there was always freedom, even the ultimate freedom. The freedom to leave. You don't have to stay anywhere forever. ('Part Twelve' 14)

¹⁵ Since Hell is valuable piece of supernatural real-estate that everyone in the series seems to want.

This theme that Lucifer defines as ‘the freedom to leave’ is essential to understanding Morpheus’ dilemma in the face of death, and also Morpheus’ self-image. He always has the opportunity to leave his responsibilities behind. Yet Morpheus refuses to leave his narrative role, as Lucifer did. Morpheus’ identity as Dream of the Endless means more to him than his life. Morpheus clearly has a choice, although he has chosen identity above survival. Jahlmar’s suggestion that Gaiman is putting forth a choice between change and death (268) is true, and Morpheus was given this choice. He chose death. As such, in the end, Gaiman’s Lucifer is a devil redeemed while Morpheus is the one who is lost.

Morpheus as Narrative Personified

It is no coincidence that the characters of Prospero and Satan serve as such perfect foils for Morpheus in *The Sandman*. Despite the fact that they stand at the opposite ends of the spectrum from each other when it comes to narrative agency, Prospero and Satan do share some similarities that apply to Morpheus as well. All three are manipulative in their goals and they believe that they have been wronged at the beginning of their respective stories. They have been exiled from their rightful homes and hope to return one day. In these aspects, these three characters fit into the same mould, yet one is a kind, benevolent man who returns home, one is trapped as the eternal villain of creation, and one dies (maybe even by his own hand). Since all three have a special relationship with their narrative constructs, it might serve to examine them individually.

Satan is the traditional, if not the original, villain. Yet what makes him interesting in Milton’s interpretation is his attitude towards his role in God’s narrative. Not only is it probable that he is merely a puppet in the grander scheme of the universe, but what is worse, he even suspects it himself when he speculates that some other angel would have rebelled against god if he had not. Since Satan defines his role as God’s adversary, Satan surrenders his narrative agency to be reduced to a secondary character in a story where he has no sway over the outcome.

Prospero is of course an interesting character as the possible alter-ego of Shakespeare. In the beginning of the play, it is suggested that Prospero has a predetermined plan that resembles both Morpheus’ and Satan’s. He will take his vengeance on those who wronged him and return himself to the power that he once possessed. If the play had followed these early cues, Prospero probably would have been trapped in the same way Morpheus is by

the framing of the tragedy. After all, heroes of tragedies meet tragic ends. Yet, Prospero escapes the trap. He is reminded of his humanity by Ariel and he decides to forgive those who wronged him. He forsakes vengeance and embraces his former villains as family. This change in Prospero is what redefines, not only his role for the narrative, but the framing of the narrative itself. His narrative influence does not come from his magic, with which he controls the spirits and actors of the island. Rather, Prospero gains this narrative strength when he throws these superficial powers away. His identity and role in the narrative is defined by his choices and his redemption, and not by his magical power or influence over plot.

When examining Morpheus' narrative influence through the lens of these two characters, another version of Morpheus appears. Like Satan, Morpheus has a predetermined idea of his role throughout the series. Yet combined with Prospero's power of framing the narrative, this turns destructive for Morpheus since Gaiman closely interlinks the ideas of identity and narrative. Morpheus has the power to influence narrative, but is unable to change himself. The only God in Morpheus' narrative is himself, yet he still acts out his role in the predetermined tragedy. If one were to follow this logic, Morpheus plays by his own rules and receives his just punishment.

The closest Gaiman ever comes to reconciling the images of Morpheus-as-Satan and Morpheus-as-Prospero is by introducing the idea of narrative entrapment, by having Morpheus both in control of events while simultaneously being a victim of them:

I suspect that we build our traps ourselves, then we back into them, pretending amazement the while. That this is the way of life from the All-Highest down to the meanest creature in creation... ('Exiles' 21)

This hint is introduced in the final volume of the series by the new incarnation of Dream, Daniel Hall, but the story never makes it clear if he is speaking about Morpheus or not. Morpheus' sisters, Death and Delirium, both put forth their own ideas about this narrative self-delusion. Death proposes that not only can we know everything, but that we do: "We just tell ourselves we don't to make it all bearable" ('Chapter 8' 15). Delirium continues on this path when she says: "Not knowing everything is all that makes it okay, sometimes" ('Chapter 8' 15).

This idea would put Morpheus not just at the centre of the narrative, but in a metonymic relationship with it, simultaneously making him a victim of and master of his fate, which perhaps is the most faithful depiction of genuine fate there is. In a universe teeming with higher beings and gods, Gaiman ultimately returns the narrative power to the individual, and

gives them the responsibility to choose accordingly. Jahlmar points out that since Gaiman gives every character the freedom to choose and change, he also gives them the responsibility to do so (282), and this might just be the hardest responsibility that the series presents to any of its characters. Not knowing, or forcing ignorance, might be the only way to move forward. After all, everyone tells stories about themselves in order to make it all bearable.

Not only would this idea of Morpheus trapping himself within the narrative reconcile Prospero's and Satan's prominent intertextual influences over the series, but it would further explain why Morpheus requested *The Tempest* from Shakespeare. At first, Shakespeare asks Morpheus why he did not want a tragedy: "[...] Something lofty, something dark, a tale of a noble hero with a tragic flaw?" ('The Tempest' 35). When Morpheus says that he wanted a story about a king that forsakes his kingdom, Shakespeare demands Morpheus to explain his personal reasons for wanting him to write the play and Morpheus finally admits:

"Because I will never leave my island."

"You live on an island?"

"I am... in my fashion... an island..." ('The Tempest' 36)

Morpheus explains that he is incapable of leaving his island, but also that he is essentially this same island.¹⁶ This symbolism supports the idea Morpheus' inability to escape his narrative, by contrasting Morpheus with Prospero's ability to avert his tragedy by leaving his magic and island behind. Yet, it is important to note that both Morpheus' and Prospero's isolations are broken by the end of their character arcs. Morpheus leaves his island only by dying, but Prospero leaving his island is considered as a liberation, as he even begs for the audience to release him in the last lines of the play:

And my ending is despair,
Unless I be relieved by prayer,
Which pierces so, that it assaults
Mercy itself, and frees all faults.

¹⁶ This also connects back to Milton's Satan, because Satan cannot escape hell because he himself is hell. Morpheus cannot escape his island because the island is himself. He cannot escape his isolation because he is his own isolation. Morpheus' sentiment also bears some comparison with John Donne's poem 'No Man is an Island', the title of which has become proverbial in the English language. Gaiman seems to toy with this phrase as Shakespeare answers: "But that can change. All men can change" ('The Tempest' 36). To this, Morpheus replies that he is not a man and that he cannot change.

As you from crimes would pardoned be,
Let your indulgence set me free. (Shakespeare, Act 5, Scene 1, Lines 375-380)

In *The Sandman*, these lines refer to the character of Shakespeare much more so than to Morpheus, but the fourth wall break can also be read as a complete lack of narrative power. Since Prospero is directing his speech to the audience, it suggests that Shakespeare placed the highest power over narrative in the hands of those that viewed it. In that sense, Prospero-as-Shakespeare has very little say over the narrative passed on. Over the centuries, the play has been subjected to multiple interpretations and those that discuss the story arguably have more narrative power over *The Tempest* than Shakespeare ever had.

Gaiman seems to take this exact approach to his storytelling, as he highlights that “You shouldn’t trust the storyteller; only trust the story” (‘The Hunt’ 17). Ambiguity has always had a place in *The Sandman* narrative, and there is no place where this is more prominent than in Gaiman’s depiction of his protagonist, not just in terms of his narrative influence, but Morpheus himself is one of the most indefinable characters within the story. This writing decision from Gaiman would be curious if it had not been such a deliberate action. Gaiman uses the comic book medium to its full potential, telling the story with minimalistic dialogue and letting the reader fill in the necessary blanks. Just as Walsh argues that the meaning is not an inherent quality of the symbols, but a process that can only exist within the discourse of the individual mind (860), Gaiman gives the reader the greatest narrative power possible with both his storytelling and use of the comic book medium.

There are two very skilful executions of this deliberate ambiguity concerning Morpheus’ narrative influence in *The Kindly Ones*. The first one being when Nuala confronts Morpheus’ decision concerning the Furies and Orpheus’ death: “You want them to punish you, don’t you? You want to be punished for Orpheus’s death.” (‘Part Eleven’ 6). To this, Morpheus has no answer. He previously spoke about the rules and his inability to act decisively against the Furies, but when Nuala corners him for a straight answer, he is quiet. Instead, there is only a panel with Morpheus’ half-lit face as he looks down and away from her, leaving the importance of the moment intentionally vague to have its meaning inserted by the reader.

The second instance of Gaiman playing with the notion of Morpheus’ narrative power is when Morpheus’ sister Death confronts him right before he dies, and she tells Morpheus that he had another choice:

Destruction simply left. Took down his sigil, said he wasn't responsible for the realm of Destruction anymore, that it was no longer his affair, and took off into the forever. You could have done that. ('Part Thirteen' 6)

To this, Morpheus merely replies that he couldn't, and after a moment, Death agrees "No. You couldn't, could you?" This could indicate that Morpheus lacked the narrative power to change the outcome of the story, but it could also mean that Morpheus would not leave the Dreaming even if it killed him. Gaiman does not provide a clear answer to Morpheus' means or motives, but rather let the evidence point in all directions and presents Morpheus to the reader as an intentional ambiguous character.

Conclusion

With the character of Morpheus, Gaiman has not only presented a persona struggling with change, identity and isolation, but also a binary contradiction concerning the power over narrative. Although most critics that focus on Shakespeare's part in *The Sandman* want to put forth a metonymic relationship between Morpheus and Prospero, Morpheus is in possession of too many contradictory traits for such a simplistic reading of the character. Rather than reconciling the image of the two, the narrative instead suggests that Prospero is meant to serve as a foil for Morpheus. Milton's Satan bears a closer resemblance to Morpheus than does Prospero when it comes to their resolution to cling to their original identities. Yet with the inclusion of Lucifer, as the character capable of breaking the narrative mould, it is rather this devil that serves as the proper foil for Morpheus in the framing of the series. The question of whether or not Morpheus was in control of the events leading up to his death is one that cannot be answered, and is perhaps best left unanswered. One of the great strengths of *The Sandman* lies in this ambiguity surrounding its protagonist, since it can simultaneously incorporate the entrapment and omnipotence of narrative. Since Gaiman both empowers and strips Morpheus of this narrative power, the reading of *The Sandman* becomes strangely realistic, since it symbolises both choice and consequence. With great narrative power comes great narrative responsibility, and no other hero in the comic book universe personifies narrative better than does Neil Gaiman's Sandman.

Works Cited

Primary Sources:

- Gaiman, Neil. 'A Hope in Hell', *The Sandman. Volume 1, Preludes and Nocturnes*. New York: DC Comics, 2010. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'August', *The Sandman. Volume 6, Fables and Reflections*. New York: DC Comics, 2011. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Chapter 8', *The Sandman. Volume 7, Brief Lives*. New York: DC Comics, 2011. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Chapter One', *The Sandman. Volume 10, The Wake*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Chapter Two', *The Sandman. Volume 10, The Wake*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Episode 4', *The Sandman. Volume 4, Season of Mist*. New York: DC Comics, 2010. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Episode 5', *The Sandman. Volume 4, Season of Mist*. New York: DC Comics, 2010. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Exiles', *The Sandman. Volume 10, The Wake*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Men of Good Fortune', *The Sandman. Volume 2, The Doll's House*. New York: DC Comics, 2010. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Part Eleven', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Part Four', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Part Seven', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Part Thirteen', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'Part Twelve', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.
- Gaiman, Neil. 'The Castle', *The Sandman. Volume 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.

- Gaiman, Neil. 'The Hunt', *The Sandman. Volume 6, Fables and Reflections*. New York: DC Comics, 2011. Print.

- Gaiman, Neil. 'The Tempest' *The Sandman. Volume 10, The Wake*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.

- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20/20-h/20-h.htm>

- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. London: Macmillan Publishers LTD, 2008. Print.

Secondary Sources:

- Camus, Cyril. "Neil Gaiman: A portrait of the artist as a disciple of Alan Moore." *Studies in Comics*; Vol. 2 Issue 1, p147-157, 2011.

- Castaldo, Annalisa. "No more yielding than a dream": The Construction of Shakespeare in "The Sandman." *College Literature*, Vol. 31 Issue 4, 2004.

- Christopher, Brandon. "'I will not / be haunted / by myself!': Originality, Derivation, and the Hauntology of the Superhero Comic." *Seriality and Texts for Young People*. London: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2014. Print.

- Jahlmar, Joakim. "'Give the Devil His Due': Freedom, Damnation, and Milton's Paradise Lost in Neil Gaiman's The Sandman: Season of Mists." *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*. Volume 13, no. 2, 2015.

- James, D. G. *The Dream of Prospero*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967, Print.

- Katsiadas, Nick. "Mytho-auto-bio: Neil Gaiman's Sandman, the Romantics and Shakespeare's The Tempest." *Studies in Comics*; Vol. 6 Issue 1, 2015.

- McConnell, Frank. "Introduction" *The Sandman. Vol 9, The Kindly Ones*. New York: DC Comics, 2012. Print.

- Pendergast, John. "SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF SHAKESPEARE: NEIL GAIMAN'S SANDMAN AND SHAKESPEARIAN MYTHOS." *Mythlore*; Vol. 26 Issue 3/4, 2008.

- Straub, Peter. "On Morality and Change" *The Sandman, Vol 7: Brief Lives*. New York: DC Comics, 2011. Print.

- Walsh, Richard. "The Narrative Imagination Across Media", *Modern Fiction Studies*; Volume 52, Nr 4. John Hopkins University Press, 2006.