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Can Marvel Get It Right?

A deep look inside black and similarly othered Marvel characters and their exposure in mainstream media!

Featuring Tom Foster, The Falcon, The Thing, Hank Pym, Captain America, and The Hulk!





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Introducing…

This Zine will aim to explore how black characters like Dr. Bill Foster AKA Black Goliath were introduced to the mainstream only to be superseded by the more popular white characters they accompanied.













That's All Folks!

This zine has shown you how black characters like Black Goliath have been overlooked by their more popular white counter parts. Black Goliath is easily the most glaring example of this, he has only appeared in 302 comic book issues, his own comic book series was cut short after just five issues, and he's been largely forgotten today. Hank Pym, however, continues to be as popular as ever. The same goes for The Falcon, another black character living in the shadow of his white counterpart: Captain America. The Thing is on the same boat; even though he is not black, he is still othered because of his looks so I included him in this discussion (not to mention he's appeared alongside Black Goliath before). Luckily for The Falcon, he has now gained some stand-alone value as a black character, but this is only after the retirement of
Captain America and came 40+ years after his first appearance. This is an outlier as tons of black characters have met the same fate as Black Goliath.

The data is staggering. Although each of the black/othered character share similarities in storyline, physical abilities, etc. with their white counterparts, the white counterparts have over double the amount of comic book appearances. The numbers would be even more skewed if The Thing wasn't included.

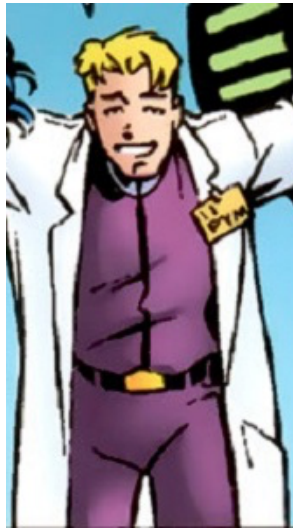


First Up To Bat...

Dr. Foster's legacy as a Marvel character would stand alone without his superhero persona due to his extreme brilliance. In fact, Foster was introduced to Marvel comics because of his brain power, not super power.

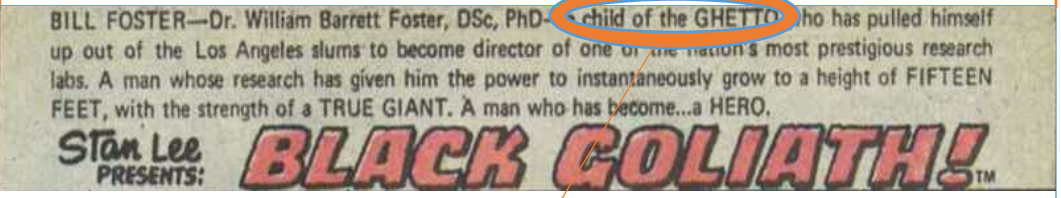




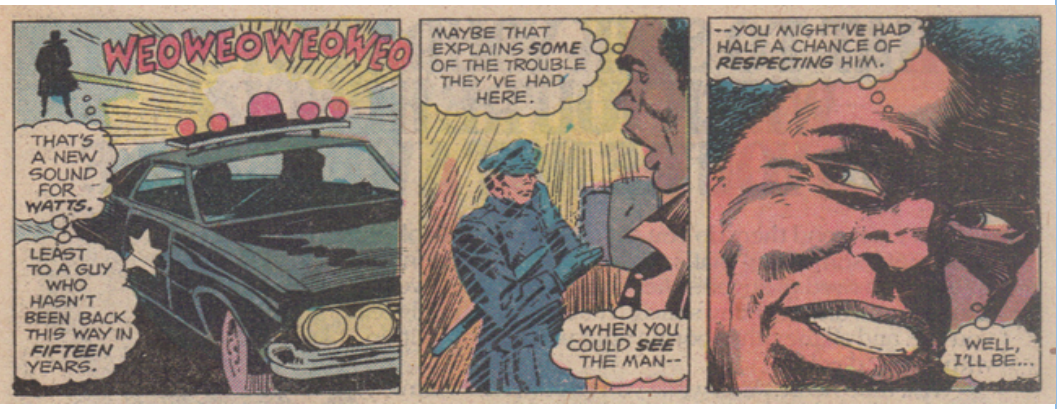


Foster worked as a biochemist in one of Tony Stark's factories, and later was called on to help Dr. Pym when Pym was stuck at the height of ten feet.

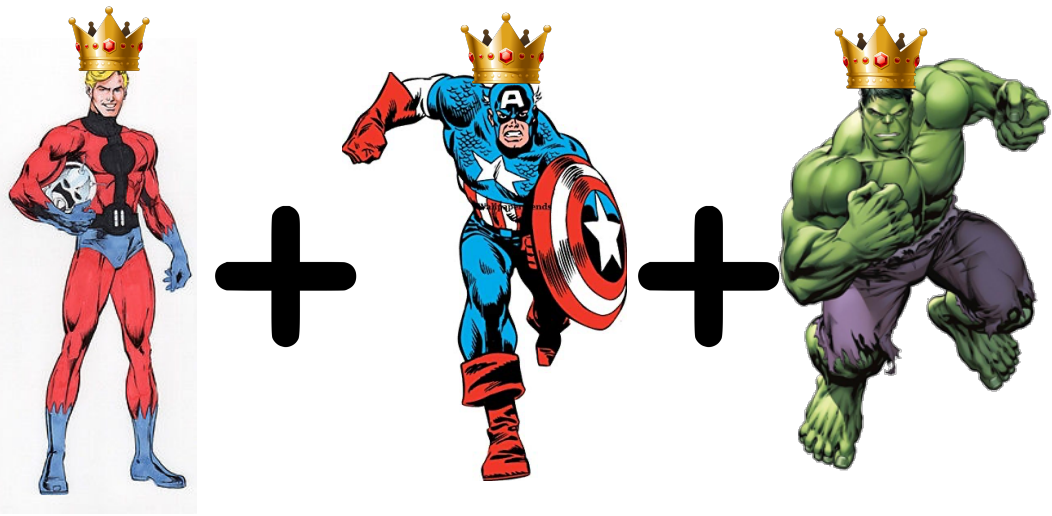
Becoming Black Goliath



Dr. Foster's entire early presence in Marvel comics is defined by his skin tone. Here, Foster is given the label "child of the ghetto" in order to make his rise to superhero status all the more improbable…



He even had a run in with the cops in the first issue of his own self titled comic book, *Black Goliath #1*



= **20,262 Combined Issues Sold**



= **9,569 Combined Issues Sold**

*According to *Comic Vine*

Short Lived Comic Series

Nothing goes to show Black Goliath's odd place in the mainstream media like his short lived comic series *Black Goliath.* The fact that Foster got his own comic series was huge for black characters who usually never got this treatment, but the series was vastly underwhelming and only ran for five issues showing that the American mainstream media wasn't ready to embrace a black character like Black Goliath quite yet.



Why "Black" Goliath?

The "Black Goliath" persona was first given to Foster in *Luke Cage, Power Man #24*



Unlike "Black Panther" whose name coincided with the animal, Foster's superhero name certainly coincided with the race of Foster

Although Black Goliath has changed uniform many times in the comics, none of his uniforms are black. This again proves that the “Black” in Black Goliath refers to Bill Foster’s skin tone





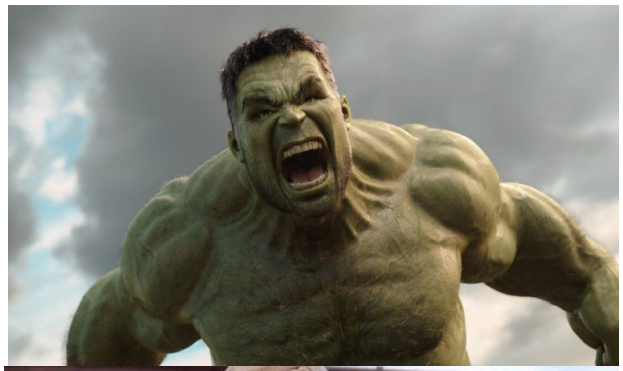




Even though Foster is a brilliant scientist and a capable superhero, it seems his most defining characteristic is his black skin

The Big Screen

Even on the movie screen The Hulk has been represented more than The Thing. This is because for the most part Bruce Banner has seen more screen time than The Hulk. The Thing has been on the big screen a few times and most recently in 2015, but none of these appearances has been nearly as popular as Bruce Banner or The Hulk in the recent Marvel Cinematic Universe.





Here, the *Comic Vine* Numbers are exactly as one would expect. The Thing appeared in 7100 issues, which is more than both of the black characters analyzed in this zine, because he wasn't black, he was othered based on his monstrous look. Yet, The Thing has still been looked over compared to other more run of the mill white characters like Captain America and The Hulk. The latter because The Hulk can turn into Bruce Banner, a white brilliant mind.



Bill Foster vs Hank Pym

AKA Black Goliath vs Goliath

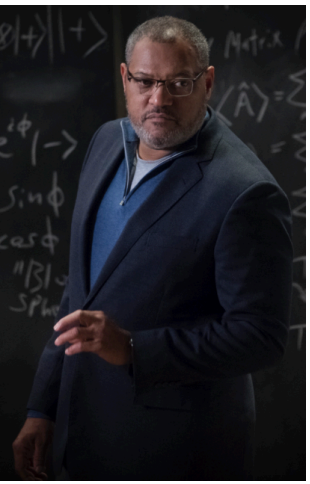






Hank Pym was the original Goliath. Foster learned how to control Pym particles to alter his height, ultimately becoming Black Goliath.

Both characters have similar story lines. Both are extremely intelligent scientists, both are able to alter their heights, but Pym is the far more recognizable character. According to *Comic Vine* Hank Pym has appeared in 3431 comic book issues while Bill Foster has only appeared in 302.





Both characters have even made it on to the big screen. Again, Pym has overshadowed Foster as Pym has made multiple sustained appearances in multiple films, while Foster made a brief appearance in only one.

The Thing, much like the Black Goliath and The Falcon, was much less popular than his white counterpart Bruce Banner AKA The Hulk



The Hulk is othered based on the way he looks much like the The Thing, but unlike The Thing, The Hulk is able to turn back into Dr. Bruce Banner.



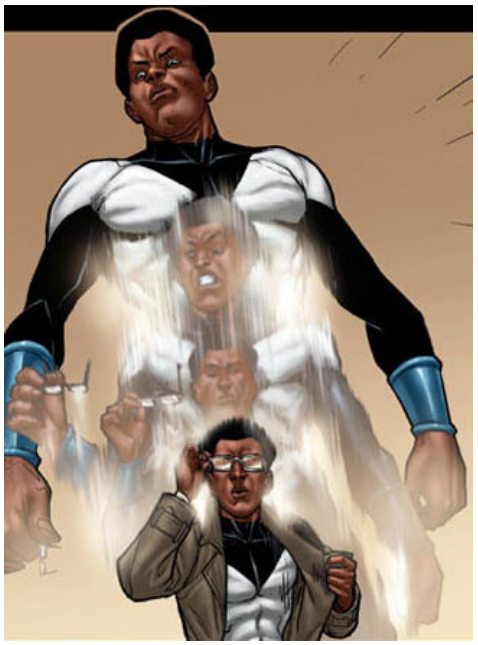
In The Hole...

The Thing first appeared in Marvel Comics in 1961. Although The Thing is not a black character, he is still othered based on the way he looks, much like black characters such as Black Goliath and the Falcon.



Black Goliath's Legacy

After Bill Foster's death in the comics, Foster's nephew Tom Foster cracked the Pym particle formula and took over the Black Goliath persona.



This proved that although Bill Foster's time in the comics was mostly overshadowed by Hank Pym, his legacy reached a younger generation in the Marvel universe.

On Deck...

Sam Wilson AKA The Falcon is another character who has been overshadowed by a white character with a similar storyline, this time the character is none other than Captain America.



First appearing only three years after Bill Foster first appeared, The Falcon almost immediately became more popular than Black Goliath would ever be.

Huge Step In The Right Direction

Marvel made a bold move in 2015 by making The Falcon the new Captain America after Steve Rogers retired





The Falcon even becomes the new Captain America in the Marvel Cinematic Universe .

But Not Quite There

Like comparing Black Goliath to Hank Pym, The Falcon's total pales in comparison to Captain America's total of 10082 appearances. This proves that although the Falcon is one of the most popular black comic book characters of all time, he will still never touch the popularity that the white character he accompanies reaches.



The Falcon, like Black Goliath, was one of the earliest black characters to appear in mainstream comic books. Although this again was a huge step for the integration of black characters in mainstream comics, The Falcon appeared mostly as a secondary character to Captain America.



The Falcon even got his name on the cover of the Captain America series in 1971…



Behind Captain America's of course.

Increasing Popularity…

As stated earlier The Falcon has become vastly more popular and recognizable than Black Goliath. According to *Comic Vine,* Sam Wilson has appeared in 2167 comic book issues.

