

Shadows of Dystopian Nightmares “Unavailable for Servitude”?: The Black Geographies of Krakoa in Jonathan Hickman’s X-Men Comics

Jeden O. Tolentino
DOI: 10.26379/2037

Abstract

I take the case of Krakoa to show how superhero comics and Black studies can together question binaries such as utopia/dystopia. In 2019, Jonathan Hickman began the story of the X-Men’s establishment of a nation-state for mutants on the sentient island called Krakoa. I use three theoretical interventions in Black geographies to argue that the leaders of this nation-state are using utopian facades to prepare their citizens for a dystopian future. First, I show that Krakoa upholds the right to “opacity”. Second, I contrast Krakoa from its sister-island Arakko, which has become a “demonic ground”. Third, I reveal the temptations that “dark sousveillance” faces from existing surveillance regimes. I then bind these threads together to conclude that the leaders of Krakoa only want to concentrate mutants in a small, manageable place and then keep them alive in servitude indefinitely to fight an eternal war against humans and machines.