

# **A Comparison of Anglo-American Comics and Japanese Manga: Constructing a Hero**

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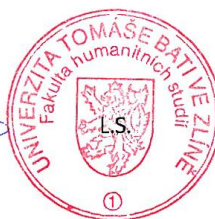
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato práce se zabývá anglo-americkým komiksem a japonskou mangou. Pojednává o jejich původu a jednotlivých náležitostech. Pro objasnění rozdílů mezi komiksem a mangou jsou využívány názorné příklady. Nedílnou součástí této práce je literárně-kulturní analýza hlavních hrdinů z podobně zaměřených žánrů. Práce se snaží poukázat na vzhledové a charakterové odlišnosti jednotlivých postav.

Klíčová slova: Komiks, manga, hrdinové, odlišnosti, analýza, postavy

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis deals with Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga. It discusses their origins and individual particulars. Illustrative examples are presented to clarify the differences between comics and manga. An integral part of this thesis is a literary and cultural analysis of the heroes of similar genres. The thesis attempts to show dissimilarities of individual characters in their visual appearance and character.

Keywords: Comics, manga, heroes, differences, analysis, characters

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## INTRODUCTION

Many people consider comic books as the medium for children. However, they are for people of all ages and, for example, serve as a useful tool to teach students about history. It is important to be aware of the fact that Anglo-American comics are not the same as Japanese manga. Manga are comics created in Japan. It uses different types of visual language. One of the most notifiable differences is the way of reading. Manga is read from right to left. This bachelor thesis aims to give a closer idea of what comics is and how it works in comparison to manga. It also attempts to portray dissimilarities of individual characters in their visual appearance and character.

This bachelor thesis is divided into two main parts, a theory and an analysis. The first chapter describes the origin of comic books, what exactly comics is and how it works. The chapter also discusses text and visual aspects of comics and refers to the icon – any image that represents a thing, person, place or idea. The icon is one of the most important elements in comics. This chapter also covers types, forms and formats of comics and compares them with manga. In contradistinction to comics, most manga issues first appear in huge anthologies. The second chapter concentrates on manga and its origin as well as its meaning. An essential part of this chapter is information related to symbolism. There occur various symbols in manga. Some symbols may evoke emotions in readers. Symbols are used to determine a character's intent to the importance of location and many other things. These symbols evoke emotions in the reader and usually come from the national culture and mythology. They are used to determine many things from a character's intent to the importance of location. The third chapter briefly clarifies who is a main character of the comic book – a hero, antihero, or villain.

The practical part covers my own analysis. It is a literary and cultural analysis of the most influential and iconic heroes of similar comic and manga genres. I chose three main characters of comics to compare them with three manga heroes. Most of them are superheroes – heroes with superhuman powers who dedicated their lives to help innocent people in dangerous situations. In this section, there are also mentioned first comic books, films or television series in which these heroes appeared. This part also provide information who created heroes who are portrayed.

## **I. THEORY**

# 1 COMICS

## 1.1 Origins

Comics, in the form that is understood today, originated at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. However, many precursors of modern comics can be found throughout entire history. Due to this fact, it is almost impossible to identify the exact date when comics emerged.<sup>1</sup> Tomášek asserts “Some elements typical for comics can be found on the Palaeolithic cave paintings, which were sequential and juxtaposed.”<sup>2</sup> Similar elements typical for comics occurred in Egyptian paintings and lots of Greek and Roman friezes (for example, on Parthenon Frieze). The Egyptians used hieroglyphs to comment on the pictures. They can therefore be considered as the first combinations of pictures with words that communicate a narrative.

The Bayeux Tapestry could be regarded as one of the most known examples of comics in the Middle Ages. This embroidered cloth combines images and words in one long sequence that forms a kind of comic strip. According to Scott McCloud the beginning of the process forming comics as they are known today started with the invention of printing and thus this art form could spread among people.<sup>3</sup>

As the first real comic strip is usually considered Richard Felton Outcault’s *The Yellow Kid* (featuring a boy in a yellow nightshirt) introduced in 1895. *The Yellow Kid* (1895-1898) was the first comic strip that used bubbles (balloons) as a place for the character’s dialog. In the first decades of the twentieth century, almost all strips were functionally humorous and became known as “the comics” or “the funnies.” The first comic books were packaged reprints of popular newspaper comic strips.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 What is Comics

Will Eisner uses the term *sequential art* to describe comics in his book *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985). He defines sequential art as “a means of creative expression, a

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<sup>1</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 14, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>2</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 15, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>3</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 15, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

distinct discipline, an art and literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea.”<sup>5</sup> However, this term is non-specific because it can also be used as a definition of the animation.<sup>6</sup> An American cartoonist and comics theorist Scott McCloud provides a detailed definition of comics. He describes comics as a “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.”<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, French comic expert and theorist Thierry Groensteen in his book *The System of Comics* (2005) states that it is almost impossible to determine any definitional criterion for comics, which has general applicability. This is so because there exist a very large diversity of what is considered to be a comic. He provides evidence in two relevant features mentioned below:

- a) Verbal statements incorporated into the image;
- b) Permanent presence of at least one identifiable character in the flow of vignettes.

Although these elements are widely used, they are regarded as random features having frequent exceptions. This means that they can only provide a basis for narrowing definitions. There are several authors who have created “wordless” comics, it means comics without verbal statements (whether it is dialogue or narrative text). These works “without words” can be found in all categories of comics: a series of daily strips or separate sheets (*The Little King* by Otto Soglow, 1931-1975); complete narrations published in the illustrated print (*Magic Glasses* by Keko, 1986); and comic albums (*Space Dog* by Hendrik Dorgathen, 1993).<sup>8</sup>

However, the following assertion is truthful according Groensteen. The comic book is inevitably a sophisticated structure. It also updates only certain potentialities of medium at the expense of others which are diminished or excluded.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Archetypes, Commercialism, and Hollywood: A History of the Comic Book.” RandomHistory.com, March 18, 2008, accessed October 16, 2014, <http://www.randomhistory.com/1-50/033comic.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 8, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>7</sup> Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (repr., New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Thierry Groensteen, *Stavba komiksu*, trans. Barbora Antonová (Brno: Host, 2005), 28-29.

<sup>9</sup> Groensteen, *Stavba komiksu*, 25.

### 1.3 How Comics Work

Comics use two methods to deliver a message to the reader: pictorial and textual. Comics work on two levels – micro-level (single panels) and macro-level (tiers, pages).

On micro-level, visual language is the most important part of comics. It uses a series of repetitive images and symbols. Images represent motion, sound and emotions. A sound visualization is called onomatopoeia.<sup>10</sup> It is defined as “the creation of words that imitate natural sounds” (moo, quack).<sup>11</sup> Comics also contain minor components such as diverse shapes of panels and word balloons, colouring, different perspectives and different fonts. According to Eisner text is usually used as the extension of the picture. Its function is to emphasize the mood or support the message which is conveyed by the picture. Panels are often considered to represent a single moment or a single action. However, such a claim is false. Single panels can pose a longer duration (a dialogue in a single panel). The width of the panel often determines the duration. Wider panels represent longer uninterrupted moments and vice versa.

On macro-level, gutters (gaps/blank spaces between the panels) and super-panels have the most significant function. Gutters tie the panels into a coherent narrative. Artists use single panels to create super-panels. Super-panels are divided into two categories: tiers and pages. Tiers are a series of panels formed in a single line. The arrangement of the panels also play an important role. The artist form super-panels intentionally to emphasize the mood of the story, to enrich the narration and make it more interesting and secure the flow of time. The reader creates the overall impression by pages. They are considered as the basic articulatory unit of comics. The text in comics is mostly placed in bubbles (balloons) or captions. Bubbles constitute direct speech or thoughts. Captions are boxes (frames) at the top of the panels that denote narration. They are usually used to provide information that will help the reader to connect the panels together and fill the gap between them and to make closure. Authors of comic books mostly try to interconnect the text with pictures.

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<sup>10</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 10-11, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>11</sup> *Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and Thesaurus*, s.v. “onomatopoeia,” accessed October 16, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/onomatopoeia>.

Their aim is to avoid situations where text mirrors pictures and vice versa. They try to create such a work where the text and pictures complement each other.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3.1 Icons

The icon is one of the most important things in comics. The “icon” means any image that represents a person, thing, place or idea in the field of comics. The icons are divided into specific categories. One category of icon are symbols. These are the images that represent certain concepts, thoughts and philosophies. Furthermore, there are the icons of the practical realm which include the icons of language, science and communication. Another type are the icons we call pictures. They are designed to resemble their subjects. The non-pictorial icons have a fixed and absolute meaning. They represent invisible ideas. Therefore, their appearance does not affect their meaning. On the other hand, in pictures, the meaning is variable according to how they differ in the expression from reality.<sup>13</sup>

#### 1.3.1.1 Caricature

The photograph and the realistic picture most resemble their real-life counterparts. When an artist abstracts an image through cartooning, he focuses on specific details. When the artists strip down an image to its basic meaning, he/she can amplify that meaning by this process. This icon is called “the caricature”.

The caricature is simple, iconic, subjective and universal. The more cartoony a face is, the more people it can describe. When a person looks at photograph or realistic drawing of a face, he/she see the face of another human being. However, when he looks at the caricature, he sees himself. Scott McCloud gives an example of driving a car that illustrates this fact. When a person drives a car, he becomes the car. If one car hits another, the driver of the car is much more likely to say that other driver hit him than that he hit his car or that another car hit his car.<sup>14</sup>

Through traditional realism, the comics artist can portray the world outside, physical world and through the cartoon the world inside – the idea or form. An indicator of audience interest is the degree to which the audience identifies with the story’s characters. The

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<sup>12</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 12-13, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>13</sup> Scott McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, trans. Richard Podaný (Praha: BB/art, 2008), 27-28.

<sup>14</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 28-38.

caricatures represent a high degree of viewer identification. In contrast, the scenery and background tend to be more realistic because the audience does not identify with brick walls and landscapes. This discrepancy is much more pronounced. Very iconic character drawings with unusually realistic backgrounds do not occur so often in American comics. However, this effect appears in the works of artists as diverse as Carl Barks, Jaime Hernandez and in the team of Dave Sim and Gerhard. Words are the ultimate abstraction.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.3.2 Closure

A phenomenon of observing only the parts but intellectually perceiving the whole is called closure. People often use it in daily lives. They mentally complete things that are not complete based on past experience. Comics supporters have named the gap (empty space) between panels “the gutter”. The human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea. Nothing is visible in that gap between two panels but based on experience it is clear that something must happen there. Comics panels divide the time and space to fractions. As a result, an uneven and staccato rhythm of unconnected moments arises. Closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally create a coherent, unified reality. Closure in comics is not continuous and it requires the reader’s involvement. Comics as a whole is actually also closure. Closure supports an intimacy which surpass only the written word. Scott McCloud states that closure is the blood of comics and gutters are its veins.

Most mainstream comics in America use storytelling techniques introduced by Jack Kirby. Western comics are focused on the goal. The artists from the east bring a vision of comics very different from American. For example, Japanese comics often emphasize being somewhere over getting somewhere. It is crucial to find a balance between what is too much and too little to all comics creators around the world. They make assumptions frequently about the experiences of readers to reach that balance.<sup>16</sup>

Comics is a mono-sensory medium which relies on only one sense to express a world of experience. This sense is sight. In the comics, the sound is represented by bubbles (word balloons) but it is also a visual representation. Information within the comics panels are expressed only visually. However, there is not necessary any our sense. This fact means

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<sup>15</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 41-43.

<sup>16</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 63-85.



that readers can use all of their senses. If readers are mainly aware of the art (visual appearance) in the story, it will be more difficult for them to reach closure.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3.3 Time Frames

Just as pictures and blank spaces between them create the illusion of time, even the words themselves depict time by representing something that can exist only in time – sound. A panel without words also called silent panel can be considered as capturing a single moment. If sound occurs in the panel, this ceases to be true. This means that if an artist enrich the panel with the bubble (dialog), it does not depict a single moment. On the other hand, the single moment can be maintained if a comment occurs in the panel – a captioned panel.

The panel also called frame is the most important icon of the entire comic. It serves as a general indicator of the division of time or space. The duration of time and dimension of space is determined by the content of the panel rather than by the panel itself. The panels have different shapes. The gap between panels transfer the reader from second to second in one sequence whereas it can transfer the reader even a hundred million years in another one. As the reader's eyes are moving through the space, the reader is also moving through time. The interaction of time and comics usually leads to one of two subjects. It captures sound or motion.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3.4 Lines as Symbols

The idea that a picture can evoke an emotional or sensory response in the reader is vital for comics. The senses and emotions as well as time and motion can be depicted either between or within panels. The artist can capture a visible phenomenon such as smoke from a pipe with a set of lines. He can also capture an invisible phenomenon with another set – the smell of rotting garbage.

The lines that represent the invisible phenomenon are not the picture. These lines are more a visual metaphor. They are a symbol. The symbols are the basis of language. When they are separated from their original context, they can be used anywhere and the reader will immediately understand what they mean.

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<sup>17</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 89-91.

<sup>18</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 95-116.

Another tool that represents invisible ideas is the background. Even though there is no distortion of the characters in a given scene, a distorted or expressionistic background usually affects the reader's recognition of characters' inner states.

The pictures have the power to evoke strong feelings in the reader. On the other hand, they lack the specificity of words. The words have the ability to fully capture the senses and emotions.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3.5 Combinations of Words and Pictures

First, there are the word specific combinations. In this case, the word/text is complete and the picture only illustrates, but do not add nothing significant to that text. Second, there are picture specific combinations, where words are a mere soundtrack to a visually portrayed scene. Furthermore, there are duo-specific panels in which both words and pictures carry the same message. There are also parallel combinations. Words and pictures do not intersect and they follow different ways. The artist can also create the montage. Words become an integral part of the picture. The last type is the interdependent combination. It is the most common type. Words and pictures are dependent on each other and try to express an idea that neither could express alone. However, this does not mean that there is a balance between words and pictures. The more the artist says with words, the more the picture can be set free to go exploring and the other way around.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3.6 The Six Steps

Pure art is fundamentally related to the question of purpose. The artist must decide what he requires from art. This is also true in comics as well as in painting, literature, film, or any other field. The creation of any work always follow a certain path which consists of six steps.<sup>21</sup>

The first step includes the purpose of the work, impulses, ideas, philosophies, emotions – the content of the work. The second step deals with the form which the work will take. It also discusses whether it will be a book, chalk drawing, song, sculpture, comic book or some other work. The third step includes the genre to which the work belongs or whether it is unique in style. Furthermore, it includes the vocabulary of concepts, gestures

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<sup>19</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 121-35.

<sup>20</sup> McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 153-55.

<sup>21</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 169.

or subject matters. The fourth step is meant to put all the parts together – what to include and what to omit. It is about how to organize and compose the work. The fifth step involves the physical construction of the work, application of skills and practical knowledge, invention and ability to solve problems. The last step represents the aspects of production and finishing. It also deals with the surface – how the work will look like.

The order of the six steps is fixed and all aspects of comics have the potential for self-expression. Every artist who creates any work in any medium will always follow these six steps whether he realizes it or not. Each work begins with a purpose (intention), even if it is random. Each work has a certain form and belongs to an idiom (style). Even if it is a style that uses only one artist. Each work has a structure. Some craft is required for its formation. Finally, each work exposes its surface to readers.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.3.7 Colours

Colours, held by bold, simple outlines, and reproduced on cheap newsprint ultimately determined the look of American comic books. Colours in comics gained a new iconic power, although they were not very expressionistic. Colours of costumes were exactly the same, panel after panel, and because of that they began to symbolize characters in the minds of readers. A lot of people see superheroes as a modern equivalent of mythology. Symbols are the material of which gods are made.<sup>23</sup> Colours in comics also have a symbolic meaning. For example, they can express a dominant mood. Tones and modeling can add depth.<sup>24</sup>

## 1.4 Types, Forms and Formats of Comics

Comics can be divided into three categories – types, forms and formats. Types of comics are related to the area where comics are being created. Forms are connected to the artistic features of comics and formats are associated with publishing and publications policies. Three main areas of comics around the world can be recognized – United States of America, Great Britain (continental Europe) and East Asia. Comics in these regions differ in many aspects – style, themes, formats and many others.

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<sup>22</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 170-82.

<sup>23</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 187-88.

<sup>24</sup> McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 190.

American comics, especially in the United States, are considered to have the greatest influence on style and trends. Also comics from other English speaking countries (Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia) are often classified into this category.

Comics in continental Europe tend to be more schematic in the arrangement of panels and action development. In most European countries, they use different formats that are later sold. In France, comics are very colourful. They are published in a hard-bound cover. In Italy, on the other hand, comics are published in black and white bundles of around hundred pages.

Manga is completely different than American or European comics. It uses different types of visual language. The most obvious difference is the way of reading. Manga is read from right to left. Manga market includes a large variety of genres and concentrates on both children and adults. The common thing is an adaptation of well-known works such as Shakespeare's plays.<sup>25</sup> Most Japanese comics first appear in huge anthologies. This fact gives the opportunity to author that he does not have to show a lot happening in one volume. When individual series are collected and published together, they can have even thousands of pages. This allows authors to devote dozens of panels to portraying slow sequences or to setting a mood.<sup>26</sup> Manga is usually published monthly in black and white colour. Manga and comics have been expanding in South Korea and Thailand in recent decades. Similarly to manga in Japan, a specific type of comic book exists in South Korea. It is called *manhwa*.

Comics have three forms. The form of the comic book depends mainly on its length. The first form of comics is a *cartoon*. It has the shortest form. Cartoons contain only one picture enriched with a textual commentary. Their content is mostly humorous or satirical. Cartoons are usually related to social and political issues. The second form of comics is a *comic strip*. Comic strips usually contain three pictures. However, there exist also those comic strips that have consist only two pictures (for example, *Red Meat* strips by Max Cannon, 1989-present). Others contain even four or five pictures (for example, Bill Watterson's *Calvin and Hobbes*, 1985-1995). The last form is a *comic book*. Most works of comics (graphic novels, short stories, comic series) belong to this category. Exceptions are

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<sup>25</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, "Translating Comics," (master's thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 21-23, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>26</sup> McCloud, *Jak rozumět komiksu*, 80.

cartoons and comic strips. Due to the absence of precise definitions of these particular types of comics, this category is very broad.<sup>27</sup>

The format of comics is mainly related to the ways of publishing comics and publications policies. Cartoons and comic strips are usually published in newspapers, while in magazines there are published short stories. All of these forms are later republished in collections that usually contain works of a single author. Anthologies created by more authors and thematically linked are very rare. Although in Japan, there exist anthologies of *dōjinshi*. It is written and drawn by amateur authors. They are common in Japan. Comic series are published primarily in weekly and monthly issues. These issues are then republished in trade paperbacks – in case that republished issues creates a story arc. The story arc is an isolated story which is a part of larger series. The second option is to republish them in graphic novels – in case that republished issues form an isolated story and were not originally part of a series. The graphic novel can also be a single story which is published in one book. Republished issues forming an isolated story and single story published as a whole in one book can be both considered as graphic novels in terms of format. However, only the latter can be regarded as a graphic novel in terms of form.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 23, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

<sup>28</sup> Ondřej Tomášek, “Translating Comics,” (master’s thesis, Masaryk University, 2009), 23, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff\\_m/](http://is.muni.cz/th/146660/ff_m/).

## 2 MANGA

### 2.1 Origins

It is difficult to determine the exact date when manga first appeared. Many artists attribute the beginning of sequential art in Japan to the creation of scrolls of illustrations by Buddhist monks in the twelfth century. The *Chōju Giga* also called “animal scrolls” is the most famous example of scrolls from the twelfth century. These scrolls were created by a legendary monk known as Bishop Toba.<sup>29</sup> The *Chōju Giga* is represented by a long sequence of humorous and expressive scenes of animals (rabbits, monkeys, foxes, toads) portraying activities and hobbies of members of the clergy and the nobility.

Another important shift in art came in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Artists began to produce a special style of illustration known as *ukiyo-e* (“pictures of the floating world”). They began to create and improve art objects using woodblock printing. The *ukiyo-e* panels of illustration documented the life and activities of the “floating world” of Yoshiwara (the decadent district in the capital city Edo, present-day Tokyo). Artist Katsushika Hokusai, who coined the term *manga*, created one of the most famous images of Japanese art, woodblock print known as *The Great Wave off Konagawa (Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, ca. 1830-1832).<sup>30</sup> This work depicts the enormous waves threatening Japanese fishermen and their boats. Moreover, Mount Fuji is visible in the distance.<sup>31</sup>

Manga, as it is understood today (modern manga), emerged after World War II.<sup>32</sup> Comics started to appear bound as small, red books and were cheap. Osamu Tezuka nicknamed as “the god of comics” (“*manga no kamisama*”) was one of these red book artists. Nowadays, he is heralded as the grandfather of Japanese comics.

Tezuka influenced almost all manga creators who appeared after him and defined many of the main characteristics of modern manga.<sup>33</sup> Tezuka, inspired by French and German films, created a completely new way of writing by introducing cinematic

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<sup>29</sup> Robin E. Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime* (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 1.

<sup>30</sup> “Hokusai Katsushika, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, ca. 1830-32, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/45434>.

<sup>31</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Michal Vokoun, “Manga,” *ABC*, July 28, 2003, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.abicko.cz/clanek/casopis-abc/4581/manga.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 6.

techniques in comics.<sup>34</sup> These techniques included zooms (close-ups), pans, fade-ins, fade-outs, complicated angle shots, jump cuts by using the space in between the panels (like the break between film frames), and drawing of facial expressions and motion into a larger number of frames.<sup>35</sup> This enabled him to achieve psychological and dramatic effects that were not previously possible.<sup>36</sup>

He also used sound effects to provide realism to everyday sounds (for example, dripping water and rustling) not only to fights. These cinematic techniques also allowed the extension of stories and thus Tezuka started the convention of extended storytelling in manga. His most famous works include, for example, *Kimba the White Lion* (1950-1954), *Astro Boy* (1952-1968), and *Princess Knight* (1953-1956).<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2 What is Manga

*Manga* are comics created in Japan. The word “manga” covers all printed matter from three-hundred-page magazines printed weekly and monthly to the *tankōbon*, the bound volumes originally serialized in magazine form, which are available at manga stores, bookstores, and newsstands. These bound collections are essentially the same as the trade paperbacks or graphic novels collected from American comics originally printed in comic book form. *Manga-ka*, another important term, refers to every manga creator and is meant to be read quickly and its authors rely on an established set of symbols, sound effects, and stylistic changes in art to provide the reader with necessary information and background. Unlike the detailed work in Western comics or the rich description of novels, there occurs the noticeable lack of detail in manga. It can make the story seem incomplete. Manga creators rely on visual cues and their main purpose is to convey emotions.<sup>38</sup>

Manga uses a wider variety of sound effects than Western comics. In Western comics, there occur onomatopoeic words like “bam!” (knockouts) or “twang” (a released bow string) that are recognizable by the majority of people, while the Japanese have many more

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<sup>34</sup> Michal Vokoun, “Manga,” *ABC*, July 28, 2003, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.abicko.cz/clanek/casopis-abc/4581/manga.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Duus, review of *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, written by Frederik L. Schodt and Osamu Tezuka, *Journal of Asian Studies* 43, no. 3 (May 1984): 556, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2055798>.

<sup>36</sup> Michal Vokoun, “Manga,” *ABC*, July 28, 2003, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.abicko.cz/clanek/casopis-abc/4581/manga.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 27-29.

words expressing sound. In manga, they use a sound effect “shin” (silence). They also have sound effects for all kinds of activities. They use “bari bari” (crunching), “ba” (sudden impact or hit such as bang or thump), “po” (blushing), “jiro” (glare), and many others. Sounds in manga are not only noises expressing emphasis. As well as in comics, they are a part of everyday life and add depth to the panels.<sup>39</sup>

### 2.2.1 Emotion Is the Key

Every aspect of the art is used to heighten the drama in manga because of the fact that everything happens on a melodramatic scale. For example, in drama, the pacing often determines the tone. It allows for long silences within the story to extend the tension and emphasize the inner struggle of the characters. Fierce overreacting, exaggerated facial expressions, motions, and changes in appearance are all part of the laugh in comedy. Another example can be the background in a fight scene. It dissolves away into action lines showing the character’s momentum as well as intense concentration. These techniques are used to emphasize the emotional life of the story. Western comics use similar techniques, nevertheless, they have never been as inseparable part of the medium as in Japan.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.2.2 Character Design as Personality

In manga, a character’s appearance, clothing, and hair is as important as the text itself. Such aspects say a lot about the character. A handsome young man with an easy smile, wide eyes, thick eyebrows, and a bristly hairstyle is a typical example of the hero of many *shōnen* manga (boys’ comics). His enemy often has narrow eyes and a menacing glare. He is usually older, dressed more sophisticated, and wears jewelry. These stereotypes are important indicators of a character’s nature. Shōnen manga traditionally refers to boys and young men, aged from twelve to eighteen years. It is often recognized by storylines that concentrate on action, battles and fighting, heroism, honour, humour, and family or social obligation. The common genres include fantasy, mysteries, space adventures, and historical drama. *Mecha* (“boy and his robot” stories), samurai epics, sports sagas, and adventure stories are often shōnen manga.

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<sup>39</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 71.

<sup>40</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 28.



The exact opposite of shōnen manga is *shōjo* manga (girls' comics) that refers to girls and young women, aged from twelve to eighteen years. Shōjo manga is usually distinguished by a concentration on emotions, relationships (often leads to melodrama), romance, family or group obligations, honour, and heroism. The range of genres is diverse. It includes science fiction, fantasy adventures, historical drama, sport stories and more.

In modern Japanese stories, photorealistic background images are often used. The artist assumes the reader will recognize a building and understand where the scene is set. When a character starts to behave in exaggerated ways or the background vanishes, the images of the story are changing in ways that are essential to understanding the progression of the plot and characters. In manga, the term “*chibi*” (super-deformed) is used to describe exaggerated and simplified form which the characters adopt in a strong emotional state. This expression comes from the noun *chibi*, which is a slang word referring to a short person or child. It is similar to the English word “runt”.<sup>41</sup>

### 2.3 Symbolism

In manga, there occur several types of symbols which can be divided into diverse categories. These symbols evoke emotions in the reader and usually come from the national culture and mythology. They are used to determine many things from a character's intent to the importance of location.<sup>42</sup>

The first type of symbols is the way the characters are drawn. Osamu Tezuka suggested that he used to draw expressions of heroes depending on the situation. For example, when the character was surprised, Tezuka drew his eyes bigger. When the character was angry, he drew wrinkles around the eyes. Another type of symbols expresses or emphasizes emotions and states. The authors use special symbols that can be classified into two categories.<sup>43</sup>

The first category (Kentarō Takekuma, a manga artist, calls it *manpu*) includes a subset called *junsui manpu* or genuine comic symbols – ideograms. One of the most known examples is the “drop”. It is a simply sketched drop of sweat (*ase*/*hiyaase*) on the character's temple or near his head. This drop reflects shame at one's silliness or response

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<sup>41</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 28-34.

<sup>42</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 58.

<sup>43</sup> Anna Křivánková, “Svébytnost japonského komiksu,” (master's thesis, Charles University, 2007), 33-35, accessed January 18, 2015, <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/50280/?lang=en>.

to indiscretion of another character. Other example is a drawing resembling a bundle of three/four letters “u” (*kekkan*) which denotes the bulging veins on one’s temple (the character is angry or experiencing extremely stressful situation). Last but not least, a small Band-Aid in the shape of a cross – *batsu* (violence against the character was committed). The second subset of symbols are common symbols – *ippan kigō*. These include question marks, exclamation marks, notes, hearts and many others that occur in Western comics and also in other texts. Their function is intelligible in most cases. Therefore, there is no need to explain them.<sup>44</sup>

The second category represents effects – *kōka*. They are not ideograms but grouping of lines that often occur in the background of the picture. Their function is to indicate emotions or the current state of the individual characters. For example, they include the grouping of vertical lines (*suichokusen*) pointing from the top towards the character (anger, depression, negative emotions) and *nawa* – lines in the shape of plaited fibres (complicated situation, internal dilemma).

The third category consists of symbolic expressions that authors employ to convey details not only about the current state of the characters but also about their nature. They include flowers which vary according to the nature of the character. For example, there appear roses (passion, sensuality), daisies (naivety, simplicity), chrysanthemums (sensitive nature), still lives with barbed wire or gun (hot-tempered nature).

The last category of symbols expresses the fact that something had happened. They are rather simple symbolic scenes replacing the storyline which requires a more complex visual processing or explanation in text form. A main example can be the expression of the passage of time, sexual intercourse (in the form of erupting volcano) or death employing traditional motifs.<sup>45</sup>

One of the main traditional Japanese symbols are the flowers of the cherry tree. The Japanese Cherry is also called *sakura*. These pink cherry blossoms can indicate diverse ideas at once. They are used to symbolize spring, the blooming period. *Sakura* can also refer to delicate but fleeting beauty. In view of the fact that cherry blossoms only bloom for a short period, they are considered to be more beautiful and precious for their short

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<sup>44</sup> Anna Křivánková, “Svébytnost japonského komiksu,” (master’s thesis, Charles University, 2007), 36-37, accessed January 18, 2015, <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/50280/?lang=en>.

appearance. It is connected with the Japanese ideal that romance is more touching if there appears tragedy. Sakura may also represent an early and untimely death. For example, in *X/1999* (1992-2003), Seishirō Sakurazukamori uses as his tool and key symbol the sakura flower. A shower of sakura petals precedes Seishirō's arrival or magic. His assassinations provide meals in the form of human corpses. These meals are the primary course of power of eternally blooming sakura tree.

In addition to sakura, names may also function as symbols. They can indicate a character's intended role or personality. An example may be Kamui in *X/1999*. Kamui literally means the mind of god. It is an apposite name for a young man on whom depends the fate of the world.<sup>46</sup>

### 2.3.1 Colour shifting

In manga, there also function some special factors such as the shifting colour of character's hair from black to white depending on what panel they are in. Most readers of manga know that everybody has dark hair (whether it is a shade of black, brown or dark red). Some characters, however, are portrayed with white or light hair. An example is Rei in the *Mars* series (1996-2000) or Mayura in *Alice 19<sup>th</sup>* (2001-2003). The reason can be the intention of the artist to take a shortcut and not fill in the black or to distinguish that character from another in the same manga. This fact does not mean that the character suddenly changed hair colour to blond. Although it is not always shown in that way, it is given and fixed that the hair remains black.<sup>47</sup> Despite the fact that manga is mostly black and white, colour indicators can also be very important. Some references are assumed to be familiar to readers. For example, white is the colour of death and mourning. Nevertheless, as it is with Aion in *Chrono Crusade* (1998-2004), it can also be the trademark colour of a villain. Another example is Tsuzuki in *Descendants of Darkness* (1996-present). He is considered unnatural because of his dazzling purple eyes about which other characters make allusions.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Anna Křivánková, "Svébytnost japonského komiksu," (master's thesis, Charles University, 2007), 37-38, accessed January 18, 2015, <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/50280/?lang=en>.

<sup>46</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 58.

<sup>47</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 59.

<sup>48</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 58.

Every comic book, as well as book, film, theatre performance or other media, has a main character. In comics, the main character can be a hero, antihero, or villain. The *hero/heroine* is someone who shows courage and is admired for his/her fine qualities and brave acts. Heroes are self-sacrificing and help people and other creatures in dangerous situations, even if it might endanger their lives. (Meriam) They usually have special abilities such as super-strength, super-speed, or super-hearing and can easily save people thanks to their superhuman powers. Heroes with such powers, who are devoted to protect the public from evil, are called superheroes. They have sense of justice. Since heroes are usually at least partly people, readers can identify with them and their problems. They can relate to their struggle to do the right thing (marvelous) In American comic books, heroes are, for example, Superman, Spider-Man, Captain America, or Wonder Women (female hero). In Japanese manga, heroes are Atom, Naruto, Goku, Sailor Moon and many others. The type of hero that dazzle readers is the *antihero*. The antihero is a character that is good in certain way to be labeled a villain even if his actions are sometimes indistinguishable from villains. Antiheroes are often popular among people as they walk on the edge between good and evil. They have a monster within themselves. However, antiheroes are able to embrace their inner monster and harness it in order to achieve justice. A typical example is Batman. On the other hand, *villains* are characters that are evil, often purely. (antiheroes) They commit crimes, hurt innocent people, and cause difficulties. One of the best know villains is, for example, The Joker or Shredder.

### 3 HEROES, ANTIHEROES, AND VILLAINS

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Heroes with such powers, who are devoted to protect the public from evil, are called superheroes. They have sense of justice. Since heroes are usually at least partly people, readers can identify with them and their problems. They can relate to their struggle to do the right thing.<sup>50</sup> In American comic books, heroes are, for example, Superman, Spider-Man, Captain America, or Wonder Women (female hero). In Japanese manga, heroes are Atom, Naruto, Goku, Sailor Moon and many others.

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<sup>49</sup> Merriam-Webster: *Dictionary and Thesaurus*, s.v. "hero," accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hero>.

<sup>50</sup> Russell W. Dalton, *Marvelous Myths: Marvel Superheroes and Everyday Faith* (Saint Louis: Chalice Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>51</sup> Jennifer Crusie, introduction to *Antiheroes: Heroes, Villains, and the Fine Line Between: A Cultural History of American Comic Books*, by Smart Pop Books (Dallas: Smart Pop, 2011).

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 4 COMPARISON OF HEROES FROM ANGLO-AMERICAN COMICS AND JAPANESE MANGA

### 4.1 Superman

*Superman* is a comic book created by two high school students, writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster. Joe Shuster draw the first picture of Superman.<sup>52</sup> The character Superman first appeared as one of several anthology features in *Action Comics #1*, the first issue of the comic book series, in April 1938 (cover-dated June 1938). It was published by National Periodical Publications, a corporate predecessor of DC Comics. In 1939, National Periodical Publications launched *Superman* as a self-titled comic book, the first for any superhero.<sup>53</sup> Superman was the first character that fully embodied the definition of the superhero.<sup>54</sup> Due to his popularity, publishers introduced many other costumed superheroes and they tried to imitate him and thereby a new genre emerged – *superhero comics*.<sup>55</sup>

Superman was made into a film and cartoon many times. The first film version is *Superman* from 1978, starred by Christopher Reeve. In addition to films, Superman also appeared in television series. One of the most famous series is *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman* (1993-1997). Superman was played by Dean Cain. The modern version of the television series, starring Tom Welling, is *Smallville* (2001-2011). The Superman comic book series is still being published.

#### 4.1.1 Visual Appearance of Superman

Apart from a few exceptions, Superman has been wearing almost the same costume through the years. To give a closer idea of how he looks, the original picture of the cover of *Action Comics #1* will be described. A tall, beefy and broad-shouldered man, hoisting a car over his head, is portrayed on the cover. This man has short black hair with curl on his forehead. He wears a blue body stocking (clothing covering the body from the neck to the

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<sup>52</sup> M. Keith Booker, ed., *Encyclopedia of Comic Books and Graphic Novels* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2010), 1:1.

<sup>53</sup> Wikipedians, eds., *DC Comics Encyclopedia: Superhero Handbook*, 20, accessed January 22, 2015, [http://books.google.cz/books?id=bymmUqU7\\_S8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=true](http://books.google.cz/books?id=bymmUqU7_S8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=true).

<sup>54</sup> Peter Coogan, *Superhero: The Secret Origin of a Genre* (Austin: MonkeyBrain Books, 2006), 175, Adobe PDF eBook.

<sup>55</sup> Booker, *Encyclopedia of Comic Books*, 1:1.

ankles) with red underpants.<sup>56</sup> He has a red cape attached to the neckline of the body stocking and a yellow triangle-shaped shield on his chest with a red “S” inside and red pieces of cloth wrapped around his legs instead of shoes. They look like socks.<sup>57</sup> In later versions of Superman, they are replaced by boots. Regarding his underpants, Superman wears them over his body stocking almost in all versions. However, this underwear was removed later as it is in *The New 52* (2011-present) comic books or the *Man of Steel* (2013) movie. In later versions, he also has a yellow belt. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Superman will have a new casual look on the cover of *Action Comics #41* in June 2015. Dressed in the T-shirt and jeans, he will have stubble on his face and trimmed hair. The emblem on his chest will also be redesigned.<sup>58</sup> In the television series *Smallville*, Superman never appeared in the full Superman costume except a few shots in the distance.<sup>59</sup> Writers and artists mostly present Superman that he is about thirty years old.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, he looks much older (around forty-five years) in the picture from *Action Comics #1*.

## 4.2 Astro Boy

*Astro Boy*, also known as *Mighty Atom* (*Tetsuwan Atomu*), is a science fiction manga written and drawn by Osamu Tezuka. It originated with Tezuka’s previous work *Captain Atom* (*Atom Taishi*, *Ambassador Atom*, 1951-1952) where Astro Boy was only one of the characters. However, he is the main character in *Astro Boy*. The original manga series was published in the manga magazine *Shonen* from April 1952 to March 1968 by Kobunsha Publishers, Ltd. *Astro Boy* sparked the emergence of the action/science fiction genre also known as *mecha* (“boy and his robot” stories) and it is considered Tezuka’s most famous work.<sup>61</sup> After *Astro Boy*, manga and anime were full of robots.<sup>62</sup> The popularity of this

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<sup>56</sup> Merriam-Webster: *Dictionary and Thesaurus*, s.v. “body stocking,” accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/body%20stocking>.

<sup>57</sup> “Superman’s Appearance” (Internet image), *Hollywood Reporter*, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/how-superman-wonder-woman-batman-783439>.

<sup>58</sup> Graeme McMillan, “How Superman, Wonder Woman and Batman Have Changed Their Looks Through the Years,” the *Hollywood Reporter*, March 22, 2015, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/heat-vision/how-superman-wonder-woman-batman-783439>.

<sup>59</sup> Blair Marnell, “‘Smallville’ Producers On Why Tom Welling Never Wore The Superman Costume,” *CraveOnline*, May 28, 2011, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.craveonline.com/entertainment/tv/articles/168579-smallville-producers-on-why-tom-welling-never-wore-the-superman-costume>.

<sup>60</sup> Stuart Fox, “How Old Is Superman?,” *Live Science*, June 22, 2010, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.livescience.com/8333-superman.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 7.



manga resulted in creating other works such as animated television series, films, and video games.

In 1963, *Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atomu)*, the black and white animated television series, premiered on television as the first commercial animated television programme in Japan and became one of the most popular television shows. It was produced by Tezuka's Mushi Production and it ended in 1966.<sup>63</sup> This series was remade several times. In 1980, it was remade under the same name. *Astro Boy* was remade once again as *Astro Boy: Mighty Atom (Asutoro Bōi: Tetsuwan Atomu)* in 2003. These newer television series have been playing for one year. Unlike the original black and white version, both of them were coloured. One of the latest versions is the *Astro Boy* movie from 2009 directed by Englishman David Bowers.

#### 4.2.1 Visual Appearance of Atom

Before describing the appearance, it is important to know that *Astro Boy* is only the name of the manga. The main character is called *Atom*. As the *Astro Boy* manga is black and white, the cover of *Astro Boy* volume 1, published by Dark Horse Comics, will be portrayed. In contradistinction to Superman, Atom is drawn simpler. As mentioned earlier, Superman is a grown man, while Atom is a boy. Atom has short black hair with two spires (parts of hair combed up) and big black eyes that cover almost the whole face. Big eyes are typical of manga and anime. Atom has rosy cheeks and he is smiling. He wears black underpants and he has red over the knee boots. Flames, which enable him to fly, shoot from his right arm. However, flames often shoot from his boots or legs as it is in volume 7 or 10 published by Dark Horse Comics. The cover also shows that he is in the universe and the planets are in the background. Saturn can be seen behind him.<sup>64</sup> There occur minor differences in terms of his appearance. For example, Atom has a red belt and underpants on the cover of *Astro Boy* volume 15.<sup>65</sup> In the *Astro Boy* movie from 2009, he wears clothes and looks more visually elaborate.

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<sup>62</sup> Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 160.

<sup>63</sup> "Astro Boy ["Shonen" Version]," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/manga/291.html>; Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> "Atom's Appearance 1" (Internet image), Dark Horse Comics, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.darkhorse.com/Books/11-526/Astro-Boy-Volume-1-TPB>.

<sup>65</sup> "Atom's Appearance 2" (Internet image), Dark Horse Comics, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.darkhorse.com/Books/12-338/Astro-Boy-Volume-15-TPB>.

#### 4.2.2 Comparison of Superman and Atom

Superman is an alien, named Kal-El, with superhuman powers. He must conceal his identity as a man Clark Kent in everyday life.<sup>66</sup> As Clark Kent, he decided to dedicate his strength for the benefit of mankind and therefore became Superman. He is the savior of the helpless and oppressed, who fights against injustice, crimes, and people committing evil.<sup>67</sup> As a journalist and reporter for the *Daily Star* (later *Daily Planet*), he receives the latest news before the public and thus has access to crime scenes.<sup>68</sup> Superman is a typical hero personifying justice, truth, and the American-way.<sup>69</sup> He helped people in a critical situation many times. On the other hand, Atom is a boy robot. He is the product of an atomic fusion system created by a scientist Dr. Tenma who lost his son Tobio in a car accident. Dr. Tenma decided to create a robot that looks like his son.<sup>70</sup> Regarding clothes, Superman wears his hero costume only when he goes into action to help people. As Clark Kent, he wears clothes like humans whereas Atom is dressed almost the same every time.

Superman's personality was not always identical. It has changed over the years in several aspects. His personality was aggressive and rough in the original Siegel and Shuster stories. For example, he attacked and terrorized wife beaters, gangsters, and profiteers bit rougher and with a looser moral code than people may be used to nowadays. In later stories, writers have softened the character and made him more moderate. Superman featuring in the comics of the 1930s is indifferent to the harm that his strength may inflict, tossing villains in a way that would probably cause death. However, in 1940, new editor Whitney Ellsworth introduced a code of conduct for Superman, forbidding him to kill. This is occasionally depicted in the narrative or dialogue of stories in which Superman vows to never kill any human being. According to him, it is immoral to kill anyone. He acts in accordance with the law.<sup>71</sup>

Superman possesses many superhuman powers. He can fly, lift heavy weights (super-strength), run faster than an express train (super-speed), and leap over skyscrapers. He has

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<sup>66</sup> Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith, eds., *Icons of the American Comic Book: From Captain America to Wonder Woman* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2013), 1:75.

<sup>67</sup> Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics: Language, Culture, and the Concept of the Superhero in Comic Books* (London: Routledge, 2000), 101.

<sup>68</sup> Wikipedians, *DC Comics Encyclopedia*, 277.

<sup>69</sup> Crusie, *Antiheroes: Heroes, Villains*.

<sup>70</sup> "Astro Boy ["Shonen" Version]," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/manga/291.html>.

an invulnerable skin. For example, he is able to withstand bullets. He also has super-hearing and special vision (X-Ray, infrared, microscopic, and telescopic vision).<sup>72</sup> Superman can release solar energy in the form of heat vision which can be used as a weapon. Another super power is super-breath. After inhaling the air he can blow it in a strong wind. He can also use his breath to freeze a target.<sup>73</sup>

Superman's Kryptonian body functions as a solar battery absorbing solar energy. It absorbs and stores energy from yellow sun. This energy allows him to use his superhuman powers. However, Superman has several weaknesses. For example, he can lose his powers if he expends a lot of energy at a time. He can also lose them when he is in outer space and spends a lot of time away from a yellow sun. Another weaknesses are magic and kryptonite. Kryptonite is the ore form of a kryptonium. If Superman is exposed to this radioactive element from the planet of Krypton, he loses his powers and experiences pain. It may cause death if it is near him for more than one hour.<sup>74</sup>

In comparison with Superman, Atom is created using the most advanced technologies of the time and therefore he has superhuman powers. Although he has fewer powers than Superman. Some of them are identical as those of Superman and some are different. As well as Superman, Atom possesses super-strength (strength of one hundred thousand horsepower), super-speed, super-hearing, and is able to fly. On the cover of *Astro Boy* volume 15 published by Dark Horse Comics, Atom is hoisting a car over his head like Superman on the cover of *Action Comics #1*. Atom's eyes function as searchlights. He has rocket boots and fingers enhanced with lasers. His limb and buttock can fire missiles. He is invulnerable to most physical attacks like Superman. Atom is a model student and is more intelligent than others.<sup>75</sup> He can speak around fifty languages, accomplish a calculation in one second, and recognize a good person from a bad one just by looking.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Wikipedians, *DC Comics Encyclopedia*, 264.

<sup>72</sup> Gina Misiroglu, *The Superhero Book: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Comic-Book Icons and Hollywood Heroes*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2012).

<sup>73</sup> Steve Younis, "Superman Costume Comparisons," Superman Homepage, last modified December 10, 2012, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.supermanhomepage.com/movies/movies.php?topic=sr-costume-compare>.

<sup>74</sup> Steve Younis, "Superman Profile," Superman Homepage, last modified September 20, 2010, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://www.supermanhomepage.com/comics/comics.php?topic=comics-superman>.

<sup>75</sup> "Atom," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/character/25.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Jacobs, ed., *Filling the Hole in the Nuclear Future: Art and Popular Culture Respond to the Bomb* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2010), 83.

Superman and Atom have several things in common. They are self-sacrificing and honest. They do not abuse their super powers and only use them to protect and help people in danger. For example, Superman prevented an accident from happening.<sup>77</sup> He also intervened when the husband was beating his wife. He tipped Lois Lane (Superman's co-worker and later his wife) and thugs out of the car. He hoisted the vehicle over his head and destroyed it.<sup>78</sup> Thereafter he hung one of the thugs on the electricity pylon. Superman will not let himself be corrupted. With regard to this fact, he investigated corruption in the US Senate.<sup>79</sup> Superman and Atom live in different worlds. Atom lives in a world where robots are commonplace. He strives for coexistence of robots and humans.<sup>80</sup> He is an opponent of prejudice, discrimination, and racism. He also fights for justice, defends human rights, and advocates democratic principles.<sup>81</sup> For example, he was protecting the first robot who tried to register to vote. Another example may be Atom as bodyguard of the first legally elected robot president in the world. He also negotiated with robot revolutionists who were attempting to provoke a revolt against their human oppressors.<sup>82</sup>

Since Superman lost his home world, Krypton, he is very protective. He protects not only the Earth but primarily the family and friends using Clark Kent's identity. Due to this loss and the fact that he must hide his true identity, Superman also feels lonely on Earth, even though he has adoptive parents and many friends.<sup>83</sup> Atom is also close to many people. He has a robotic family and goes to school. He has feelings like humans and can be a friend with them. Atom acts as a human more than humans but is also discriminated against because he is a robot. He has worries as humans and knows betrayal.<sup>84</sup> Because he didn't grow up, Dr. Tenma sold him to a circus troupe. Atom was force to perform a robot show at the circus.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics*, 117.

<sup>78</sup> Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics*, 101.

<sup>79</sup> Mila Bongco, *Reading Comics*, 101.

<sup>80</sup> "Astro Boy ["Shonen" Version]," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/manga/291.html>.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Jacobs, *Filling the Hole*, 84.

<sup>82</sup> "Astro Boy [aka Mighty Atom] (Manga)," Tezuka In English, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukainenglish.com/wp/osamu-tezuka-manga/manga-a-h/astro-boy-manga/>.

<sup>83</sup> Wikipedians, *DC Comics Encyclopedia*, 364.

<sup>84</sup> "Atom," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/character/25.html>.

<sup>85</sup> "Astro Boy ["Shonen" Version]," TezukaOsamu.net, accessed January 22, 2015, <http://tezukaosamu.net/en/manga/291.html>.

In the *Astro Boy* manga from 1952, science and technology are depicted in a positive way. Science is represented as a power of justice to punish the evil and restore peace. Advanced robots like Atom are designed to be unable to do bad things. Only less advanced robots and humans are capable of wrongdoing. For example, in one of the early episodes, entitled *Frankenstein* (1952-1953), a group of robots commit crimes. They try to take over Tokyo. However, in the end, it is revealed that they are not robots but humans. In addition, the robot Frankenstein committing outrages had a mechanical failure caused by one of the engineers. There is one message in *Astro Boy* – robots (technology) are good by nature. They behave badly only if their human users are bad. Even in this case, robots (technology) rectify the damage. *Astro Boy* is perceived as a celebration of science and technology.<sup>86</sup>

### 4.3 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1984–2010) is an American comic book published by Mirage Studios. It was written and drawn by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird.<sup>87</sup> The first forty-page issue was published in May 1984.<sup>88</sup> Since full-colour comics were expensive at the time, Eastman and Laird decided to produce this action/science fiction story in black and white magazine format.<sup>89</sup> Only three thousand copies of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #1* were published.<sup>90</sup> In the first three issues, turtles are drawn simply, angular, without rounded features. They do not look friendly, rather angrily. Initially, it was difficult for readers to distinguish the turtles because the comic book is black and white and turtles do not have coloured masks. They look almost identical. Readers can recognize them only by their diverse weapons. Eastman and Laird named the turtles after Renaissance artists – Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, and Michelangelo.

There occur a lot of violence in the original comic book. Turtles' skin is visibly damaged and bleeding in many scenes where they are fighting. This is not shown in the later animated series. The first *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comics are characteristic for their

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Jacobs, *Filling the Hole*, 84-85.

<sup>87</sup> Jason Heller, "30 Years Later, the First 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' Comics Still Pop," *Entertainment Weekly*, January 18, 2015, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/07/tmnt-comic-books>.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Rosenbaum, *Raise Some Shell: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2014), chap. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Jason Heller, "30 Years Later, the First 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' Comics Still Pop," *Entertainment Weekly*, January 18, 2015, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/07/tmnt-comic-books>; Rosenbaum, *Raise Some Shell*, chap. 1.

grim atmosphere. Comic panels are immersed in grayscale and the surfaces are stippled. A dynamic is an essential part of comics. This foursome is swift and agile, although turtles are generally perceived as sluggish. The duo of artists originally intended their comic book to be part homage and part parody.<sup>91</sup>

In 1987, the first animated series of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* debuted on television. It was produced by Playmates Toys and the series stayed on the air until 1986. Another animated series of the same name was released in 2003 and produced by 4Kids Entertainment. The show ran until 2009. The last animated series, produced by Nickelodeon, is the version from 2012 which is still on the air. The foursome hit the big screen with the live-action film *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* in 1990. Two sequels were created later – *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze* (1991) and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III* (1993). In 2007, the computer-animated film titled *TMNT* was released. The latest version is the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* live-action film directed by Jonathan Liebesman from 2014.<sup>92</sup>

#### 4.4 Naruto

*Naruto* (1999-2014) is a shōnen manga written and illustrated by Masashi Kishimoto. It has been serialized in Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump* magazine since its 43rd issue in 1999. *Naruto* is a ninja action manga with many fantasy elements.<sup>93</sup> It has become one of Japan's most iconic manga series. Later, it also gained international popularity mainly in the United States and Europe.<sup>94</sup> In 2002, a television anime series titled *Naruto* (2002-2007) was launched. It was produced by Studio Pierrot.<sup>95</sup> The show was renamed *Naruto: The Last*

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<sup>90</sup> Rosenbaum, *Raise Some Shell*, chap. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Jason Heller, "30 Years Later, the First 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' Comics Still Pop," *Entertainment Weekly*, January 18, 2015, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/07/tmnt-comic-books>.

<sup>92</sup> Rob Lammle, "The Complete History of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," *Mental Floss*, May 3, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://mentalfloss.com/article/30862/complete-history-teenage-mutant-ninja-turtles>.

<sup>93</sup> Kazuhisa Fujie and Ivan Rorick, *Naruto Forever: The Unofficial Guide* (Tokyo: DH Publishing, 2008), 4.

<sup>94</sup> David Gromer, "'Naruto': Iconic Japanese Comic Series to End in November," *Headline and Global News*, October 9, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.hngn.com/articles/45212/20141009/naruto-iconic-japanese-comic-series-to-end-in-november.htm>.

<sup>95</sup> Kazuhisa Fujie, Matthew Lane, and Walt Wyman, *The Naruto Saga: The Unofficial Guide* (Tokyo: DH Publishing, 2006), 4.

*Shippūden* (2007-present) in its second series.<sup>96</sup> The English version of the anime was first aired in the United State in 2005. Over the last fifteen years, hundreds of millions of books and anime DVDs have been sold worldwide. Various artists have also created many works – more than seventy graphic novels, ten films, twenty-two anime seasons between the original *Naruto* anime's five seasons and the sequel, *Naruto Shippūden*'s 17, video games, novels, and more. Films that have been made include, for example, *Naruto the Movie: Ninja Clash in the Land of Snow* (2004), *Naruto the Movie 2: Legend of the Stone of Gelel* (2005), *Naruto the Movie 3: Guardians of the Crescent Moon Kingdom* (2006), *Naruto the Movie: The Last* (2014). There also exist a spin-off series titled *Rock Lee & His Ninja Pals* (2012-2013).<sup>97</sup>

#### 4.4.1 Comparison of Michelangelo and Naruto

The main heroes of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic book are all four turtles – Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello, and Michelangelo. Since Michelangelo has a similar personality as Naruto in some aspects, he will be portrayed. Both of them are adolescent ninjas. Michelangelo along with his brothers fights evil Krang, Shredder, street gangs, and alien invaders. They are trained by a rat, sensei Splinter, in the art of ninjutsu. They strive to remain hidden from people. Michelangelo uses a pair of nunchucks to fight. He is a mutant ninja turtle that can speak and feel like a human and is the youngest member of the team. As in the Michelangelo's case, Naruto Uzumaki, the main character of the manga, is not fully human. He has the Nine-Tailed Demon Fox sealed within his body.<sup>98</sup> This twelve-year old orphan aspires to become the most powerful ninja. He want to prove himself to his peers. He often feels sad because he does not want to be different from others and want to fit in.<sup>99</sup>

In the original comic book, silliness and making jokes are not a part of Michelangelo's personality as it is perceived today. He is always ready to fight, dedicated to training more

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<sup>96</sup> Fujie and Rorick, *Naruto Forever*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Fujie, Lane, and Wyman, *The Naruto Saga*, 4; David Gromer, "'Naruto': Iconic Japanese Comic Series to End in November," *Headline and Global News*, October 9, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.hngn.com/articles/45212/20141009/naruto-iconic-japanese-comic-series-to-end-in-november.htm>.

<sup>98</sup> Fujie and Rorick, *Naruto Forever*, 152.

<sup>99</sup> Jason Thompson, *Manga: The Complete Guide* (New York: Del Rey, 2007).

than his brothers, and full of energy. He treats his life seriously as a true ninja warrior.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, Naruto is a joker. He is a class clown of his ninja school. The reason for such behaviour may be loneliness and his childhood which he spent in isolation.<sup>101</sup> He attracts attention to himself. Although he is determined and has a strong sense of solidarity. Michelangelo and Naruto owe their abilities to hard work. Naruto is also trained in the art of ninjutsu. He can use chakra of the Demon Fox to summon giant snakes and frogs. He can also split into multiple selves. Due to the fact that he has the Demon Fox sealed within his body, he recovers quickly, regardless of how much he is injured.<sup>102</sup> However, his greatest strength is also his darkest secret. The Demon Fox wants to be free.<sup>103</sup> If he succumbs to the strong emotions such as anger, he may lose control over himself and the spirit of the Demon Fox may be released.<sup>104</sup> Like Michelangelo, Naruto's objective is to fight evil and protect people who are close to him. He is a self-sacrificing, supportive, and passionate person. Peers admire him because he sees the good qualities in people and tries to advise them how they should improve themselves. He inspires many friends.

Michelangelo likes reading comics and superhero stories, and tries to imitate the best qualities of superheroes. There has never been a tense situation with any of his brothers. He often soothes the unpleasant situation between his brothers and tries to remedy the rift. He is close to Donatello, and thanks to him, Leonardo and Raphael argue less. However, once the first animated series of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles premiered on television, Michelangelo's character suffered a big change. His personality has changed. He is now only a comic relief character. His constant joking and obsession with eating pizza became his defining attributes. New Michelangelo is light-hearted, wisecracking, and immature. Even when he is in trouble, he still has a carefree attitude. Thanks to his jokes and childish behaviour, his character became more popular especially among children in contrast to the original comic books which were aimed at older readers. He became more prominent character and is suddenly at the centre of all the action.<sup>105</sup> Naruto is more akin to a newer

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<sup>100</sup> TeenageMutantNinjaTurtles.com, "TMNT Michelangelo Biography," accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/07/tmnt-comic-books>.

<sup>101</sup> Fujie and Rorick, *Naruto Forever*, 152.

<sup>102</sup> Fujie and Rorick, *Naruto Forever*, 152.

<sup>103</sup> Thompson, *Manga: The Complete Guide*.

<sup>104</sup> Fujie and Rorick, *Naruto Forever*, 152.

<sup>105</sup> TeenageMutantNinjaTurtles.com, "TMNT Michelangelo Biography," accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.ew.com/article/2014/08/07/tmnt-comic-books>.



version of Michelangelo. As mentioned previously, he often makes jokes. He has too much energy and rush into battle without thinking as well as Michelangelo.

#### 4.5 Spider-Man in America

*Spider-Man* was first introduced in *Amazing Fantasy #15* in December 1962. Then he appeared in *The Amazing Spider-Man #1*, the first issue of the comic book series of the same name, in March 1963. It was published by Marvel Comics. The character Spider-Man was created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko. This duo of artists provided their readers with an adolescent superhero. Spider-Man was a product of the Cold War. It emphasized the place of adolescents in American society and attention to them. Thanks to Lee and Ditko, teenagers got a hero, Peter Park, with whom they could identify. Peter Park's transformation into Spider-Man indicated the American positive or negative relationship with atomic science as Spider-Man often expressed ambivalence towards his new situation.

In 1965, *Esquire Magazine* readers ranked Spider-Man as one of the revolutionary icons. Although the nature of American youth culture is constantly changing, Spider-Man is one of the most popular superheroes even in the present days. It may be caused due to the fact that Peter Parker often makes mistakes and learns from them.<sup>106</sup> Spider-Man was filmed many times. Among the best-known films are, for example, *Spider-Man* (2002), *Spider-Man 2* (2004), and *Spider-Man 3* (2007), starring Tobey Maguire as Spider-Man in all three films. The newer version is *The Amazing Spider-Man* from 2002. The hero was portrayed by Andrew Garfield. Spider-Man also appeared in several animated television series – *Spider-Man* (1967, 1994) and many others.

#### 4.6 Spider-Man in Japan

In addition to the American version of Spider-Man, there exist the Japanese one. Ryoichi Ikegami created a manga titled *Spider-Man: The Manga*. It retold the story of Spider-Man in a Japanese setting and the Japanese way. The manga was originally issued in Japan from January 1970 to September 1971 in *Monthly Shōnen Magazine*.<sup>107</sup> It ran for thirteen story

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<sup>106</sup> Katherine G. Aiken, "Superhero History: Using Comic Books to Teach U.S. History," *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 2 (April 2010): 47, accessed March 5, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/maghis/24.2.41>.

<sup>107</sup> Julia Perkins, *Your Complete Spider-Man Guide: 307 Things You Need to Know* (Aspley, QLD: Emereo Publishing, 2015), accessed March 15, 2015,

arcs and lasted for thirty-one issues. There also appeared another version of Spider-Man called *Spider-Man J* by Akira Yamanaka. The manga was published in the Japanese *Comic Bom Bom* magazine from November 2004 to May 2005.<sup>108</sup> In these action/adventure manga series occur fantasy elements as well as in the American version.

#### 4.6.1 Comparison of American and Japanese Spider-Man

Since comic books featuring Spider-Man are still being published and Spider-Man's personality has undergone many changes over the years, his original character will be depicted. It all began when a radioactive spider bit a teenager, Peter Parker, on a school field trip. Peter transformed into Spider-Man and gained super powers.<sup>109</sup> After losing his uncle, Peter dedicated himself to use his abilities to protect the city. Spider-Man possesses many superhuman powers. He can cling to walls, has super-strength and super-speed. He is more agile than humans and has a spider-sense which alerts him to danger.<sup>110</sup> He has the ability to shoot webs from his wrists.

At first, Peter Parker was a miserable loner with no friends, but good-natured. Spider-Man is a good but not perfect superhero.<sup>111</sup> He is a hero with whom readers can identify with. He has many problems like normal people. Peter Parker is an orphan being raised by his aunt. When he finds a girl he likes, he does not know how to treat her. Moreover, his super powers also cause problems in his life. He is not able to get closer to people because he lies to them to protect them.<sup>112</sup> Spider-Man has difficulties with his identity which he has to hide. He often express ambivalence towards his new situation – transformation into Spider-Man. He has unsocial character, inferiority complex and fear of women. Peter

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[http://books.google.cz/books?id=bymmUqU7\\_S8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=true](http://books.google.cz/books?id=bymmUqU7_S8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=true).

<sup>108</sup> Toni Johnson-Woods, ed., *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives*, (repr., London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 244; Daniel Stein, Shane Denson, and Christina Meyer, eds., *Transnational Perspectives on Graphic Narratives: Comics at the Crossroads* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 152.

<sup>109</sup> Katherine G. Aiken, "Superhero History: Using Comic Books to Teach U.S. History," *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 2 (April 2010): 47, accessed March 5, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/maghis/24.2.41>.

<sup>110</sup> Marvel.com, "Spider-Man," accessed February 17, 2015, <http://marvel.com/characters/54/spider-man>.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Morton, "A Beautiful Man: On Peter Parker and the Amazing Spider-Man," *The Millions*, May 2, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.themillions.com/2014/05/the-superhero-who-could-be-you-on-the-amazing-spider-man.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Jonathan J. Sanford and William Irwin, eds., *Spider-Man and Philosophy: The Web of Inquiry* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2012), 7.

Parker makes many mistakes, however, he learns from them. Agonizing over his choices, he always tries to do the right thing.<sup>113</sup> In the issue of *The Amazing Spider-Man #27* from August 1965, Peter Park lost his costume and had to satisfy with a cheap version from a costume shop. He also lost his mask in fights and was defeated in battles several times.

Peter Parker enjoys being stronger than thugs and his peers who made fun of him. He is self-absorbed. He grew up poor and remained poor most of the time.<sup>114</sup> This is the reason why he needed money. He was profiting from selling photographs of his fights with criminals. In some cases, he even started those fights. However, he is a good man at heart. He has a strong sense of justice. He thinks about a criminal act in order to save his aunt's house in *The Amazing Spider-Man #1*, but eventually his good manners wins.<sup>115</sup> He places himself at risk while trying to save people in dangerous situations.<sup>116</sup>

The Japanese version of Spider-Man/Peter Park is Yu Komori. His character is based on American Spider-Man. Yu Komori was also bitten by a radioactive spider and concealed his true identity. He has superhuman powers as American Spider-Man. He did not intend to use his special abilities. Several storylines regarding Spider-Man are different than those in American comic books. For example, the way he earns money differs. He struggles to catch a criminal (Japanese version of Electro) for whose capture is offered a reward in the form of money. Japanese Spider-Man is more conscious, honest, and fair-minded. The manga as a whole is darker, more violent, and there are more sexual situations that in the American comic book.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Perkins, *Your Complete Spider-Man Guide*.

<sup>114</sup> Sanford and Irwin, *Spider-Man and Philosophy*, 7.

<sup>115</sup> Paul Morton, "A Beautiful Man: On Peter Parker and the Amazing Spider-Man," *The Millions*, May 2, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.themillions.com/2014/05/the-superhero-who-could-be-you-on-the-amazing-spider-man.html>.

<sup>116</sup> Sanford and Irwin, *Spider-Man and Philosophy*, 10.

<sup>117</sup> Johnson-Woods, *Manga: An Anthology*, 244.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to explain the main differences between Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga. The first chapter explained what comics is and how it works. There are sections dealing with the relationship between text and images in comics. An American comics theorist Scott McCloud defines comics as juxtaposed images in deliberate sequence which convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. Comics have three forms – a cartoon, comic strip, and comic book. In the process of creating any work, the artist has to follow a certain path which consists of six steps – the purpose of the work, form of the work, genre, what to include and omit, physical construction, and aspects of production. The second chapter focused on comics created in Japan, manga, and the differences between manga and American comics. Manga is read from right to left and is usually published monthly in black and white colour.

Another aim of this bachelor thesis was to analyze heroes in literary and cultural sphere and compare them with each other. The third chapter dealt with the main characters of comics and manga. Every comic book, as other media, has a main character. The main character may be a hero, antihero, or villain in comics. In the fourth chapter was portrayed their visual appearance, qualities and also dissimilarities. For example, Superman is one of the most influential and iconic heroes in the eyes of American comic book readers. As America has Superman, Japan boasts its folk hero Atom. He is a cultural phenomenon in Japan. Both of them dedicated their lives to help people in dangerous situations and fight evil. However, they are not identical. Superman is an alien. He conceals his identity as Clark Kent. On the other hand Atom, the main character of Astro Boy manga, is a boy robot. Everyone knows his true identity. In this chapter were also depicted other heroes like Michelangelo, Naruto, and Spider-Man. There was also shown as heroes behave and how their character has changed over the years.

This thesis summarizes the main facts about Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga and differences between them. The analysis clarifies the process of constructing a hero and provides information about heroes in the literary and cultural sphere.

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