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Aliens Are Just Like Us: Personal Names in The Legion of Super-Heroes

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Names created for alien comic-book characters in the 1960s provide an insight into cultural naming norms of the time; personal names had to be structurally familiar, so that readers could relate to them, yet different enough to seem other-worldly and/or futuristic. This analysis focuses on the personal names of The Legion of Super-Heroes, a team of super-powered teenagers from the thirty-first century. Their invented names conform sharply to English-speaking US American norms in terms of gender marking through syllable count and phonetic choice. The names of the future are very much like those of mid-twentieth-century American comic-book readers.

KEYWORDS Laurel Sutton, superhero names, Legion of Super-Heroes, DC Comics, Superman, Batman, aliens, Silver Age, science fiction, personal names, code names.

Introduction

Both science fiction and comic books tell stories about what is possible, filtered through the lens of the world in which we currently live. This extends to the creation of aliens who are really "just like us," in looks, behavior, and language. US American superhero comic books of the 1960s were full of super-powered humans and aliens who were US Americans in all but name — and even their personal names relied heavily on subtle but strict naming traditions. The Legion of Super-Heroes — super-teens from the future (and other planets) — were named to make them relatable to their readers. I analyze their personal names and explore the meanings and consequences of the name choices made by their creators, including how those choices changed over time, in a way that reflected the changes in US culture.

Comics in America

Although sequential art has existed for as long as humans have been crafting graphic representations, the art form known as "comic books" did not exist until the latter half of

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the nineteenth century, created in the US. Comic books, as writer Harlan Ellison asserts, "are one of only five native American art forms that we've given the world" (1990: 350). Superman, who was featured on the cover of *Action Comics* No. 1 in 1938, was the first true comic-book superhero (Rhoades, 2008: 17). Superhero comics have risen and fallen in popularity over the last century, but still account for the majority of comic books sold today. Superman was the template for superheroes who were created after him. He wore a colorful costume; he had a secret identity with an alias (*Clark Kent*); and he used his powers for good, which for Superman meant he had "sworn to devote his existence to helping those in need" (Siegel and Shuster, 1938: 4). He was also white, cisgender, and male, features which were shared by almost every other superhero of the 1940s and 1950s, a period referred to as the "Golden Age of Comics."[1]

Superman's cryptonym, *Clark Kent*, came from actors Clark Gable and Kent Taylor, who also happened to be the brother-in-law by marriage of Jerry Siegel, co-creator of Superman. Both names are Anglo[2] in origin, as is *Bruce Wayne*, Batman's secret identity: *Bruce* from Robert Bruce of Scotland, and *Wayne* from "Mad Anthony" Wayne, a US patriot (Kane and Andrae, 1989: 4). Many Golden Age superheroes were given Anglo personal names: *Barry Allen* (The Flash, 1956), *Jay Garrick* (The Flash[3], 1940), *Hal Jordan* (Green Lantern, 1959), *Carter Hall* (Hawkman, 1940), *Oliver Queen* (Green Arrow, 1941), and *Alan Scott* (Green Lantern, 1940), to name some of the most well-known characters from DC Comics. Because all of these characters (except Superman) have a human origin, and all of their secret identities (including Superman) are "normal" US citizens (a reporter, a college student, an engineer etc.), the form of their names — first name + family name — is expected. With the exception of Bruce Wayne, an upper-class millionaire, all of the secret identities' careers place them squarely in the working or middle class. Yet none have first names or family names that are identifiably German, Jewish, Italian, Hispanic, French, etc. Superman/Clark Kent was created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, two Jewish teenagers, as an explicitly Anglo character. Like many superheroes, Superman reflected the aspirations of "men who often used comics to advance specific visions" (Kelley, 2009: 2) — in this instance, the vision of the hero as a white male.

This is not surprising, as mass media (films, and later television) almost always portrayed heroes as white and male. As it was onscreen, so it was in comic books: whiteness was the norm, the unmarked case, a practice succinctly summed up by communications scholar Naomi R. Rockler: "Whiteness functions as a normative category that 'Others' are measured against. Many European Americans see race as something people of color have, but that they themselves do not" (2002: 401). This was even true when comic books featured alien (i.e. non-human) species; they were depicted visually as looking like white people, but with colored (perhaps blue or green) skin. As comics writer Denny O'Neil phrased it: "It was kind of comforting when people realized that although [Superman] was a very nearly omnipotent creature, he is straight from the Chamber of Commerce, or that land in which Norman Rockwell paintings exist" (Maslon and Kantor, 2013: 68).

Note that the first names given to male superheroes were not the most common boys' names of the era. In fact, none of them appear on the top 20 boys' names in the US Social Security database from 1930–1950.[4] These names were familiar enough to be recognized as signifying white and male, but different enough to imply something special: *Clark*, *Bruce*, *Barry*, *Jay*, *Hal*, *Carter*, *Oliver*, and *Alan* are uncommon, but still fulfill the social expectations of the target audience.

Who read comics in the Golden and Silver Ages? Contemporary market research, conducted by the Market Research Company of America (Zorbaugh, 1944: 198), showed that, in 1944, 70 million US citizens, roughly half of the US population, read comic books; and 95 % of all boys and 91 % of all girls between the ages of six and 11 read comic books regularly. The study also revealed a high percentage of adult readers, with 41 % of men and 28 % of women aged 18–30 admitting to regularly reading comics (Zorbaugh, 1944: 199). By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the demographics had changed somewhat, as the pre-teen superhero fans aged into teenagers and post-war adult readership dropped. For an audience of US Americans, predominantly English-speaking readers in the middle of the twentieth century, names that were familiar in form and representation served to make the characters recognizable, just as their appearance made them physically relatable. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the assembled cast of The Legion of Super-Heroes.

Teenagers from the future

By 1958, DC Comics had successfully introduced teenage superheroes in the form of Superboy (starring in tales of Superman in his youth, introduced in 1945) and Robin (Batman's sidekick, introduced in 1940). They had also pioneered the concept of super-hero teams, most notably with the Justice Society of America (1940), and the time seemed ripe to combine those innovations. The Legion of Super-Heroes first appeared in 1958 in DC's *Adventure Comics* No. 247 (Binder and Plastino, 1958) as a team of super-powered teenagers from the thirty-first century who travelled back in time to recruit Superboy as a member. The fan response, measured in both sales and letters to DC, was overwhelmingly positive. The Legion made guest appearances in various Superman-related titles over the next two years, until it was awarded its own regular feature in *Adventure Comics* No. 300 (Siegel et al., 1962).

Comics about the Legion have been published regularly ever since. The Legion has had nearly 50 members over its more than 50-year history; most of them are not from Earth, but are still bipedal humanoids with northern European facial features, much like the Golden Age superheroes. Each member of the Legion is given a code name that denotes their powers or place of origin (e.g., *Triplicate Girl*, who can morph into three identical bodies and back again into one). We also learn their personal names (Triplicate Girl's is *Luornu Durgo*) and about their home planet (Luornu Durgo comes from Cargg, where all inhabitants have this power). Legionnaires, as they are called, do not have secret identities; they are as likely to refer to one another by their code names as by their personal names. Yet, despite its apparent pan-galactic inclusiveness, the Legion, as with other superhero comics, "represented every fantastic race possible, as a means of ignoring real ones" (Singer, 2002: 111). And while ethnoracial minorities in the US may have identified with comic-book aliens as Rockler's "Others," these aliens did not make up for the utter lack of non-white heroes from Earth. The Legion of the Silver Age included no African or African-American members, no Asian members (even Karate Kid, a martial arts expert who grew up in Japan, is drawn with Anglo features), no Latino members, and no Native American members. All of the non-human races were drawn with Anglo facial features. As one writer, Jim Shooter, put it: "'How is it that you can have orange people from other planets and green people from other planets, but you can't have a guy from China, or a black character?' But those were the rules back then" (Cadigan, 2003: 53).

Legionnaires' code names, as originally created during the Silver Age, were explicitly gender-identified: male superheroes' code names are suffixed with *lad*, *boy*, *king*, or *kid*, while female names are suffixed with *lass*, *damsel*, or *girl*, or in one case prefixed with *princess* (*Princess Projectra*). Code names were sometimes alliterative, as shown with the names of *Lightning Lad*, *Bouncing Boy*, *Karate Kid*, *Light Lass*, and *Duo Damsel* (originally *Triplicate Girl*, but renamed after one of her selves was killed). There does not seem to be any correlation between the uses of *kid*/*boy*/*lad* or *girl*/*lass* and the ages of the characters, who are all supposed to be teenagers (aged between 15 and 18) when inducted into the Legion. It is most likely that the writers chose the suffixes for variety's sake when introducing new members. In the very first 1958 Legion story we meet the three founders, two boys and one girl: *Lightning Boy*, *Cosmic Boy*, and *Saturn Girl*. By the time of the second story, a year later, *Lightning Boy* had become *Lightning Lad*. The alliteration of *Lightning Lad* was seemingly too good to pass up, and helped differentiate him from Cosmic Boy and the next Legionnaires to be named: *Chameleon Boy*, *Colossal Boy*, and *Invisible Kid*.

The code names of the Legion follow the pattern set by previous DC Comics heroes of naming powers explicitly. Saturn Girl is an exception; her power is telepathy, but perhaps *Telepathy Girl* or *Mind-Control Girl* were not as aesthetically pleasing as *Saturn Girl*. Three other Legionnaires whose names do not conform to the "power + gender suffix" pattern are *Brainiac 5*, *Mon-El*, and *Timber Wolf*. Brainiac 5 is the "great-great-great-great-grandson of Superman's foulest foe," Brainiac (Siegel and Mooney, 1960). He joins the Legion to make up for the crimes of his ancestor. His code name is primarily a reference to his extreme intelligence[5] ("twelfth-level intellect"). In the context of the DC Universe, it is also meant to refer to his lineage, with *5* being the number of generations since the original Brainiac. *Mon-El*, in contrast, is a native of a planet called Daxam and, like Superboy, gains super-powers on Earth (Bernstein and Papp, 1961). His real name is *Lar Gand*. Superboy gives him the code name *Mon-El* because he landed on Earth on a Monday (*Mon*) and *El* for Superboy's own Kryptonian family name[6]. Later, he joined the Legion (Siegel and Forte, 1963) and continued to use the code name *Mon-El*. Timber Wolf's abilities include strength, speed, and agility; he also possesses sharp projectile claws.

Although a few alien heroes had appeared in DC Comics during the Golden Age (Superman being the preeminent example), never before had such a large (sometimes up to 30 members), active cast of extra-terrestrials been assembled. Despite their alien referents, the personal names of the Legionnaires in the Silver Age follow familiar patterns:

- First name + family name construction
- Pronounceable by speakers of English — orthography does not indicate any sounds not found in US English (e.g., clicks, implosives, uvular or glottal fricatives)
- Syllable count and consonant choices indicate male and female categories of names.

For comic-book writers of the Silver Age, who were working to deadlines while creating what was regarded as nonserious literature, the first two rules were easy ways to purposefully position characters as alien in origin but with outward identifying US American (or at least Western) markers. The writers' ethnocentrism, which holds up whiteness as the normative category, made it unlikely that they would consider using onomastics to appeal to non-white and non-US American readers. No malice need be involved: Legionnaires'

names were the result of writers, working within previously established boundaries, trying to appeal to their largest target market.

Concerning the third rule, syllable count and consonant choice are less obvious markers than words like *lad* or *lass*, but they do reflect cultural norms in Anglo male and female first names in the Golden and Silver Ages — and, to an extent, in the present. Here I will consider only formal or official first names and not nicknames, so that we can compare them to the formal first names of Legionnaires. (Legion members rarely, if ever, used nicknames of their formal names.)

These metrics are discussed by Deborah Cameron in an analysis of the top-10 list of first names for boys and girls in the UK in 2014 (Cameron, 2015). The top 10 boys' names were *Oliver*, *Jack*, *Harry*, *Jacob*, *Charlie*, *Thomas*, *George*, *Oscar*, *James*, and *William*, while the top 10 girls' names were *Amelia*, *Olivia*, *Isla*, *Emily*, *Ava*, *Poppy*, *Isabella*, *Jessica*, *Lily*, and *Sophie*. Cameron points out the following tendencies in the names that make up these top-10 lists:

- Boys' names tend to be shorter, with some names being monosyllabic; there are no monosyllable girls' names
- Girls' names have more vowels than boys' names, partly as a consequence of their greater length
- Girls' names end in vowels more often than boys' names, particularly the schwa sound [ə], represented by the letter "a," and the [i] sound, usually represented by "y" or "ie" at the end of a name.

A review of the top 10 girls' and boys' names in the US from 1965, squarely in the center of the Silver Age, shows much the same result. The top 10 boys' names were *Michael*, *John*, *David*, *James*, *Robert*, *William*, *Mark*, *Richard*, *Thomas*, and *Jeffrey*, while the top 10 girls' names were *Lisa*, *Mary*, *Karen*, *Kimberley*, *Susan*, *Patricia*, *Donna*, *Linda*, *Cynthia*, and *Angela*. There were three single-syllable boys' names, but none for girls; there were four girls' names that had more than two syllables, and none for boys. While eight girls' names end in vowels, only one boys' name does.

In the US in 2014, the top 10 boys' names were *Noah*, *Liam*, *Mason*, *Jacob*, *William*, *Ethan*, *Michael*, *Alexander*, *James*, and *Daniel*, while the top 10 girls' names were *Emma*, *Olivia*, *Sophia*, *Isabella*, *Ava*, *Mia*, *Emily*, *Abigail*, *Madison*, and *Charlotte*. In this set, one boys' name is single syllable, but no girls' names are; one boys' name was more than two syllables long, while six girls' names were three or four syllables long. Here too, only one boys' name ends in a vowel, but seven of the girls' names end in [ə] or [i].

Similar results were obtained in a 1990 analysis of 1,667 entries in an English dictionary of first names (Cutler et al., 1990). The researchers observed the following trends, which were similar to Cameron's observations:

- Boys' names tend to be shorter, with some names being monosyllabic; there are few monosyllable girls' names, and many trisyllabic girls' names
- More girls' names end in vowels than boys' names
- 95 % of boys' names have a first syllable which is stressed, whereas only 75 % of girls' names do.

Based on these observations, one could offer general guidelines for the phonological construction of male formal first names and female formal first names:

- Male: short (one or two syllables), initial stressed syllable, ends in consonant
- Female: long (two or more syllables), non-stressed initial syllable, ends in vowel.

A legion of names

How do the Legionnaires' names compare? I will focus on the formal personal names of Silver Age members of the Legion and the Legion of Substitute Heroes (the Legion's backup team). Tables 1 and 2 list these members' personal names and code names, categorized by gender.

TABLE 1
MALE SILVER AGE MEMBERS OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Male (23)			
Personal name	Code name	Planet of origin	Powers
Rokk Krinn	Cosmic Boy	Braal	Magnetism
Garth Ranzz	Lightning Lad	Winath	Electrical manipulation
Reep Daggle	Chameleon Boy	Durla	Shapeshifting
Gim Allon	Colossal Boy	Earth	Ability to grow
Lyle Norg	Invisible Kid	Earth	Invisibility
Thom Kallor	Star Boy	Xanthu	Can increase mass
Querl Dox	Brainiac 5	Colu	12th-level intellect
Dirk Morgna	Sun Boy	Earth	Heat and light generation
Chuck Taine	Bouncing Boy	Earth	Super-bouncing
Jo Nah	Ultra Boy	Rimbor	Super-speed, super-strength, invulnerability, used in rotation
Lar Gand	Mon-El	Daxam	Super-speed, super-strength, invulnerability
Jan Arrah	Element Lad	Trom	Elemental transmutation
Tenzil Kem	Matter-Eater Lad	Bismoll	Can eat anything
Val Armorr	Karate Kid	Earth	Mastery of martial arts
Andrew Nolan	Ferro Lad	Earth	Can transform into iron
Condo Arlik	Chemical King	Phlon	Control over chemical reactions
Brin Londo	Timber Wolf	Zoon	Superhuman agility and strength
Brek Bannin	Polar Boy	Tharr	Cold manipulation
Dag Wentim	Stone Boy	Zwen	Can turn into stone
Ral Benem	Chlorophyll Kid	Mardru	Can make plants grow super-fast
Staq Mavlen	Fire Lad	Shwar	Can breathe fire
Pol Krinn	Magnetic Kid	Braal	Magnetism
Ulu Vakk	Color Kid	Lupra	Can change colors of objects

TABLE 2
FEMALE SILVER AGE MEMBERS OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Female (11)			
Personal name	Code name	Planet of origin	Powers
Imra Ardeen	Saturn Girl	Titan	Telepathy
Luornu Durgo	Triplicate Girl/Duo Damsel	Cargg	Can split into three bodies
Tinya Wazzo	Phantom Girl	Bgztl	Intangibility
Salu Digby	Shrinking Violet	Imsk	Shrinking ability
Ayla Ranzz	Lightning Lass	Winath	Electrical manipulation
Nura Nal	Dream Girl	Naltor	Precognition
Projectra Wind'zzor	Princess Projectra	Orando	Generation of illusions
Tasmia Mallor	Shadow Lass	Talok VIII	Shadow-casting
Lydda Jath	Night Girl	Kathoon	Super-strength in the dark
Sussa Paka	Spider Girl	Earth	Super-strong prehensile hair
Mysa Nal	White Witch	Naltor	Spellcasting

Personal names fall into two main groups: those based on (or being themselves) Anglo names and those that are invented to sound "alien." The first category includes these female first names: *Imra* < *Irma*; *Tinya* < *Tina*; *Nura* < *Nora*; *Salu* < *Sally*; *Lydda* < *Linda* or *Lydia*; *Sussa* < *Susan*; *Mysa* < *Maia* or *Mya*; and *Luornu* < *Lorna*. Male first names include: *Rokk* < *Rock*; *Garth*; *Gim* < *Jim*; *Lyle*; *Thom*; *Dirk*; *Chuck*; *Jo* < *Joe*; *Jan*; *Val*; *Lar* < *Larry*; *Dag*; *Pol* < *Paul*; and *Andrew*. Some of these characters are from Earth, so the use of common Anglo names is not unexpected. *Jo Nah*, of course, is also a joke name, referencing the Hebrew Bible story of Jonah, who was swallowed by a whale (or fish) and survived through God's intercession. Jo Nah, Legionnaire, got his powers when his spaceship was swallowed by an ultra-energy beast, a "space whale," and he was exposed to its radiation. Two of the female first names seem to have non-Anglo sources. *Ayla* is a common feminine first name in Turkish, meaning "halo of light around the moon" (Türk Dil Kurumu [Turkish Language Association], 2015), while *Tasmia* is a Muslim name for girls which means "to mention the name of Allah" (QuranicNames.com, 2015). It is not known if these names were chosen because they were likely to be unfamiliar to the readership and would therefore sound "alien," or if the writers thought they were inventing names.

The female first name *Projectra* is clearly derived from the English verb *project*, as her power is generating illusions. This name is the most awkward of the group, as it relies on the reader to believe that a word derived from English would coincidentally be a first name on another planet. Years later, the writers gave up having Legionnaires use the full form of *Projectra* when addressing her, and switched to the nickname *Jeckie*, which is close to the Anglo name *Jackie*.

The invented first names category is much smaller, including only five male names: *Reep*, *Querl*, *Ral*, *Staq*, and *Ulu*. *Reep* might be a play on the name *Rip*. *Querl* may have been chosen to suggest the words "question/query" or "querulous" (he is impatient and arrogant); the construction is similar to the form of the original Brainiac's personal name, *Vril Dox*.[7] *Ral* may be a shortened form of *Ralph*, while *Staq* is homophonic with the English word *stack*. *Ulu* is unusual in structure and has no obvious derivation except, perhaps, from the nickname of theatre and film director Israel "Ulu" Grosbard.

Using earlier metrics of syllable number, syllable stress, and vowel occurrence, we see that Legionnaires' names follow the same patterns as gendered names in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Of the 23 male names, 19 are single-syllable and four are two-syllable names (and those appear to have initial stressed syllables). Of the 11 female names, none are single-syllable, eight have two syllables, and the remaining three have three syllables (two of which have unstressed first syllables). Three male names — *Condo*, *Jo*, and *Ulu* — end in vowels (but not in [ə] or [i]); in sharp contrast, *all* of the female names end in vowels.

While first names served to reinforce the gender identification of the characters, family names seem to have been crafted simply to convey their alienness. In both first names and family names, the simple technique of doubling letters serves to make the names more unusual looking orthographically: *Ardeen*, *Wazzo*, *Ranzz*, *Wind'zzor*, *Rokk*, *Krinn*, *Arrah*, *Armorr*, *Vakk*, and *Reep* all feature "unexpected" double consonants (in contrast to names like *Mallor*, *Kallor*, *Daggle*, *Bannin*, and *Allon*, which show double consonants common in Anglo family names like *Allen* or *Ruggles*). Although *Wind'zzor* is clearly a

spelling variant of the name *Windsor* (referencing the royal House of Windsor in the UK), the creative spelling places it outside of Western culture. The frequent use of the letter *z*, which is uncommon in Anglo names, is also meant to seem otherworldly and "futuristic." (The writers may have been influenced by product naming in this period, when brand names such as *Twizzlers*®, *Zex*, *Clo-Zum*, and *Klenzade* were introduced.) Some family names are merely plays on Anglo family names: *Morgna* < *Morgan*, *Ardeen* < *Arden*, and *Allon* < *Allen*. *Armorr* is the English word *armor*, with a doubled final consonant. All the family names, no matter their origin, are either one or two-syllable names.

Many of the Legionnaires' names fit neatly into the pattern set by science-fiction writer Edmond Hamilton, who began his career in the 1920s writing for pulp magazines like *Weird Tales* and *Wonder Stories*. He later became a writer at DC Comics, creating stories for Superman, Batman, and the Legion; Hamilton created Element Lad, Lightning Lass, Dream Girl, and Timber Wolf, among many others. In his science-fiction stories, Hamilton created a style of naming from which he rarely deviated, described as "generally euphonious, and generally without any particular ethnic overtones" (Krueger, 1966). This is exemplified in his novel *The Star Kings* (1947), in which the male alien characters have names like *Zarth Arn*, *Vel Quen*, *Hul Burrel*, *Arn Abbas*, *Orth Bodmer*, and the delightfully named *Shorr Kan*. Male first names are short, single-syllable, and rarely end in vowels. The most prominent female character in *The Star Kings* is *Princess Lianna* — a name as opposite in every way to Hamilton's male names as it is similar to Legionnaires' names like *Luornu*, *Ayla*, and *Tasmia*.

Changing times

As time passed, new and younger writers and artists took over production of Legion comics. In keeping with the changing spirit in the US, the comics of the Bronze Age (1970–1985) became more inclusive and dealt with current, socially-relevant storylines. In 1976 the first black Legionnaire was introduced in a borderline-racist storyline that showed him as the leader of a racial separatist society, descendants of slaves, who rejected the Legion's help. *Tyroc*, real name *Troy Stewart*, eventually joined the Legion and years later became president of Earth. The year 1977 saw the introduction of *Dawnstar*, a winged woman from the planet of Starhaven, which was colonized by Native Americans from Earth. The addition of recognizably non-white Legionnaires was hugely important for non-white readers. As Jae Bryson, a Black Legion fan, writes: "Tyroc was a Legionnaire, which meant *I* was a Legionnaire — finally" (Bryson, 2008: 319).

The Legion's creative teams of the 1970s and 1980s also created *Blok*, *Quislet*, and *Tellus*, a trio of non-human aliens. *Blok* (no code name) is from the silicon-based species called Dryads. *Quislet* is an energy being lacking gender and physicality; Quislet's real name is described as an "unpronounceable glyph" and is written in the comics as "¥□Δ." *Tellus*, the third non-humanoid, is referred to as "he," although the race of Hykraians (methane-breathing aquatic beings) is not shown to have male and female members. Tellus' personal name is given as *Ganglios*.

In the cases of the code names *Tyroc*, *Dawnstar*, *Blok*, *Quislet*, and *Tellus*, no overt gender markers are present, although *Blok* fits the formula of a single-syllable, consonant-heavy male name. All new Legionnaires created after 1992 had non-gender specified

code names: *Wildfire* (later *NRG*); *Nightwind*, *Reflecto*, *Impulse*, *Kono*, *Neon*, *Reflex*, *Echo*, and *Gates*. This signaled a clear break with the gendered code names of the Silver Age, and reflected the relaxation of strict gender norms and markers, in language and appearance, in US American society.

In the 1990s, a different version of the Legion appeared, from an alternate universe. This team had many of the same members, but with updated single-word non-gendered code names: *Chameleon Boy* > *Chameleon*; *Phantom Girl* > *Apparition*; *Triplicate Girl* > *Triad*; *Colossal Boy* > *Leviathan*; *Sun Boy* > *Inferno*; *Light Lass* > *Gossamer*; and *Element Lad* > *Alchemist*. Some of the new Legionnaire code names reflected diverse ancestry: *Dragonmage* is from the New Shanghai Colony, and his personal name is *Xao Jin*; *Harmonia*, personal name *Harmonia Li*, is from China; and even original Legionnaire *Gim Allon* (Colossal Boy) was explicitly identified as Jewish by the Legion's writer at the time, Paul Levitz, acknowledging that *Allon* is an Israeli family name (Gelbwasser, 1997). In another attempt at inclusion, Lightning Lass and Shrinking Violet were portrayed, sometimes very subtly, as partners in a relationship.

The Legion was "rebooted" (continuity was discarded) for the third time in 2004. The "Threeboot Legion" erased Shrinking Violet/Lightning Lass as a couple, but Star Boy was now visually Black, and Karate Kid was drawn with Asian features. Even Chameleon — no longer Chameleon Boy — was portrayed as gender-unspecified, rather than explicitly male. Yet the code names and personal names remained the same, and all the aliens continued to look white.

Despite the numerous reboots and reinventions, Legion comics continue to be published today (Moore et al., 2015), using the original Silver Age code names. Legion comics, having survived the turbulent 1960s and the dark, serious storylines of the 1990s, have returned to their Silver Age roots with original code names, original personal names, and Anglo appearance of the main characters. While the comics industry has struggled to escape the "straight white male" paradigm of the superhero, with some success (in the twenty-first century, we have seen a female Thor, a Black Captain America, and a Muslim Ms Marvel), tradition has impeded widespread progress in diversity. The mostly white men creating comics are the same people who grew up reading the comics of the Silver and Bronze Ages, and they seem reluctant to reinvent the familiar heroes of their youth. The Legion of Super-Heroes may be stuck in the 1960s, but the real teenagers of the future will expect — and demand — to see themselves as comic-book heroes.

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Notes

1 The subsequent "Silver Age" spanned 1950–1970.

2 I use the word "Anglo" as a shorthand for "culturally English", although Anglo names may have originated in Germany, Ireland, Scotland, or even Normandy.

3 It was and is a tradition for succeeding generations of people to take up the mantle of a named superhero. As of 2015, more than 15 different women and men have appeared as The Flash.

4 The "Hal" in *Hal Jordan* is short for *Harold*. The name *Harold* does appear in the #18 position from 1930-34, drops to #20 in 1935, and then falls off

completely in 1936. *Hal* is therefore an uncommon allonym for an already less-common name.

5 The term *brainiac* became U.S. slang for a highly intelligent person.

6 Superman's personal name was revealed as *Kal-El* in 1957.

7 Brainiac's other descendants are *Pran Dox* (Brainiac 3) and *Kajz Dox* (Brainiac 4) (*Adventure Comics* #335, Hamilton and Plastino, 1965).

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