

The War of the Frogs and the Rats
The *Batrachomyomachia* in Marvel's *The Mighty Thor*

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ABSTRACT

In the story arc beginning in *Thor* 363 and running through *Thor* 366 something very unusual happens to the hero. In order to keep Thor from participating in the Althing to elect a new king after the disappearance of Odin, Loki puts a spell on Thor and turns him into a frog. In this new frog form, Thor ventures into Central Park, where he meets other frogs and aids them in their war against the rats. Eventually, Thor returns to Asgard and confronts his brother before being returned to his normal form.

By putting Thor into the context of a war between frogs and rats, Simonson creates an intertextual relationship between his own text and the *Batrachomyomachia* (among a variety of other texts as well). This paper looks at this intertextuality on two levels:

1. As a means of satirical reduction. The reduction of Thor to the state of a frog parallels the reduction of the heroes of the Iliad to frogs in the *Batrachomyomachia*, this reduction plays on the idea that a comic book hero must act in a certain way, even as a frog.
2. As a way to drive the narrative of the comic forward. Following the disappearance of Odin and Thor's scarring adventures in Hel, the narrative threatens to end, as Thor may take over as king of Asgard. His experiences as a frog allow him to reset and to decide to continue as the defender of earth.