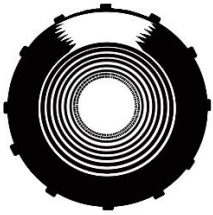
# The Black Archive #54

# DALEK



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# 1. 'AND NOW I KNOW YOUR NAME'

## Names, Titles and Descriptions in a Story About Individuals

'It's a terrible title!'

[Billie Piper][1]

It's the perfect title. Stark and efficient in its formal construction, *Dalek* uses a single word to collide themes of isolation, individualism, and the singular with the collective identity of an enemy best known for rolling indistinguishably off the assembly line. While **Doctor Who** has often questioned who the Daleks 'are' in the collective sense, *Dalek* is the first episode to consider who a lone Dalek might be when removed from that broader context, not as a revision or aberration, but an individual[2]. Tasked with redefining the Daleks on a mass scale, the episode refutes its own ability to provide that definition, creating a conflict between identity and perception that encompasses the journey of its lead antagonist. With a single word, the title cuts down the entire premise with remarkable efficiency. There's no better word than *Dalek* for that.

## I. 'The' of 'The Daleks'

For decades, titles of Dalek stories were heavily conventionalised through adherence to an '*...of the Daleks*' formal structure[3]. This

[1] '2017-05-22 Tenth Doctor and Rose', *The Big Finish Podcast.*

[2] While the Dalek is described as having absorbed Rose's DNA, that change is immaterial to the journey this Dalek takes or our perception.

[3] From *The Power of the Daleks* (1966)*, The Evil of the Daleks* (1967)*,*

convention was followed in both 'Return of the Daleks' and 'Absence of the Daleks', working titles used for earlier drafts of the *Dalek* script[4]. Beyond merely naming the Daleks in this structure, '*...of the Daleks*' titles include them within a possessive suffix. It implies that these are stories where Daleks have ownership and control. For the most part, this works. The Daleks **are** possessive and controlling. They function as a united front, allowing 'the Daleks' to become a recognisable collective entity.

Consistency and repetition of title structure also categorise Daleks in a way that separates them from other recurring monsters. Looking at the early Cyberman titles as a point of comparison, their first four stories, *The Tenth Planet* (1966), *The Moonbase* (1967), *The Tomb of the Cybermen* (1967) and *The Wheel in Space* (1968) are all geographical titles. While *Tomb* at first seems to match the *'…of the Cybermen'* structure we would be looking for[5], its grouping with the other titles shows an alternative emphasis on where the Cybermen come from, what they are and how they became that way, rather than what they're doing right now. It also recognisably echoes the Dalek structure when it does appear, making it a title that posits that the Cybermen are appearing as an equal threat to the Daleks in this serial.

Yet while it may frequently be appropriate to present the Daleks in

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*Genesis of the Daleks* (1975) et al, nine out of the 10 1966-89 appearances of the Daleks were broadcast with titles constructed under this model.

[4] Morris, 'The Fact of Fiction: *Dalek*', pp58-64.

[5] Before 2006, *Tomb of the Cybermen*, *Revenge of the Cybermen* (1975) and *Attack of the Cybermen* (1985) are outweighed by the six titles not using *'…of the Cybermen'*.

the light of possessive, collective antagonists, continual reliance on the same formal structure contends with the issue of overfamiliarity. Since their debut, Daleks have been used to critique fascism, collective thinking, and ideas of genetic supremacy, but ' ...*of the Daleks*' lumps it all together under a central idea worn thin, with later stories featuring the Daleks as nothing more than generic **Doctor Who** monsters.

*Dalek*, a title suggested by producer Julie Gardner[6], purposefully disregards this convention, returning to a title structure with roots in the Hartnell era of **Doctor Who** where titles such as *The Aztecs* (1964), *The Sensorites* (1964), or *The War Machines* (1966) offered a straightforward presentation of new monsters through workmanlike declarative titles. As episodes up to 'The OK Corral' all had individual titles rather than one title for the entire story, these story titles were assigned retroactively, organising the narratively-linked episodes into titled groups and labelling them as efficiently as possible so as to be immediately recognisable. While lacking the creative flourish of later story titles, the convention was established through the necessity of utilitarian purpose. Perhaps fittingly, the first instance of a title in this model was *The Daleks*[7], providing us with a base against which similar titles can be judged. Compared to *The Daleks*, *Dalek* serves a similar purpose, but its changes are not an attempt at minimalism, but relate to how we actually read the title, cutting to the core of how the episode presents its titular character.

The less significant of two changes, removing the 's', makes the title

[6] 'Episode 6: *Dalek*', DWM Special Edition #11 – Series 1 Companion.
[7] This serial has also been referred to as 'The Mutants'. However, *The Daleks* has been generally accepted as the established title.

singular. As there is only one Dalek in the episode, our attention is devoted to the arc of this one Dalek as a singular character in the same way it is for, say, Linx the Sontaran in *The Time Warrior* (1973). But unlike that story, which introduced a new alien entirely, the Daleks have been well established as a collective group. The concept of one Dalek comes off as something wrong and isolating. It's something or someone that **should** be with a group but isn't. The Dalek stands apart, intentionally presented on its own.

Of course, it's not even *The Dalek* in this case, but simply *Dalek* on its own. As Sean Parker might say, it drops the 'the'. It's cleaner[8]. 'The' is a definite article, used to indicate a definite noun. It has only one possible object it could point to. Yet definite articles for members of a larger group behave uniquely. Instead of defining an individual, they allow that individual to act as a placeholder for the group. 'The' Dalek still holds the collective power and definitions of the Daleks as a collective race. *The Dalek* would therefore imply that the Dalek in *Dalek* is a representation of the ideal Dalek, or that we understand it through its Dalek role. Because it isn't 'the' Dalek, we'd better understand the character as 'a' Dalek, one of many, but unique and non-representational. It has the potential to be other things, as it is, by nature, indefinite.

The sum of these changes is a monoword title. In terms of media titles, it's the same trick *Logan* (2017) used to set expectations for Hugh Jackman's final appearance as Wolverine in the **X-Men** film franchise. That film intentionally used its title 'to indicate that it's a different kind of film and to indicate that it's a more character-driven

[8] *The Social Network* (2010).

movie,' [9] to an audience who would have otherwise engaged with the film as nothing more than the 10th entry in an ongoing franchise. While still offering a presentation of the subject, it's a subject that the audience is already familiar with in a different form, making this a popular late-instalment title for many franchises with an established history[10]. Subverting the audience's established familiarity with the material, the monoword title allows an identifiable name to alter its existing meaning within the work.

Like many that adopt this title structure, *Dalek* is a personal story, the journey of a lone individual. Robert Shearman developed *Dalek* from a desire to use a Dalek in a personal conflict where 'rather than have him face an entire army, I wanted the Doctor to face his enemy as an individual.'[11] Merely having one Dalek appear doesn't accomplish that goal unless the Dalek is unburdened from the Dalek race as a whole. Yet in achieving this, the episode meant to redefine the Daleks consciously introduces the one Dalek who can't be broadly defined. The lack of a predetermined definition is what makes the creation of a unique individual possible. Metaltron is no longer '... of the Daleks' in this story. They are an entity with their own personal identity.

## II. Individual Identity

Linguistic convention in **Doctor Who** media has always treated Daleks as objects rather than people. Even in *Dalek*, the script, novelisation, and onscreen dialogue all use 'it' as a personal

[9] Lovett, Jamie, 'The Real Reason "X-Men" Isn't in the Title of *Dark Phoenix* Revealed', *ComicBook.com*, 3 October 2018.
[10] *Dredd* (2012), *Creed* (2015), *Joker* (2019) et al.
[11] Davies, Russell T, et al, *Doctor Who: The Shooting Scripts*, p201.

pronoun. While following the established convention for Daleks, the pronoun 'it' has also been conventionally used to dehumanise others, particularly those people who do not conform to the gender binary. It's a way of saying 'this person isn't a person... This isn't someone with her own identity and her point of view—a human being just like (us). She's something alien, something that we want to put at arm's length.'[12] Even though a Dalek is alien, they still have identity, point of view, and everything else that makes them worthy of personal respect. That dismissal is one of the reasons Jane Goodall insisted on personal pronouns for chimpanzees in her first paper, a move which 'upgraded them from the status of mere 'things' to essential Being-ness.'[13] To that point, this book makes a conscious choice to use 'they'/'them' pronouns for the Dalek character, seeing as their gender is undefined. Humanisation starts with language, and that is a conscious choice we can make to avoid dismissing any possibility of humanity before it is established.

*Dalek* is an episode not only about 'a Dalek', but about an individual with individual desires, drives, and agency well beyond any Dalek we've seen before. The one thing they don't have, in stark contrast to my initial thesis for this chapter, is a name. While this book chooses to use 'Metaltron' as an identifier for the purpose of clarity, it's only used twice in the actual episode, and both times preceded with the definite article 'the'. As much as I may want Metaltron to be their name, the episode simply doesn't support it. Shearman himself thought the idea of the name was 'such a joke, really', believing 'it

[12] Stern, Mark Joseph, 'How to Dehumanise a Trans Person in Three Simple Steps'.

[13] Goodall, Jane, *Through a Window: My 30 Years with the Chimpanzees of the Gombe*, p15.

had to be a real grunt Dalek.' While Metaltron is clearly shown to behave as an individual, the refusal to give this character a name or define them as unique is a blow against their individuality. Calling this Dalek 'Metaltron' imparts upon the Dalek an identity that is separate from that of the collective. How can one become an individual without a name?

In linguistic terms, a name is a fixed reference, the sort of word philosopher Saul Kripke defined as a 'rigid designator'[14]. It is a unique word that attaches to a specific object through all possible worlds, rather than a description which can be given to several different objects matching a particular set of criteria. Depending on the context, 'the Dalek' could mean Metaltron or it could mean the Reconnaissance Dalek from *Resolution* and *Revolution of the Daleks* (2021). By associating Metaltron with a name, we give them a permanent, unique identity that allows for individual agency.

This is not the first instance of a Dalek becoming individually identified. In *The Evil of the Daleks* (1967), Patrick Troughton's Doctor marks a selection of Daleks with chalk to identify them as individuals, designating them Alpha, Beta, and Omega after the letters of the Greek alphabet. He is then able to track those Daleks and tell them apart from others. It allows them to distinguish themselves, to the point where, when questioned about the marks, one of them even replies, 'That is my name.'[15] In the same story, these grunts are contrasted with the Emperor Dalek, a member of the Dalek race who has been designated an individual title by hierarchical design. Naming these grunt Daleks is an act of intrinsic humanisation, giving

[14] Kripke, Saul A, *Naming and Necessity*, p48.
[15] *The Evil of the Daleks* episode 6.

them individuality without upending their position in the caste. This becomes a key component of imbuing these Daleks with the 'human factor'[16].

The fact that the Doctor needed to do this emphasises the interchangeability of Daleks under normal circumstances. The Doctor needed to mark these Daleks to tell them apart from the others because, without a name, there's no relevancy to a Dalek being unique. The lack of identity is an intentional component of a society that values only the collective; and a lack of names, as a general rule, coincides with how they were meant to be perceived, as an endless army where all members of the society are the same. As the character of Jeff Winger argues in the pilot episode of **Community** (2009-14), 'I can pick up this pencil, tell you its name is Steve and go like this [breaks pencil] and part of you dies just a little bit on the inside.'[17] The act of identification individualises the object and creates an instinctually empathetic response. It isn't important what the name is in this case, only how it is used. Names that otherwise may not have immediate intimate meaning, like Omega, K-9 or Doctor, begin to evoke such a response once they are used in this way. Not only does it achieve this for the observer, but when the object being named is a sentient being, it allows that being to consider itself as unique. They can now empathise with themself. If the act of giving someone a name can humanise them, the absence

[16] Like *Dalek*, *The Evil of the Daleks* also uses a pseudo-scientific explanation of how 'the human factor' has humanised them before this point. In the Appendix, Robert Shearman describes this sort of explanation as 'just nonsense'.

[17] **Community**: *Pilot* (2009).

of a name inversely dehumanises.

*The Evil of the Daleks* was also intended by its creators to be the final Dalek story[18]. These Daleks acquire names and are humanised through a process that ends their capability to continue to be used in the same way. Floundering in the Pertwee era, Daleks could not return regularly until *Genesis of the Daleks* provided a redefinition through Davros, an entirely distinct, named individual. Perhaps one of the reasons Metaltron remains nameless in *Dalek* is to avoid recreating this irreversible separation.

## III. The Power of Names

This way that names are used makes them a unique source of power. The representation of an idea in language, knowledge of a name can be used to practical purpose. It's often believed that knowing a name means knowing an essential quality of the object. We no longer need to describe an object if we know what it actually is, and therefore knowing the name can mean you understand the object itself. This is why the 'unknowable name' for God is sacred in many religions[19] and why characters like Rumplestiltskin, Beetlejuice, or Mr Mxyzptlk can be controlled, summoned, or banished by the invocation of their names. These are narrative admissions of the power of names.

Henry van Statten consistently uses names as a way of leveraging

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[18] For more detail see Guerrier, Simon, *The Black Archive 11: The Evil of the Daleks*.

[19] Addey, Crystal, 'Assuming the Mantle of the Gods: Unknowable Names and Invocations in Late Antique Theurgic Ritual', in Lardinois, APMH, JH Blok and MHM van der Poel, eds, *Sacred Words: Orality, Literacy and Religion: Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World Volume 8*, p279.

power. He asks Diana Goddard for her name after she impresses him and, in the same breath, calls Adam 'the English kid', purposefully disregarding Adam's name to assert his dominance[20]. He even explicitly calls the Doctor 'Doctor with no name' before taking him to see Metaltron, indirectly criticising the fact that this Doctor refused to give his name when asked. This comes to a head when van Statten learns the word 'Dalek' from the Doctor and says 'The last in the universe. And now I know your name. Dalek. Speak to me, Dalek. I am Henry van Statten, now recognise me!' There are two demonstrations of van Statten's thought processes at work here. First, that by knowing what the Dalek is called, he can hold power over them, and secondly that he can invoke the power of his own name to draw upon recognition of his status.

That status 'Henry van Statten' holds can also be tied back to his name. It's a Dutch name, with 'van' simply translating to 'of' or 'from'[21]. The 'Statten' should then be a place of origin and could refer to Staten Island in New York. This island was named by the Dutch 'Staaten Eylandt' to mean 'States Island' in honour of Dutch Parliament[22], but it ends up giving Henry the name that could be translated to 'Henry of the States'. Henry is a Germanic name that means 'ruler'[23]. The man who owns the internet is the true ruler of the United States, having a name that privileges himself above all others.

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[20] All dialogue quotes taken from *Dalek* unless otherwise noted.
[21] Brians, Paul, *Common Errors in English Usage: Third Edition*, reading location 3836.
[22] Carlson, Jen, 'Staten Island Wasn't Officially Called That Until 1975'.
[23] Hanks, Patrick, *Dictionary of American Family Names*, p165.

Names also matter for the company that Henry van Statten keeps among the employees of GeoComTex. Adam Mitchell combines the name of Adam, the first man in the Judeo-Christian bible, with a surname, 'Mitchell' that also translates to 'who is like God'[24]. Adam was originally written as van Statten's son in the early drafts of *Dalek*, a fact which isn't surprising at all considering the broad literary history of the name being given to heirs. He exists under a higher power, but is also like that higher power. Like his biblical counterpart, Adam is a character who grapples with the temptation of knowledge, foreshadowing his turn in *The Long Game* (2005). Diana Goddard, meanwhile, has a given name originating with the Greek words for 'day' or 'daylight'. Her last name is shared with Shearman's wife, Jane Goddard, who also acted in *Jubilee.* While possibly derived from the words 'god' and 'hard', it could also have been derived occupationally from the word for a 'goatherd'[25], foreshadowing that this character will herd GeoComTex towards daylight once she takes hostile ownership of the company at the end of the episode. Lastly, the three minor characters who are known only by their surnames, Polkowski, Bywater, and De Maggio, are all given possessive surnames that, rather than describing their character, place them solely in relation to others in time or place[26].

To not even have a name is the lowest form of social power. 'Metaltron' is a name given to the Dalek by their captor. These sorts of names, with American slave names being the most frequently cited example, have been used to denigrate people and remove

[24] Hanks, Patrick, *Dictionary of American Family Names*, pp599, 584.
[25] Hanks, Patrick, *Dictionary of American Family Names*, pp55, 69.
[26] Hanks, Patrick*, Dictionary of American Family Names*, pp112, 264, 489.

them from their own past. The violence inherent in this sort of naming is important to acknowledge. In the influential black nationalist work *Message to the Blackman in America*, Elijah Muhammad argues that:

> 'by stating one's name, one is able to associate an entire order of a particular civilization simply by name alone […] until you accept the truth of your true identity and accept the names of your people and nation we will never be respected because of this alone.'[27]

By naming Metaltron, Henry van Statten is committing an oppressive act, cutting the Dalek off from their native culture. However, Metaltron did not actually have a name to begin with. Dalek society is one of collective identity. Daleks do not normally have names, because they are attempting to suppress and remove **any** individual identity from the Dalek collective. To the Daleks, there is no self. A single Dalek's sole purpose is to serve the greater collective.

If we do interpret Metaltron as a name, we could observe that it is only one letter off from Metatron, the scribe and right hand of God in Judeo-Christian tradition who, according to some kabbalic sources, ascended from the human Enoch[28]. We later see Metaltron ascend beyond what Daleks are capable of, and they end this journey in an act that echoes the self-annihilation of Enoch becoming Metatron in the work of William Blake[29]. By giving Metaltron a name

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[27] Muhammad, Elijah, *Message to the Blackman in America*, pp54-55.

[28] Segal, Alan F, *Two Powers in Heaven*, p65.

[29] Leveton, Jacob Henry, 'William Blake's *Enoch* Lithograph (1806-7): Producing the Theme of Self-Annihilation, Resisting the Politics of the

to reshape their identity, Henry van Statten gives Metaltron presence and agency within the story with which to pursue individually-motivated actions. At the end when Metaltron wants to feel the sunshine, it isn't something 'a Dalek' would be expected to do. By reclaiming the name of 'Metaltron' from van Statten, Metaltron asserts an individual point of view and can become an individual. Yet because they were presented as 'a Dalek' originally, *Dalek* also presents this ascension as an act that all Daleks are capable of performing.

## IV. Influence and Resolution

While Metaltron may not have benefitted from a name, **Doctor Who** has continued to produce an abundance of Dalek episodes since 2005, including several that maintain and expand on these innovations regarding names and titles that *Dalek* established. More often than not, major Dalek threats in post-*Dalek* **Doctor Who** have come in the form of an individual with a name. Characters like Dalek Sec, Dalek Caan (*Army of Ghosts* / *Doomsday* (2006)*, Daleks in Manhattan* / *Evolution of the Daleks* (2007), *The Stolen Earth* / *Journey's End* (2008)), Rusty (*Into the Dalek* (2014)*, Twice Upon a Time* (2017)), and even the Reconnaissance Dalek (*Resolution*) can only exist because of the redefinition of individual character that *Dalek* provides. Through the continued introduction of Daleks as named individuals with narratives centred on individual agency, these episodes take lessons from *Dalek* in how to successfully present Daleks as fully-rounded characters. They are given an individualised focus in the narrative of the episodes, even when they

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Napoleonic Wars.'

are not the only Dalek to appear.

Members of the Cult of Skaro are written explicitly as being different from their predecessors, thinking for themselves and plotting in a way that earlier Daleks would never have done. The fact that they 'even dared to have names'[30] shows how revolutionary this idea can be. These Daleks approach individuality in a way that other recurring monsters such as the Cybermen, Sontarans, or Weeping Angels have not, but many human villains have: with personal goals. Cybermen in particular are an interesting comparison on this point, as the struggle to retain individuality is something that has repeatedly prevented characters from being fully accepted as proper Cybermen, something that makes their 'conversion' incomplete[31]. Individual Cybermen do not count, but individual Daleks are free to make interesting choices and be driven by unique desires and drives in a way that generic Daleks are not, as iconic representations of a race. We see this in *Dalek*, when Rose asks what Metaltron could want 'besides killing'. The Doctor asked what they were good for if not that. It's individuality that answers what other motivations it might have.

*Into the Dalek*, as the title suggests, explores the interior world of another individual Dalek. It reworks the famous 'You would make a good Dalek' line from *Dalek* to emphasise what it means to be good. When the Dalek identified as Rusty returns in *Twice Upon a Time*, we recognise him[32] as the same character who appeared in *Into the*

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[30] *Doomsday* (2006).

[31] See Yvonne Hartman in *Doomsday*, Danny Pink in *Death in Heaven* (2014) or Bill Potts in *The Doctor Falls* (2017), amongst others.

[32] Unlike Metaltron, Rusty is referred to with he/him pronouns in

*Dalek*. Or rather, we are meant to recognise him, but it likely isn't until the Doctor says 'Rusty' that the audience understands that this is the same character. In place of visual signifiers, which are in short supply amongst the Daleks, names are the next best thing.

A second attempt at the type of story *Dalek* tried to be was made in *Resolution*. Once again focused on the resurrection of a lone Dalek, the Dalek in *Resolution* is entirely without a name or individual identity. This episode fails at establishing individual character because the singular Dalek is never given a name. In *Case File Eleven*, it is called 'The Reconnaissance Dalek'[33], but through the use of 'the', we know this is simply an interchangeable title. It is 'the' Dalek whose primary purpose is reconnaissance, utterly incapable of growth or change outside of its collective identity and purpose. This suggests that the revolution of *Dalek* is one that may be, for the foreseeable future, limited to the Davies and Moffat eras. Indeed, Moffat uses both the Davies-era and the 20th-century depictions of Daleks as it serves the story, with stories such as *Victory of the Daleks* (2010) treating individual Daleks as generic threats, while *Asylum of the Daleks* (2012) features a myriad of individual Daleks who have been sent to the asylum precisely because they don't conform[34]. He moves even further away from 'individual' stories by the time of *The Magician's Apprentice* / *The Witch's Familiar* (2015), bringing back Davros as the focal point of the story in a way that shouldn't be necessary with individualist Daleks. Still, the fact that Chris Chibnall's

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both episodes where the character appears.

[33] Doctor Who, 'The Dalek | Case File | **Doctor Who**'.

[34] This story also features Oswin as an individual resisting Dalek conversion in the same way others have been shown resisting Cyber-conversion.

Dalek revival comes in such a familiar narrative shape tells us that *Dalek* left the series with an influence to be reckoned with, requiring an equal revolution to disperse.

Meanwhile, if we look to the title structure of post-*Dalek* episodes, only *Evolution of the Daleks*, *Victory of the Daleks, Asylum of the Daleks* and *Revolution of the Daleks* bear the traditional '*...of the Daleks*' title, in an obvious throwback to the 20th-century convention. The majority of post-*Dalek* episodes bear titles which are non-standard to any structure. The scarcity of convention denotes the greater variety in the types of stories these monsters are capable of providing. While Metaltron may not have been provided with a name, the story of 'a Dalek' is one that Robert Shearman proved was worth telling.

## V. How 'Dalek' and 'Metaltron' Interact

'*Dalek*' disregards Metaltron's individual name, whether interpreted as 'Metaltron' or something unknown to the audience, stripping them of the power that was accumulated through the self-actualisation of naming. Without a name, but remaining indefinite, there is always assumed interchangeability to the object. That dismissal of individual identity ensures that there is nothing rigid or fixed, that one is as good as any other. Where the title *Dalek* implies a weight to the label, 'Metaltron' gives the Dalek an alternative identity with that weight removed. They no longer need to be consistent with previous incarnations of the Daleks. The answer to the title's question of 'What is an individual Dalek?' is made impossible to resolve by the fact that an individual Dalek has the qualities of an individual. Not only is Metaltron unable to represent the typical individual, but the question itself seems to contradict the

idea of Metaltron being one.

Applied to ‘a Dalek’ rather than ‘the Dalek’, these actions become described in reference to actions we’ve seen before. Applied to ‘Metaltron’ they are unique to **this** entity alone. Take, for example, the difference between Metaltron and the generic Daleks seen in *The Parting of the Ways*. With the possible exception of the Dalek Emperor, no individual Dalek in this later episode has motivation beyond the larger Dalek plan. It makes Metaltron stand alone even with the history of the Daleks known. Why doesn’t Rose expect these Daleks to be as unique as Metaltron? A descriptor with associated values allows for a more nuanced, intersectional view of one’s own self. It holds these values for Metaltron, allowing us to conceptualise the individual character of Metaltron in a way we potentially could not if they did not use a name.

Again, let’s look at the example of *Logan*. While it wasn’t the first movie to focus on Hugh Jackman’s character, it was marketed and received with a much stronger emphasis on his personal journey. Both *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (2009) and *The Wolverine* (2013) used the superhero identity as the title. The interplay between title and identity that comes from breaking that tradition in *Logan* tells us there is a man beneath the metaphorical mask. This is the traditional purpose of the monoword title, after all. However, where *Logan* emphasises the personal, *Dalek* refutes it. Metaltron has been denied the privilege of a name, even in a title structure that emphasises the personal. It shows the struggle of the conditioning Metaltron is fighting against to be recognised at all.

In actuality, neither ‘Dalek’ nor ‘Metaltron’ are this character’s real name. The name that Henry van Statten sought to leverage power

over this creature does not actually exist. In all of *Dalek*, only Rose ever asks this Dalek 'what's your name?', and she does not receive an answer. Others are thoroughly uninterested in asking who this Dalek is, beyond their role as 'a Dalek', first and foremost. The possibility to exist uniquely is foreign to Daleks on a fundamental societal level.

That conflict should be at the forefront of our discussion of the character. The title tells us that the Dalek's true name is subjugated, its power diminished. The individual is not respected, a Dalek and nothing more. What we see from Metaltron's journey is someone struggling to assert their own sense of self. The Doctor himself does not respect this, seeing them still as 'a Dalek' and subject to all prejudices that come with that. Whether we view this character as 'a Dalek' in an indefinite or 'the Metaltron' in a definite, they remain an ordinary, indefinite part of a group, definable on a personal level, but also in a way that any Dalek could be. Experiencing that conflict elevates *Dalek* to something more. It tells us that this is the story of a Dalek named Metaltron. Without that name, without that purpose, *Dalek* isn't the same story at all.

# BIOGRAPHY

Billy Seguire is a writer in Toronto, Canada. He is the co-host of the oddly specific podcast **Scooby Dos or Scooby Don'ts**, as well as previously hosting **Film Runners** and **Comicsbound**. He has a BA in Film Studies from York University and was a writer/editor for geek news website *Rogues Portal* from 2016 to 2017. Since then, he has contributed writing to anthologies *Toronto Comics: Osgoode As Gold* and *Called Into Being: A Celebration of Frankenstein*. His hair is a mess, but his heart is in the right place. This is his first professional publication.