

A Comparison of American Comics and Japanese Manga: Superman vs. Astro Boy

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Bachelor Thesis
2017



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta humanitních studií
Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur
akademický rok: 2016/2017

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Daniela Mičulková**
Osobní číslo: **H130147**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Srovnání amerického komiksu a japonské mangy: *Superman* vs. *Astro Boy***

Zásady pro vypracování:

Shromáždění odpovídajících odborných materiálů k tématu amerického komiksu a japonské mangy
Studie vybraných děl *Superman* a *Astroboy*
Formulace cílů práce
Analýza zvolených děl v kontextu s tématem
Vyvození a formulace závěrů práce

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bryne, John A. Superman: The Man of Steel. Volume 1. New York: DC Comics, 2013.

Darowski, Joseph J. The Ages of Superman: Essays on the Man of Steel in Changing Times. Jefferson: McFarland, 2012.

Duncan, Randy, and Matthew J. Smith. The Power of Comics: History, Form And Culture. New York: Continuum, 2009.

Osamu, Tezuka. Astro Boy. Volume 1–23. Translated by Frederik L. Schodt. Milwaukee: Dark Horse Comics, 2008.

Schodt, Frederik L. The Astro Boy Essays: Osamu Tezuka, Mighty Atom, and the Manga/Anime Revolution. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2007.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Petr Vinklárek

Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

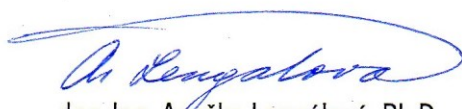
Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

11. listopadu 2016

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

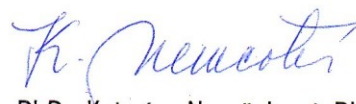
5. května 2017

Ve Zlíně dne 9. prosince 2016



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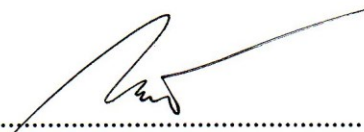
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na srovnání anglo-amerického komiksu a japonské mangy. Úvodem bakalářské práce je samotná charakteristika a historie komiksu, dále se práce zaměří na anglo-americký komiks a japonskou mangu jako takové. Důležitou součástí této práce je zaměření na dvě konkrétní díla *Superman* a *Astro Boy* a následné jejich porovnání s přihlédnutím k historickým událostem. Nedílnou součástí práce je i charakteristika samotných autorů vybraných dvou komiksů a také analýza hlavních postav.

Klíčová slova: komiks, manga, anglo-americký komiks, japonská manga, Superman, Astro Boy

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis is focused on comparison of Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga. The bachelor's thesis is introduced with the characterization and history of comics followed by focusing on Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga as such. Important part of the thesis is a deep analysis of two important works *Superman* and *Astro Boy* with their characteristics considering historical events. Integral part of the thesis is to characterize authors of selected works and analysis of the main characters.

Keywords: comics, manga, Anglo-American comics, Japanese manga, Superman, Astro Boy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Petr Vinklárek for his willingness to give me valuable advice and information, for his patience to work with me and also for his optimistic and positive approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Each form of art has its own main flagship works and the world of comics is not an exception. Superhero comics have always been a specialty of American culture and one of the first superhero comics that laid down the basics of this comics genre was *Superman* (1938) by Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel. This work is still a big inspiration for many creators until today. Japan is very famous for their comic books called manga and *Astro Boy* (1951) by Osamu Tezuka was one of the first comics that laid down foundations for today's manga. It was the first iconic work that changed the whole perception of comics in Japan and the comics industry gained enormous popularity.

This bachelor's thesis is targeted on the comparison of these two flagships of Anglo-American and Japanese comics. The main purpose is to make an analysis of their origins, point out authors' intentions and influences, describe the whole comics' story, their characters and then compare and contrast main superheroes of these works.

The first part is considered as a theoretical part including the definition of comics, history of Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga. This part covers important comics definitions from comics experts such as Randy Duncan, Will Eisner or Scott McCloud. History of Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga is covered until birth of "*Superman*" and "*Astro Boy*" to focus more deeply into the history that influenced these works before their realization. At the end of this chapter there is a comparison of these historical comics streams. This part also points out the fact that European culture had a great influence on both of these comics cultures.

The second chapter is focused on the work "*Superman*" by Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel. Authors' lives and the influences that affected their work are mentioned here. This topic is covered as the first part of this chapter with the inclusion of some information about John Byrne whose Superman adaptation "*Superman: Man of Steel*" was chosen for

the analysis. Last part of second chapter is focused on the story and the characters of this comics.

The third chapter is concentrating on the work "*Astro Boy*" by Osamu Tezuka. Tezuka's life is also covered here from the very beginning to point out his natural talent for this type of art. The English translation of *Astro Boy* by Frederick Lowell Schodt was used for this analysis, so certain information about the translator is covered here as well because he was a close friend of Osamu Tezuka. The rest of the chapter is focused on *Astro Boy*'s story and characters.

The last chapter is the main aim of the whole bachelor's thesis and that is comparison of work "*Superman*" and "*Astro Boy*". This part uses information from the previous chapters with focus on the main characters of the comics and compares and contrasts their features, appearance and meaning for the reader.

1 THEORY OF COMICS

1.1 Definition of comics

The search for definition must begin with a separation of the medium of comic books from the linguistic misunderstanding of the term comics. According to Randy Duncan, comics is used as a term to describe “phenomenon of juxtaposing images in a sequence”¹. In other words, this phenomenon is called *sequential art* which is a creative expression, discipline, art and a literary form that according to Will Eisner’s theory “deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea.”² Will Eisner wants to point out that comics creators communicate with the audience through comics with a language that is built on visual experience natural to both of them.³

Scott McCloud’s conclusion about his definition of “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence”⁴ is “Definition says nothing about superheroes or funny animals, nothing about fantasy/science fiction or reader’s age. No genres are listed in our definition, no types of subject matter, no styles of prose or poetry. Our attempts to define comics are an on-going process which won’t end anytime soon.”⁵ The following chapters describe the beginning of comics in America and Japan and at the end I will compare their similarities and differences.

¹ Randy Duncan, Matthew J. Smith, *The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture* (New York: A&C Black, 2009), 3.

² Will Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art* (Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985), 5.

³ Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art*, 5.

⁴ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 9.

1.2 Roots of Comics

This bachelor's thesis is going to cover the history from the very beginning of comics until Superman and Astro Boy was created to capture only these historic moments that led to the creation of these two superhero comics.

1.2.1 Anglo-American comics

People always had tendency to use sequential art to archive certain events in history, for example, an ancient Egyptian scribes in The Tomb of "Menna", Bayeux Tapestry that depicted Norman Conquest of England in 1066 or historical Grecian urns.⁶

An important predecessor of the form of juxtaposing images is Swiss caricaturist Rodolphe Töpffer also known as "Father of Comic Book". Töpffer was using sequential art as a medium to tell entertaining fictional stories, which was an epigrammatic style of drawing that became the foundation of the later comic strip.⁷ Rodolphe Töpffer published his book called "*Histoire de M. Vieux Bois*" (1837) and five years later in 1842 this book appeared on American newsstands named "*The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck*" and is considered as the first comics-like art that appeared in America. This graphic novel had not yet developed speech balloons for the text but the text was under panels in order to describe actions of Mr. Oldbuck.⁸

According to Shirrel Rhoades, comics and comic book as such started to be published since 1897 and named this era as "Platinum Age". In this era early comic book publishers started to be in business with publishing pulp comics and newspaper strips as

⁵ McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, 22-23.

⁶ McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, 10-16.

⁷ Duncan, Smith, *The Power of Comics: History, Form and Culture*, 25.

⁸ Shirrel Rhoades, *A Complete History of American Comic Books* (New York, Lang Publishing, 2008), 4.

*The Yellow Kid, Popeye and Mickey Mouse.*⁹ In 1933 Maxwell Charles Gaines published a comic book named *Funnies on Parade*. This comic book had a magazine format of sequential storytelling and it laid the foundations for the main features and format of comic books. This comic book became a great success so it did not take very long for competition to show up.¹⁰

Other successful works were for example Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson's *New Fun: The Big Comic Magazine #1* (1935) or his *Detective Comics #1* (1937) which was the first comic book published under new brand company Detective Comics, Inc. nowadays known under the name DC.¹¹

The Great Depression was the main period where superheroes came to existence even though in this period America was going through the longest lasting economic downturn in its own history.¹² In this era the first superhero was born and with him came the new era of "Golden Age". His name was Superman by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster and he was featured in the first comic book series *Action Comics #1* (1938).¹³ In 1939 Superman's popularity was sufficient enough to create a first comic book dedicated solely to him, which was a revolutionary idea because until this time comic books were consisted only of multiple stories of different heroes and superheroes. The first issue of Action Comics had a man who was lifting a car on its book cover. This was something that heroes normally did not do. In this case, Superman is considered as the first hero that had true

⁹ Rhoades, *A Complete History of American Comic Books*, 9-10.

¹⁰ Rhoades, *A Complete History of American Comic Books*, 10-11.

¹¹ Rhoades, *A Complete History of American Comic Books*, 16.

¹² Rhoades, *A Complete History of American Comic Books*, 10.

¹³ "Creating a Superhero," Jamie Coville, Accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/Hist1.html>

superpowers beyond a normal human strength. His fitting name Superman gave a born to phenomena of superheroes names which is popular until today.¹⁴

One of the main features of the Anglo-American superhero comic is the fact that comics is focused on action rather than on the emotions and mindset of the main characters. Superheroes in their normal lives have ordinary appearance. In this manner their symbolic character is visible to audience only in their superhero costume, for example, Superman's S sign on the costume but this character is going to be analyzed in this bachelor's thesis later.¹⁵

Not only action comics were present, but a whole range of genres was created throughout the time such as detective comics, adventure comics, horror comics, fantasy comics, etc.¹⁶ These comics had always been carrying a great source for future in the manner of culture, everyday language, slang, colors and historical events for us. In spite of the intention that only children would like to read comics, all these comics reflected continuous situation of America, needs and wishes of the American people (despite the fact that some genres of comics were targeting only adults).¹⁷

1.2.2 Japanese manga

Manga is a Japanese version of comic that was created in Japan in the Japanese language usually after the period of World War II.¹⁸ In the Japanese language word manga is created from two signs: "man" (漫) which means "capricious" or "aimless" and "ga"

¹⁴ "Creating a Superhero," Jamie Coville, Accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/Hist1.html>

¹⁵ Robin E. Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime* (Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 27-29.

¹⁶ M. Keith Booker, *Encyclopedia of Comic Books and Graphic Novels* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2010), 12-13.

¹⁷ Brooker, *Encyclopedia of Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, 11.

¹⁸ John Lent, *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Pres, 2001), 3-4.

(画) which means “picture”. The first person who used the word manga in this way was Rakuten Kitazawa in the 19th century.¹⁹

There are two theories that are often associated with the true origin of Japanese comics. First comes from the ancient human need to “express and record”.²⁰ These theories give a reference to the oldest wooden structure in Japan Horyuji Temple where the scribbles were found on the ceiling board on its backside. The second theory is that Japanese comics came from scroll paintings. These scroll paintings tell a story. However, there is more than just a picture, there is also the text that accompanies the situation represented by the picture. One of these painting scrolls was a work of Fukutomi Soushi (14th century). It represented a person whose avaricious personality made him think that he could gain wealth through artistic performance but the result was different. He ends up with nothing but shame. This scroll accompanied with text was also the predecessor of speech bubbles. In the 18th century giga images started to gain popularity. They were caricatures with text that often included satirical elements. In feudal Japan some types of satiric political work were prohibited and punished because they were considered as an offense. Giga images were founded as a form of entertainment and if they did not contain a strong political message, they were not banned. In the same century, another element that is also present in today’s manga was created by Katsushika Hokusai and it was “Manpu”. Manpu are symbolic texts or illustrations that represented interjection, but also the feelings and sounds of the environment. It is really common in modern manga to have many of these manpu. For example “doki doki” is manpu for beating heart or “pika pika” for attribute of shiny thing. Katsushika Hokusai presented this element for the first time in his

¹⁹ Isao Shimizu, *Nihon Manga no Jiten – Dictionary of Japanese Manga* (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1985), 53-54.

books “Hokusai manga”. In spite of this series of books being named “manga” they were still just doodles for amusement.²¹

In 1860s Japanese experienced the first Western influence of art and it rapidly influenced the creation of Japanese comics. In 1860 British businessman and artist Charles Wirgman started to teach the European style of drawing in Japan and he was successful.²² He started publishing magazine in English named “Japan Punch” which was another satirical work criticizing higher class, the politics, the missionary and the merchandise in local area in Japan via character Mr. Punch that was an alter ego of Mr. Wirgman himself. He depicted historical events of that time in humorous illustration and these illustrations were the first influence of western culture on Japanese style of drawing.²³ In the period 1945 - 1952 United States started an occupation of Japan. This way the American culture leaved such an impact on Japanese culture that we can see its results to this very day. This includes the style of drawing. American comics, movies and cartoons were imported into Japan and it was a big inspiration for a lot of artists that were open-minded to new types of art styles. However, not all artists were like that. The artistic community separated into two camps. One camp consisted of people who let American culture influence their work and the others who wanted to keep the Japanese tradition of art and culture in their work. This post war situation created authors that gave the word “manga” the meaning that we use

²⁰ „History of Japanese Manga Comics,” Japanese Gallery, Accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.japanesegallery.co.uk/default.php?Sel=manga&Submenu=4>

²¹ „History of Japanese Manga Comics,” Japanese Gallery, Accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.japanesegallery.co.uk/default.php?Sel=manga&Submenu=4>

²² D&AD, „Helen McCarthy - A History of Manga,” YouTube video, 8:21, June 20, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTp25fd00qU>

²³ „History of Japanese Manga Comics,” Japanese Gallery, Accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.japanesegallery.co.uk/default.php?Sel=manga&Submenu=4>

until today. These authors are for example Machiko Hasegawa and Osamu Tezuka with his manga *Astro Boy* which is going to be the second main subject of this bachelor's thesis.²⁴

Japanese manga is concentrated on emotions as well as on action. A lot of thinking bubbles are present in any manga genres, which show us the mindset of a character and enable us to understand his emotions. The appearance of characters is significant because their hair style, eyes and clothing reflect their personality. If the character is an innocent young girl, she is drawn with big eyes, long light hair and adorable clothes. On the other hand rough man has crazy red hair, narrow bad eyes and black stylish clothes.²⁵

In Japan manga is very popular among all age groups and it covers all possible genres, for example: romance, comedy, detective, horror, sports, action, business and also sexuality. It is no surprise to find an adult man traveling by underground with manga in his hands and its popularity has also reached other countries. Manga started to be more than just a form of entertainment, but also one of the main media of information. For example, politicians spread their opinions to public in the form of comics or another example is that English textbooks in Japan are constructed in the form of manga.²⁶ The most common language that manga is translated to is English and manga is the biggest part of the publishing industry in Japan.²⁷

1.3 Comparison of Anglo-American comics and Japanese Manga

First of all it is important to point out that both of these cultural streams have roots in ancient times and it all begun with the same purpose and need: to express and record; so this fact proves that intent and purpose is the key for creating sequential art. On the other

²⁴ Friederik L. Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986), 30-35.

²⁵ Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 28-34.

²⁶ Cronacaman, "Frederik L. Schodt Part I," YouTube video, 9:55, June 1, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaZzzf9vMzY>

hand, there is a difference in how Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga were created. When we look only at Anglo-American history a lot of these ancient relicts were found on European continent, not on American one. Afterwards this sequential art was developed in Europe, it was brought to America where it had its own progress. On the other hand the development of Japanese sequential art from ancient times was only internal. Pictures accompanied with text were present in Japanese culture since the 14th century in the form of painted scrolls (and later giga images) which gave a great and stable foundation for further development which eventually resulted in the creation of manga.

In spite of Japan having their own development form since the beginning there is one important joint development point with Anglo-American comics and that is the European influence. European sequential art culture had a great impact on both continents. America was the first who was introduced to this type of art in 1842 by Rodolphe Töpffer but he only suggested the first idea of sequential art while Japanese culture already knew this type of expression. European influence in Japan had been done in a different perspective. It came later in 1860 with Charles Wirgman and he introduced the Western style of drawing which influenced the Japanese one enormously.

There are two important historical events which had a huge impact on the comics culture of both continents. “The Great Depression” in America and “American Occupation” in Japan, which is the last similarity in my comparison chapter. The Great Depression gave an impulse in 1938 for the need of heroes. As a result, superheroes like Superman were created which left its influence on the whole comics culture. We can see the traces of this influence to this very day. Post war U.S. occupation in Japan brought a variety of new Western art material and inspiration for art creators. This type of art and

²⁷ Paul Gravett, *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* (New York: Harper Design, 2004), 8.

Western inspiration influenced the world of Manga in an enormous way. It was time when there was a need for peace and when Astro Boy was born.

In the manner of the basic features of the Anglo-American comics and Japanese Manga there is a huge difference in what is their main interest. In Anglo-American superhero comics, action is a main factor rather than emotions and in Japanese Manga it is the other way around. This focus on emotions from the side of manga has also a consequence of creating more onomatopoeia words than usual. Western comics has, for example, “Whooom” and “Bam” as interjections for falling down, but Japanese comics has interjections for feelings such as “po” (blushing), “jiro” (silent) or “doki-doki”(heart beating).²⁸ Appearance of manga characters are corresponding to their personality in contrast to American comics where main characters have no significant features which could tell audience more about his personality until he is dressed into his superhero costume.

In the following chapters I am going to focus on two great works called Superman and Astro Boy and make a detailed comparison.

²⁸ Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime*, 71.

2 SUPERMAN

2.1 Authors

2.1.1 Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel

This chapter will tell the background of Superman's authors and tell us more about the reason why he was created.

Superman was not a creation of one single person but two. The names of Superman's creators are Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel. Joe Shuster was born on 10th July 1914 in Toronto, Canada whereas Jerry Siegel was born on 17th October 1914 in Cleveland, USA. Destiny merged them together when Joe Shuster was 9 years old and his family moved from Canada to Cleveland, USA. After 8 years of living there he met Jerry Siegel and they became good friends. Both of them had one big hobby that made them get along so well and that was the love for science fiction stories, movies and novels or comic strips.²⁹ They decided to put their enthusiasm into action and Shuster started to work with Siegel on their first sci-fi fanzine named simply *Science Fiction*.³⁰ Shuster was the artist and Siegel was the writer, but both of them were cooperating and editing issues together. They stuck in these roles for the rest of their lives. In their school issue Siegel hid his identity by the pseudonym Herberz S. Fine (which was created from the names of his cousin and mother before her marriage) and the term of Superman was created for the first time. He wrote a story called "Reign of the Superman" but in this first appearance Superman was the villain who used his superpowers. The word "Superman" was inspired

²⁹ "Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman," Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

³⁰ "Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman," Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

by the German word “Übermensch” that was invented by Friedrich Nietzsche. It was a symbol of force and power. Übermensch was a human beyond all laws that can do anything and Nietzsche gave this title to Adolf Hitler. It is an ironic situation that this term was used by two Jewish students from Cleveland.³¹ Siegel and Shuster liked this idea of an anti-hero. They created comic strips for Superman and tried to sell it to some publishers in 1933. Superman had no success and publishers were not interested in such a bad character. It discouraged both of them and Shuster also burnt all his artwork with the thought that he will never ever come back to this character again.³² Things changed, however, thanks to Jerry Siegel and one of his sleepless nights. An idea came into his mind and he started to think about different sketches. In the morning he rushed into the Shuster’s house in order to show him his new creation and Shuster was amazed. Siegel came with totally new Superman. He was not a villain anymore and he turned him into a hero, he gave him a double identity and he added extra characters as Lois Lane that we know very well even today. “It was a terrific idea.” said Shuster about the new Superman to his friend and they started to work on Superman’s design right away.³³

In 1938 Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel managed to publish their first comic strips in “Action Comic #1”. They had a hard time to sell Superman successfully so they decided to sell rights for this work to DC (Detective Comics, nowadays called “DC Comics”). DC Comics were searching for a new action comics and they took Superman since “It was

³¹ Batmite's superhero channel, “Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (3 of 5),” YouTube video, 10:38, February 2, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViP5sjJfIA0>

³² “Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman,” Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

³³ Batmite's superhero channel, “Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (1 of 5),” YouTube video, 10:37, December 15, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTUrFYU2e_I

better than nothing.”³⁴ At that time they did not know that this will be the most famous superhero in the world. Even Siegel and Shuster did not expect it, so they sold the rights for Superman to Detective Comics forever.³⁵

This happened in 1938 and DC Comics gave them only 130 dollars for it.³⁶ Their Superman gained popularity, Siegel and Shuster tried to get their rights back, but with no success and after several years DC Comics decided to pay them 20 000 dollars a year (in spite of the fact that DC Comics were getting millions of profit) and publish their names in the credits of all future Superman comics, series and movies. This amount of money was fluctuating throughout the time and both creators had hard times with DC Comics for copying their work and with inadequate payment for their job. Joe Shuster died in 1992 at the age of 77 and Jerry Siegel lived until the age of 82. Siegel died four years later in 1996. Shuster’s artwork remained of good quality throughout all of his life in spite of having eye problems. After their death DC Comics truly accepted them as the true creators of Superman comics.³⁷

2.1.2 John Byrne

There are hundreds of comic books of Superman by now. Each of them adds and omits some important facts about Superman and basically there is no comics book where readers can get all the basic information. For the basic analysis I chose a Superman comics

³⁴ “Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman,” Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

³⁵ “Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman,” Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

³⁶ Batmite's superhero channel, “Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (1 of 5),” YouTube video, 10:37, December 15, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTUrfYU2e_I

³⁷ “Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster and Superman,” Jamie Coville, Accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.thecomicbooks.com/old/super.html>

book by John Byrne. He wrote 6 mini-issues in 1986 and I chose later issue from the year of 2003 for my bachelor's thesis, where all of these 6 original issues are collected in one book.

In 1986 John Byrne was hired by DC Comics to revitalize their main “flagship character”³⁸ Superman. Many comics authors were working with the character of Superman and they pushed the storyline in the stadium when nobody was interested about it.³⁹ John Byrne himself wanted to improve the Superman's reputation and he said the following about the old Superman: “He had become trapped by the ridiculously high level of his own power. It was hard to imagine ever being truly impressed by anything Superman did, since he could push planets around.”⁴⁰ Byrne tried to make Superman new but still original that meets Siegel and Shuster's ideas. He focused more on the character of Clark Kent and his emotions and he worked on this character for two years. He decided to quit when he felt no support from readers and because the form of merchandise started to be different from the concept of comics that he remade. He revitalized more comics heroes such as Captain America, Iron Man, X-Men and his most popular one Fantastic Four.⁴¹

2.2 Comic Books

2.2.1 Superman: Man of Steel

The whole story starts on Krypton, a planet somewhere in the galaxy. This planet is a sterile and cold world with advanced technology in terms of robots serving the population

³⁸ “John Byrne,” ComicVine, Accessed March 15, 2017, <http://comicvine.gamespot.com/john-byrne/4040-1770/>

³⁹ Joseph J. Darowski, *The Ages of Superman: Essays on the Man of Steel in Changing Times* (Jefferson: MrFarland & Company, 2012), 126.

⁴⁰ “Interviews: John Byrne – Exclusive Krypton Club Interview!,” Craig Byrne, Accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.supermanhomepage.com/comics/interviews/interviews-intro.php?topic=john-byrne>

and having their own consciousness. This planet experiences the so called “Green Death”. It is a chain-reaction when the core of Krypton makes pressure on the planet’s crust. This pressure creates a new radioactive metal that is spreading all over the planet and killing its population. Jor-El ended his journey around the planet and he discovered that it can take only an hour before the planet explodes. Jor-El and his wife Lara have a newborn child named Kal-El and despite of Lara’s negotiation Jor-El wants to send their son to another planet to preserve his life. He found a planet called Earth where their son can get love which he could not get on Krypton anymore.⁴² Jor-El thinks that the population of Krypton itself caused this whole situation “We control the planet. We have filled every nook and cranny, conquered and harness every force of nature... And in the end, what have we achieved? Sterility. A cold and heartless society stripped of all human feeling, all human passion and life.”⁴³ Kal-El was put into a rocket and when Krypton started to erupt; his father sent the rocket into space. The destination of the rocket was precisely set: Earth, America, Kansas, Smallville. Before the planet exploded Jor-El says to his wife that he loved her in spite of the “cold and heartless” tradition of the population.⁴⁴ He was different from the other inhabitants of the planet in terms of realizing that this sterility is not humane and also realized his love for his own son and his future. He realized it himself: “Our world has not had a place for what I feel.”⁴⁵ This romantic beginning of the comic is really different from the original version from Siegel and Shuster when this sequence of the story was told only on one panel and the beginning is explained in a hurry. This proves how

⁴¹ “John Byrne,” ComicVine, Accessed March 15, 2017, <http://comicvine.gamespot.com/john-byrne/4040-1770/>

⁴² John Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel* (New York: DC Comics, 2003), 12-16.

⁴³ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 14.

⁴⁴ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 17.

⁴⁵ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 1.

Byrne focused here on emotions of the characters. He dedicated whole 8 pages to this sequence in order to more catch the reader's attention and answer some questions.⁴⁶

In the prologue, we experience the retrospective narrative and after this reader meets grown-up teenager named Clark Kent that won a whole football match only by his own inhuman power. His father, Jonathan Kent, took him aside after the match and wants to have a talk with him. He took him to some field and reveals him the truth. Clark Kent is not his true son and with the previous information, reader can make a conclusion that Clark Kent is Kal-El. His parents found him in a field closed in a small rocket. His Mother, Martha Kent, thought that it is some Russian experiment because she saw a human baby not an alien. Jonathan and Martha wanted a baby for so long, so this was a gift from heavens for them. They named the baby Clark Kent and raised him with love and care. Clark started to discover that he is not the same as other human beings. He can easily lift abnormally heavy objects. He also realized that he can endure much more. He got trampled by a bull but got out of it alright. He also discovered that he can fly. His father was not able to give him an explanation where that rocket came from and who exactly Clark is. One thing that his father always told him is not to use his special powers to make himself better than others. This was the reason why his father could not stand to see his son using his power in football matches and make himself a star.⁴⁷

Once the truth is revealed to Clark, things change. Clark decided to be different and responsible with his powers. He decided to not use his powers for himself anymore and use it for other people instead; however, it must be done in secret so that his identity is not revealed. He leaves his parents and moves to a big city Metropolis where he is needed. He

⁴⁶ Darowski, *The Ages of Superman: Essays on the Man of Steel in Changing Times*, 127.

⁴⁷ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 19-28.

helps others, using his powers. Thanks to his speed, he ensures that he is not recognized by other people and if somebody takes a picture of him, the photo is blurry. One day he returns back to his parents as he is scared by an incident that happened. He was among a crowd of people when one of the planes in the sky crashed into another during the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Metropolis city. His urge to help people forced him to fly out of the crowd and save people on the planet. In one of those planes was the reporter Lois Lane that was popular among the whole city and Clark fell in love with her when he saw her. In this case she could see him properly, so his appearance was revealed and he is afraid that if other people can recognize him, he will be exiled for his superpower. He told this story to his parents and they made up a hidden identity for him. It is a good example how supportive and loving parents he has. Afterwards, reporter Lois Lane published an article about her experience with mysterious “Superman” so Clark decided to call himself like that. He worked with his father on the design of his Superman costume and his mother sewed it for him. His “S” symbol on his chest was also something that he came up with as it is the first letter of his new identity. Since people have already seen his face, he decided to change his looks as Clark Kent. He decided to wear circle glasses and comb his hair backwards to look different at first sight. After trying his costume for the first time he showed his gratitude to his mother by hugging her and kissing her on the forehead saying “Not to worry, Ma. The whole thing works just fine! It’s got exactly the symbolic look I wanted.”⁴⁸ This is another example that Clark is a loving human, capable of emotions even though he has inhuman power.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 40.

⁴⁹ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 30-41.

From this time he appears in Metropolis as Superman in his costume without hesitation and the population starts to know him better. He is helping where he is needed. However, he is not killing the criminals. If the need be, he knocks them out of consciousness so that the police can arrest them. He is not only saving people, but also tells others what is right. For example, at one point, he saves a lady carrying big playing radio, he warns her that playing a loud music is not appropriate on the street⁵⁰ or the fact that he would never hit a lady.⁵¹ This moral code has been taught from his parents and it shows his loyalty and respect for them. The fact that Superman shows himself more, reporter Lois Lane starts to be more interested in him so she puts herself in danger to “summon” him. Then she invites him to her apartment and wants to do an interview with him, but Superman’s answers aren’t that interesting to her. Clark Kent, knowing that his identity might be in danger, decides to join the same newspaper agency where Lois Lane works and before she can, he writes an article about Superman so that he can keep his identity a secret. Lois Lane is angry because she had a chance to write an article based on her talking to Superman face to face.⁵²

From this time his adventures start to be episodic and in any case Byrne put more details and emotions into the beginning of this version of Superman which was more appealing to readers in spite of previous Superman's that just landed to Earth and started to save the whole world. The main villain that Superman met is Lex Luthor. Lex Luthor is well known in Metropolis for being the most powerful man and businessman. Clark Kent met him when he escorted Lois Lane to a party that Lex Luthor held on his ship. He hired criminals so that they attack the ship, in order to force Superman to appear. Superman

⁵⁰ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 48.

⁵¹ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 53.

really appeared, saved the day and Lex Luthor asked Superman to work for him. Superman declined and when he found out that Luthor counterfeited this assault Superman decided to get him arrested. This made them the biggest enemies. Lex Luthor was released, but he was determined to destroy Superman because all people look up to him and not to Luthor anymore.⁵³ In another chapter the reader can see how Luthor kept his promise and created a copy of Superman to destroy Superman. Superman beat his copy with a struggle, but never plans revenge. Attacks are only one-sided from Lex Luthor because Superman has no reason to harm anybody for no justifiable reason.⁵⁴ The important part of this series is the last sixth book called *Haunting*. Clark Kent is going back to Smallville to visit his parents again. In spite of loving Metropolis he started to compare these two cities and thinks to himself how good it is to be back: "It's good to have a place I can go. A place where the people are so down to earth and normal. A place where no one's likely to make demands on either of my identities."⁵⁵ It is visible that in case of living two busy lives he is happy when he can have a break and can spend time with his parents by a table and eating his favorite rhubarb pie. This shows us how down-to-earth he is and why he also admits to his parents that he likes Lois Lane a lot, but he is doing nothing about it because he feels that she loves Superman more and Clark Kent is just a competition at work. The last important moment that happened in Smallville was meeting his true father Jor-El. Nobody explained how it was possible that he appeared in front of Clark but he was tangible. He was glad that he can see his son and without any discussions he imported a lot of data and memories into his head. He could see what his mother was like and also and most importantly, he gets to know that he is an alien from another planet and not mutant as he thought. He discovered

⁵² Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 57-62.

⁵³ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 91-107.

the truth about his planet Krypton and why he was sent to Earth. Jonathan Clark made Clark's true father disappear because importing this amount of data was hurting Clark. Jor-El never appeared again, but after that Clark needed to be alone and think about his life. He realized that his true father gave a gift to him. He imported not only memories to him, but also knowledge of Kryptonian language, culture, songs, customs, etc. Krypton does not longer exist, but his father wanted to keep Krypton alive in his son. In spite of doing this great act, Clark found it meaningless.⁵⁶ The most important conclusion of all of these issues is the last big panel of Clark Kent in Superman costume standing on the top of the mountain and saying that Krypton made him Superman, but the Earth made him human.⁵⁷ This conclusion shows us that Byrne was focusing on the character of Clark Kent more than on Superman. He made Superman more realistic to make him feel more human than alien. A lot of thinking bubbles were present in the comics, so the reader can see into Clark's mind and his way of thinking about himself. As Byrne himself said, Clark was the true person and Superman was the disguise. Clark Kent was Byrne's favorite character because Superman sees a human being within himself who is in charge of his mysterious powers and takes the responsibility for it.⁵⁸

2.2.2 Superman Characters

In this chapter I am going to describe the main characters of Byrne's Superman, their role in the story and the origin of their existence. Clark Kent as a main character of

⁵⁴ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 108-130.

⁵⁵ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 132.

⁵⁶ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 131-149.

⁵⁷ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 150-152.

⁵⁸ "Interviews: John Byrne – Exclusive Krypton Club Interview!," Craig Byrne, Accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.supermanhomepage.com/comics/interviews/interviews-intro.php?topic=john-byrne>

the story, his parents, which had a key influence on Clark's personality, his love and main female protagonist Lois Lane and his main villain Lex Luthor.

2.2.2.1 *Clark Kent*

The main hero of Superman comics Clark Kent was raised in a good family that provided him love and care. In this case he grew up to be a man with a sense of justice and moral code. His original appearance was not changed throughout the time so it is available to analyze his costume and accessories without comparison to previous versions. His natural appearance was decided to be a normal black haired man with glasses. Shuster and Siegel decided to give him glasses to hide his identity, because in 1938 glasses were not as affordable as nowadays so it was an interesting accessory for a main hero to attract readers. His natural and normal looking appearance should show us more of Clark Kent as a human being. Superman's posture and natural talent for acrobacy was inspired by the performances of actor Douglas Fairbanks in his movies like "The Mark of Zoro" or "Robin Hood". In his "Superman mode" his body shape is exposed which shows us his superpowers and strength while in "Clark Kent mode" his giant posture is not that noticeable because he is dressed into normal clothes as working suit.⁵⁹ The main superpowers of Clark Kent/Superman were super strength, flying, invulnerability (totally bulletproof), super speed, heat vision, freeze breath, x-ray vision (he could see through walls), superhuman hearing, healing factor.⁶⁰ The true origin of Superman outfit is also filled with inspiration by external influences. His fitting costume with pants was designed

⁵⁹ Batmite's superhero channel, "Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (1 of 5)," YouTube video, 10:37, December 15, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTUrfYU2e_I

⁶⁰ „Superman,“ DC Comics, Accessed March 17, 2017, <http://www.dccomics.com/characters/superman>

according to weightlifters in the circus as well as the color of his costume.⁶¹ When we stop by costume colors it is important to note the influence of ink colors in that period of time. Blue, yellow and red colors were the basic ink colors and the cheapest ones. The symbol “S” on Superman's chest and cape were changing its meaning through the time. Originally it was a simply his logo, the first letter of his new identity of Superman and this was the meaning that Byrne kept in his comics as well.⁶² In his adaptation Clark Kent decided to be Superman overnight. From the normal boy living in a small village, he became a hero of the world where everyone admired him and looked up to his strength. Everything happened because he decided to do so and changed everything overnight.⁶³ This is a typical vision of an American dream what Shuster and Siegel also acknowledged in their time and they knew that this type of hero will be sensational for the readers. It gives the feeling to the reader that everyone can be a hero and everyone can decide overnight to change their lives completely. He arrived when it was needed with modesty about his abilities and non-threatening and non-aggressive image.⁶⁴ ⁶⁵ This appearance inspired the creation of many other superheroes that had this approach to fighting with the villains and also had complex background stories.

2.2.2.2 Jonathan and Martha Kent

Jonathan and Martha Kent are Clark's adoptive parents (they are called “Pa” and “Ma” by Clark) who live in the fictional town Smallville in Kansas. Both of them get along

⁶¹ VariantComics, “The History Of Superman!,” YouTube video, 10:11, June 26, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvGwLHODZgo>

⁶² VariantComics, “The History Of Superman!,” YouTube video, 10:11, June 26, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvGwLHODZgo>

⁶³ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 28.

⁶⁴ Batmite's superhero channel, “Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (2 of 5),” YouTube video, 10:13, December 15, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJprUlmj_Ko

⁶⁵ Batmite's superhero channel, “Superman → The Comic Strip Hero (3 of 5),” YouTube video, 10:38, February 2, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViP5sjJfIA0>

very well and they welcomed a new baby from the rocket with open arms due to the fact that they strived to have baby for long but not successfully. Martha Kent named “Kal-El” after her middle name “Clark” and she took him as her own son.⁶⁶ In spite of their dreams coming true, they were raising Clark with no selfishness and arrogance. Clark’s parents raised him with love and made a huge impact on his personality and Clark always treasured their wisdom and advice. Most of the main situations in the Byrne’s comics were held in the kitchen and representing idyllic American family where the mother is cooking a breakfast while her husband is reading the newspaper. The difference is that his father is reading the newspaper because of Clark and discovers how well is his son doing in the role of Superman. The Mother is also excited about it and she is proud of their own son so she is cutting out all the articles about Superman and making a scrapbook with them.⁶⁷ It was also their dream to make their son use his powers for people and not only for himself. Martha and Jonathan Kent also were symbols of love and home for Clark. There were the only one who loved him without prejudice like true parents.

2.2.2.3 *Lois Lane*

Lois Lane is a journalist with Pulitzer Prize working for a newspaper “the Daily Planet” in Metropolis. She was given the prize for her determination for hunting exciting news and her fearless personality.⁶⁸ In Byrne's *Man of Steel*, Lois is portrayed like a strong and independent woman who is not afraid to get herself into danger or break some rules to get some information. When Superman appeared she fell in love with him and dreams about being closer to him. She accepted her co-worker Clark Kent but her relationship to him is only occupational. In comparison with previous Superman comics, Lois was more

⁶⁶ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 24.

⁶⁷ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 30.

vulnerable and innocent. She was always getting into trouble due to her curiosity and it was Superman's job to save her at any time. Superman/Clark Kent was himself in love with Lois so it was natural to serve as her invisible bodyguard. Byrne admits that this portrayal of Lois Lane was annoying for a lot of readers, so he decided to change her character into a stronger woman that is not afraid to take a shotgun and fire or deny one of the most powerful men in Metropolis.⁶⁹ Lois Lane was the reason why Clark Kent started to work for a newspaper in the same agency as her to secretly take care of her and also make sure that there will not be anything wrong written about him. She was one of the main motivators why he continued his job as Superman.⁷⁰

2.2.2.4 Lex Luthor

Lex Luthor is considered to be the main Superman's enemy and the most powerful man in Metropolis. His corporation Lexcorp owns interests of all businesses in the city and he is the second or third richest man in the world so it is basically known that Lex Luthor owns the city of Metropolis.⁷¹ He is proud of his power and enjoys using it for whatever he wants. His fleshy posture represents wealth and red hair aggressiveness and anger. Superman started to be his enemy when Luthor realizes that people admire Superman for his acts and he feels that Superman is starting to take control over the city. He thought his power was decreasing when Superman was in charge of arresting him.⁷² Luthor's power was his pride so competition was not acceptable, but Superman was not fighting him for the same reason. Luthor does things for his own pleasure and sometimes it includes hurting. Superman fights many city criminals, but Luthor is the most powerful one because

⁶⁸ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 54.

⁶⁹ "Interviews: John Byrne – Exclusive Krypton Club Interview!," Craig Byrne, Accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.supermanhomepage.com/comics/interviews/interviews-intro.php?topic=john-byrne>

⁷⁰ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 63.

of his money and intelligent strategies that make him also Superman's greatest enemy and important villain of the series, because he was the only one of all the villains who was fighting for his beliefs.⁷³

⁷¹ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 91.

⁷² Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 103.

⁷³ Byrne, *Superman: Man of Steel*, 107.

3 ASTROBOY

3.1 Authors

3.1.1 Osamu Tezuka

Osamu Tezuka was born in 1928, Toyonaka, Osaka Prefecture, but he grew up in the city of Takarazuka. His family had tradition in medicine and law and it was expected of him to follow this tradition. His father was interested in manga as a hobby so he was the one who introduced small Osamu to the world of cartoons and comics. Big influence for Osamu were Walt Disney's cartoons and comics such as Popeye or Superman cartoons. He saw a Disney movie "Bambi" 80 times which proves his big enthusiasm into this cartoon world. Osamu Tezuka was creative and talented from his early age.⁷⁴ His pictures were highly influenced by Disney and western style of drawing, but he was not copying at all. He only took the best from these types of drawings and added his unique style. His ideas and style of comics were revolutionary and unique. Osamu Tezuka finished his medical school with graduation and decided to devote all his life to creating manga. However, his medical knowledge was not wasted and he used it for a lot of his comics as a source of information.⁷⁵

From the point when he dedicated his life to comics he started to put his emotions into his work. He created work based on his inner world and feelings. When he felt depressed, he wrote a depressed story, etc. Despite of these feelings he still cares about enjoyment that his comics can give to the audience. He wanted to make them decent enough for adults and entertaining for kids. So his work was not only about positive things,

⁷⁴ „Godfather of Anime, Osamu Tezuka,“ John, Accessed March 17, 2017, <https://www.tofugu.com/japan/osamu-tezuka-history/>

but they teach kids how to deal with present, negative situation and look into the future with an optimistic mindset. His specialty in comics was depicting himself as a character in his comics. He simply drew a cartoon version of himself and appeared in the introduction of manga or throughout the whole story to give an explanation about the current situation or about the past events in the story.⁷⁶

Osamu Tezuka created comics called Ambassador Atom (“Atom Taishi”) which was published in monthly magazine for boys “Shonen”. The first release of this comics was in 1951. In this comics Tezuka created a side character named Atom, who was supposed to be a small robot boy. The reason why he called him Atom was because around this time America was doing a test of nuclear bombs and “everyone was talking about ‘atoms’ then”.⁷⁷ This side character was such a success that Tezuka decided to create a separate comics for him. In the same year 1951 he published comics called “Astro Boy” (“Tetsuwan Atom”). This comics gain an enormous success so Tezuka decided to also create an animated series. Later in 1968 he decided to found his own animation studio “Tezuka Production” in the manner of Walt Disney Studio when he was transferring his comics into animation. Anime Astro Boy was the one of the many others that he created with his studio. “Anime” is a term for an animated Japanese movie or series. Astro Boy was the first manga ever that was adapted to an animation. The U.S. started to have an interest in this series so they made a contract with Tezuka and started to broadcast this series in America. Japanese title “Tetsuwan Atom” that could be translated as “Mighty Atom” but the main translator of Astro Boy comics Frederick L. Schodt claims that he changed the

⁷⁵ „Godfather of Anime, Osamu Tezuka,“ John, Accessed March 17, 2017, <https://www.tofugu.com/japan/osamu-tezuka-history/>

⁷⁶ Dan Mazur, Alexander Danner, *Comics: a global history, 1968 to the present* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), 89.

title into “Astro Boy” to be more appealing to American culture of comics heroes. When we imagine all heroes whose names are Superman, Batman, Wonder Women, etc. at that time it was natural to see another type of superhero title. Schodt wanted to make Americans accept Astro Boy and not to be surprised by him.⁷⁸ It is also important to note that Astro Boy was always owned by Osamu Tezuka so there are no other versions of Astro Boy comics because it is highly licensed.

Osamu Tezuka created 700 manga series in his whole life which was containing 170 000 pages. He laid down the basics of Manga that is well known today. Features like big eyes, big heads, volumized and original style of hair and others were created by him and this pattern is used and developed until today. Due to this he deserved a title “Father of Manga” or “God of Manga” that he received from people. He died in 1989 and his last words were “I'm begging you, let me work!” which prove his workaholic nature that he maintained throughout all his life.⁷⁹

3.2 Comics Book

3.2.1 Tetsuwan Atom / Astro Boy

Osamu Tezuka is the only owner of his manga “Tetsuwan Atom” so there is only one version of comic book present and I used this original version for my analysis. There is a lack of knowledge of Japanese language from my side so the translated manga from Frederick L. Schodt was used for this analysis. Schodt has not done any changes in the

⁷⁷ Frederik L. Schodt, *The Astro Boy Essays: Osamu Tezuka, Mighty Atom, and the Manga/Anime Revolution* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2007), 56-58.

⁷⁸ Osamu Tezuka, *Astro Boy* (Milwaukie: Dark Horse Comics, 2002), 2-4.

⁷⁹ „Godfather of Anime, Osamu Tezuka,“ John, Accessed March 17, 2017, <https://www.tofugu.com/japan/osamu-tezuka-history/>

story. He only translated the whole comics when he was closely working with the creator of this manga Osamu Tezuka.⁸⁰

Frederick L. Schodt changed the Japanese name “Tetsuwan Atom” into “Astro Boy” so this English title will be used in the whole analysis on this manga. He points out in his introduction of this manga that he tried to translate this manga as reliably as possible. In spite of the fact that Astro Boy anime was translated with changed names of characters, for example, Professor Ochanomizu became Dr. Packadermus J. Elephun, Schodt kept original Japanese names in the manga. The use of American names was more suitable for American tastes and Americans found liking in Astro Boy series. This led to the fact that most of the people had no idea that Astro Boy is a Japanese work from Osamu Tezuka. The only exception that Schodt did in his manga was the change of name of teacher “Higeoyaji” into “Mr. Mustachio”. Name “Higeoyaji” is in fact his nickname that he was given for his big mustache so translation of this Japanese name would be “Mr. Mustache”. This was used as a humorous name and it was done for the purpose, so Schodt wanted non-Japanese readers to understand this comical nickname. For this reason he translated it into English.⁸¹

The manga begins with the introduction into the history. Main story starts in 2003 but author introduces its past in the form of technological development especially in the robot industry. In 1987 scientist developed robots that had a human appearance and throughout the time they started to be able to express emotions like laugh, cry or anger so later on in 2003 laws were created for the robots. For example: “Article 1: Robots exist to make people happy.” or “Article 13: Robots shall not injure or kill humans.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 7.

⁸¹ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 6-8.

⁸² Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 10-16.

When we get into the point when the main story starts Osamu Tezuka himself appears on the page. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, it was his unique trait to depict himself in the story. We can see him in his cartoon version behind his working table full of drawing tools with his smile on his face. Osamu Tezuka is always wearing beret on his head so this iconic symbol was not omitted in his depiction. He says: “Hi, everyone. I’m Osamu Tezuka. My Astro Boy manga began running in 1951. Around 1951 or ‘52, I tried to imagine what the future would be like and created the scenario that you just read.”⁸³ The reason why he is speaking about the past situation was that some parts of chapters were added later. When Tezuka created some chapter and later he realized it needed something to add or explain something more deeply, he draws extra pages and adds them to already published books. That is why some of the published books are refilled with some extra Tezuka’s pages and some of them are not. The version that is used for analysis is the complete book. He was used to this communication with readers. He introduces them to everything and makes sure they understand everything.⁸⁴

After a quick introduction, the actual story begins. It is the year 2003 and a small boy Tobio is driving a futuristic car without wheels (Tezuka probably thought that in that year the technology would be so advanced that it could be possible to let children drive a car) and unfortunately his car crashes into another one. When his father, head of the Ministry of Science, Dr. Tenma finds out about his son’s accident, he rushes into to the place where the accident happened and finds out to his shock that his son Tobio is dead. Tobio’s mother is not known to the reader. On the next page he decides to create a robot that would be a complete copy of his son and involves all of the Ministry of Science.

⁸³ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 16.

⁸⁴ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 7.

Everyone from his team is worried about Dr. Tenma's health because they see how he is making decisions based on his actual emotions, but they do what their boss tells them to do.⁸⁵ On the 7th of April 2003 robot Tobio is created.⁸⁶ The robot is able to communicate right away so Dr. Tenma takes care of him as if it was his own child. After all, it was the original purpose to create this robot so he forgets about the accident and pretends that this robot is his real son. He teaches him to speak and walk properly and teaches him many things about the world which led to that Tobio smiled for the first time and starts to have human emotions.⁸⁷ After some time of happy days Dr. Tenma discovers that Tobio is not growing like other kids do. This wakes him up from his disillusion and makes him really angry at Tobio. He decides to sell Tobio to a robot merchant ignoring Tobio's feelings. Merchant advises Dr. Tenma not to create such a type of robot again because these human-like robots could be dangerous for people since they could be demanding their rights or worse, try to rule the world. In spite of advanced technology where robots could have emotions they are still used as tools and they are supposed to serve people and they are not supposed to have their own consciousness or ideas. Dr. Tenma signs the contract and Tobio is sold to the merchant.⁸⁸

Important situation happens when they are leaving and Tobio asks: "Um, do you mind if I wear some clothes?" and the merchant answers furiously "Are you crazy?! Since when do robots wear clothes?!"⁸⁹ Tobio wore clothes all the time up to this point and he was educated by Dr. Tenma about everything what is normal for humans. Since Dr. Tenma realized that Tobio was only a robot, he stripped him as a symbol of taking of humanity

⁸⁵ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 18-22.

⁸⁶ Schodt, *The Astro Boy Essays: Osamu Tezuka, Mighty Atom, and the Manga/Anime Revolution*, 39.

⁸⁷ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 26.

⁸⁸ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 28-29.

⁸⁹ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 29.

from him and sold him as an item. However, Astro Boy remained in his “stripped” look for the rest of the book, not denying that he is a robot.

After some time Tobio was seen performing in robot circus with name “Astro”. One show Professor Ochanomizu, The Head of Research Lab, visited the circus and during the show he spotted that Astro is not a normal robot and that he is not enjoying performing at all. He decided to buy Astro from the circus and makes him free.⁹⁰ He said to Astro: “From now on, you’re no longer a slave to be bought and sold! I’ll be like a father to you, so you don’t need to worry. If you study hard, you’ll turn into a wonderful boy.”⁹¹ Professor Ochanomizu accepted this robot boy with love and understanding. He started to call him “Astro Boy” (“Astro” in short) and puts him into school with other kids not hiding that he is a robot. Astro also discovered his super powers such as flying, super strength, amplified hearing, ability to use his eyes as searchlights and he also has many laser weapons installed in his body. He also learns to speak sixty languages fluently and at the end he can sense if people are good or bad. Manga says that these superpowers developed after “Professor Ochanomizu’s encouragement” which is not a clear information for the reader and it is not answered in any following volumes.⁹²

From this point of the story the whole book consists of separated short stories and adventures of Astro Boy. He is helping his teacher Mr. Mustachio, classmates and the inhabitants using his super powers. The very interesting fact is that everybody accepted him. For example, his classmates did not mind that there is a robot boy in their class and when somebody was in trouble they called him and Astro Boy came to help.⁹³

⁹⁰ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 30.

⁹¹ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 30.

⁹² Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 31.

⁹³ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 209.

In spite of having Osamu Tezuka as a supporter of the story a lot of things are in charge of reader to make a reference. For example, in the Volume 1 Astro Boy was living with Mr. Ochanomizu who was supposed to be his father and in Volume 2, without any explanation, Astro Boy is living with his robot family that was created by Mr. Ochanomizu. At that time people were not used to reading manga in the form of the long linear story but rather in short stories, so Tezuka was giving features to Astro Boy throughout the whole volumes. When Astro Boy was adapted into anime, the story was deepened and references created in order to avoid confusion however the most crucial scenes were kept.⁹⁴

This uneven story is also caused by the fact that has been already mentioned, that is Tezuka tends to refill his chapters. The first chapter “The Birth of Astro Boy” was published in 1975 so it was publishers work to put it in the right order of the story. In the manga Osamu Tezuka as a character was more likely commenting why he decided to use this plot or other interesting facts for example, how the manga Astro Boy was accepted in the United States. He was basically sharing with readers his thoughts, concerns and intents about the manga Astro Boy. He has his specific humor that he is using from time to time in this manga. When a situation became more serious or sad, he sometimes uses some random funny character to suddenly pop up from the corner and usually makes another character angry because this character has nothing to do with the situation. It is really a common type of humor in Japan.⁹⁵

Osamu Tezuka used this manga to imagine a world of advanced technology where robots and human could live together. In the post war period Japan did not have a

⁹⁴ TheOriginalAstroBoy, “AstroBoy (1960) Episode 1 - part 1,” YouTube video, 14:51, December 6, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnX-0fbXzyA>

reputation for technology and science as it does nowadays, but it is possible that these dreams to become one of them started in this period and Tezuka gave them his point of view on display.⁹⁶

3.2.2 Astro Boy Characters

In this chapter I am going to describe the main characters of Tezuka's Astro Boy and their role in the story. Astro as a main character of the story, Dr. Tenma as his true father and developer and Professor Ochanomizu, a person who made Astro change his life direction. These three characters are going to be described as being considered the most influential for the story.

3.2.2.1 Astro

The main character of this manga Astro Boy is a robot created by scientist Dr. Tenma who named him Tobio after his son that he was supposed to replace. After being bought by Professor Ochanomizu, he gets the name Astro and everyone keeps calling him Astro. From the very beginning Astro is a symbol of purity. He was raised by Dr. Tenma with love and due to this care he started to be able understand what feelings are. After he learned to feel, Dr. Tenma showed him another human emotion: sadness. Due to never experiencing it, he did not know how to cry when he was sold to the robot merchant.⁹⁷

His "costume" is a symbol of purity. He is a robot in shorts and red boots that enable him to fly. He is not covered with any fabric which is a symbol of his honesty and the fact that he has nothing to hide or no reason to pretend. After he discovered his superpowers and got used to living with people he automatically started to help other

⁹⁵ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 39.

⁹⁶ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 9.

⁹⁷ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 29.

people because he could. He still behaves according to the robot laws such as robots exist to make people happy and it is prohibited to hurt someone. When some problem appeared he rushed into the scene of the crime and started to fight for peace. When a human is attacked by a robot, he fights the robot. When the robot is attacked by a human, he fights the human. He never kills, he only fights to the point that is necessary to stop his enemies. Astro was not denying that he is robot in spite of being raised like a human and Dr. Tenma never told him something like “You are a robot.” The target audience of this manga was supposed to be children so Osamu Tezuka did not want to include psychological drama into this so he kept the plot simple. Astro is never planning and very rarely thinking back just like children do. Beginning of his story is probably too much depressing for kids, but Tezuka draws these sad stories only in a few pages for example: Tobio’s dead body was shown only in one panel when Dr. Tenma was holding him in his arms but Tobio had not any bad visible injuries.⁹⁸

3.2.2.2 *Dr. Tenma*

Dr. Tenma is a scientist who is working with his team on various robot projects. His full name is unknown. There is not much historical background told about him but he is presented to have only one son Tobio. When he becomes obsessed with the thought of creating a robot to replace his son, he is portrayed with a foreboding face so the reader could understand that he is not a good character.⁹⁹ In spite of not doing a bad thing he knew that this idea is somewhat dark and selfish. When he was raising the robot Tobio he ignored the fact that he is not his real son. Dr. Tenma must have been influenced by the

⁹⁸ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 20.

⁹⁹ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 23.

death of his son more than people usually are and refuses the fact that he will never see him again. He was living in his imaginary world, hoping that he will make a real human due to his knowledge in the technological field.¹⁰⁰ In his subconscious mind, he must be aware of the reality, but he was too scared of it. When Astro was showing all the features that imply that he is not a real human being, Dr. Tenma finally had to face the fact that his real son is dead and he sank back into his sadness. In continued stories it is said that after Dr. Tenma sold Tobio, he started to be mentally unstable and went through a lot of depression. He left his position and vanished from the sight. In spite of this character being “on the scene” only for a short period of time he had a significant influence on the main character.

3.2.2.3 *Professor Ochanomizu*

Professor Ochanomizu is a new head of department of science after Dr. Tenma leaves. He is portrayed as the complete opposite of Dr. Tenma. He had a vision that robots and humans can coexist in one world and he believed that robots have real human feelings. He fights for robot rights, which is a topic that is brought up in this manga all the time. When he saw Astro in the circus and how he is not happy at all he decided to save him and create for him a real family because he believed that robots can also have a tendency to create families and feel the love. He is the symbol of hope and love in spite of having funny appearance in form of small chubby man with a big round nose.

¹⁰⁰ Tezuka, *Astro Boy*, 26.

4 COMPARISON OF SUPERMAN AND ASTRO BOY

Superman and Astro Boy are representing the first forerunners of comics trends in countries where they were created. Superman gave foundations to the Superheroes comics in America and Astro Boy was the first which influenced comics style which is now called manga.

While Superman was a symbol of strength and justice when America was going through hard times, Astro Boy was a symbol of innocence and peace which symbolized Tezuka's perception of occupation (he was more inspired than frightened). In this case, both works reflect the historical situation of their particular era, even though it was not the original intention of the authors.

The idea of the main protagonists of both comics is very similar on the first sight. Superman and also Astro are both characters with comparable superhero progress. At the beginning they considered themselves as humans with normal lives and grew up with love by their adoptive family: Superman with his parents Martha and Johnathan Kent and Astro with his father Dr. Tenma. Both of them thought about themselves as a normal human being and then, they became heroes overnight: Superman with the discovery of his superpowers and with help of parents, Astro with being adopted by his new father Professor Ochanomizu. Both of them immediately accepted their true identity and had a natural sense for using their superpowers for helping others. According to this their behavior and sense of justice is very similar in the terms of not being afraid to take responsibility for their superpowers and use them to help people.

Their abilities are also very similar: flying, enormous strength, amplified hearing and shooting lasers. All these superpowers are used only to stop enemies and help others and they do not to kill anybody. Superman has moral code from his parents, Astro Boy

follows the robot laws. In this case, both of them were restricted by rules that they decided to believe and observe. Superman's parents had a big influence on Superman and raised him with a legacy of being honest, rightful and loving. Superman respected his parents and loved them so this is why he decided to follow their words of wisdom. On the other hand, Astro was also restricted by rules, but by laws that applied to the whole city. He followed robot laws which proclaimed the prohibition of killing people and the regulation of serving people. Astro had his own consciousness so he could decide to rebel these rules but he did not do it. He voluntarily chose to follow these rules and to use his superpowers to help people. This free decision of being restricted and not using their powers imprudently made Superman and Astro strong protagonists.

Then we focus on the origin of the characters; Superman is an alien from another planet with superpowers inherited naturally from his home planet. He needs to eat, sleep and has emotions like everybody else around him and that makes him more relatable to the audience. However, Astro is a robot so it is natural that his body system is completely different from Superman's so there is no need for eating and sleeping at his side. The similar things that connect these two characters are their own consciousness and emotions. In spite of being alien and robot, they have developed human emotions and they are able to decide on their own.

Another difference is the choice of age of the protagonist. Superman is considered as a grown-up man that is able to take care of himself, he is living on his own, has a job and also is in love with a female protagonist while Astro is supposed to be a child that is always being taken cared of by somebody and his basement is his family home. Their age is also reflected in their behavior. Superman is acting responsibly as an adult and he is going to grow older while Astro has a playful character like a child and his body will never age. In spite of having different mental age and living situation, their purpose of fighting against

villains is their mutual characteristic. Every time when they are called by somebody, they will fly at the scene of crime and take care of the situation and it does not matter if it is a simple robbery or an alien invasion.

The costumes of these characters are also a great example of their different messages to the world. Superman is a symbol of strength and justice and has a muscular body with determinate posture. His costume was inspired by weightlifters so that is why he is dressed in close-fitting costume where his muscles are clearly visible. His cape was only a feature that is supposed to make flying scenes more dynamic and interesting. "S" sign on his chest is signification that he is proud of himself being a hero and want to become an iconic character for everyone. While Superman costume and appearance is very significant, the Astro Boy's costume does not have much variety. Astro has only shorts and boots which was part of his body. He was wearing clothes when he was in care of Dr. Tenma and he thought about himself as a human. After acceptance of his robot identity, he chooses not to wear clothes at all because it was something that robots are supposed to do. His "naked" presentation gives a meaning to his nature as a symbol of innocence, peace and honesty.

Costume analysis is giving us a question of living two lives. Superman is living his normal life as Clark Kent working in a newspaper publishing agency, dressed as a normal human being and wearing glasses. He is protecting his normal life and separating it from the time when he works as a superhero. On the other hand, Astro is well known to everybody so does not need to hide himself. He does not have any iconic superhero suit to show that he is the hero of the town because he shows what he has. Reasons for Superman's hiding are clearly media and people. He serves a big town where Superman became a superstar and he wants to preserve his calm life when he can walk down the street and nobody will recognize him. Astro was never presented as a famous entity of the city in spite of being only one robot that was saving the city from danger. Media did not have an

appearance here and also there was nothing shocking and revealing when Astro did not cover himself into mysterious coat like Superman did.

Antagonists are the last most significant difference. Each hero needs to have enemies to fight. In Superman there was a clear main villain Lex Luthor presented. Superman was dealing with many small issues and side villains through the whole time, but his main enemy was always Lex Luthor, who appeared from time to time to defeat Superman with his plan. Lex Luthor had body characteristic which were reflecting his character. Fleshy posture signaled his wealth, and red hair his dangerous personality. Reason why Luthor became Superman's main opponent is Luthor's desire of rule a whole city and to be the person who is respected the most. When Superman appeared and started being famous and receiving a positive response from citizens, Luthor started to feel a competition. After Superman got him arrested, Luthor had his goal clear and he was desperate to defeat Superman. When it comes to Astro Boy's main villain, it is hard to tell. Astro had many enemies to fight with but they appeared in one chapter or volume. Astro Boy is a symbol of peace after all, so there is not suppose to be some constant threat in the air. Feature that these two heroes have in common is their passivity in fighting against their enemies. Superman and Astro were never the first who started to fight or started to search for criminals. They were always present in their own lives and when something happened, they were ready to take an action. Luthor was also the only one who was determined to destroy Superman and he was also the first who had a showcase on the scene. Without his action Superman would never go and try to defeat him on his own. These aspects make Superman and Astro good and peaceful protagonists who are helping and not looking for troubles.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis was targeted on comparison of two main flagships of Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga: *Superman* and *Astro Boy*.

The first chapter was focused on description of comics and history of Anglo-American comics and Japanese manga. Comics is seen like “phenomenon of juxtaposing images” according to Randy Duncan and it is a form of sequential art. Scott McCloud's approach is also mentioned where sequential art and comics as such is somehow a free form of art where nobody stated the main rules. History of Anglo-American comics is dated here from year 1837 when Rodolphe Töpffer appeared until year 1938 when Superman was created. History of Japanese comics is dated here from 14th century with painted scrolls until year 1951 when Astro Boy was created. Important historic changes in sequential art are mentioned here as well as facts that led into creating Superman and Astro Boy. At the end of the chapter is a comparison of these two cultural streams which shows the fact that both countries were highly influenced by Europe.

The second chapter is a deep analysis of *Superman: Man of Steel* by John Byrne but the main focus is on the creators of the Superman character Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel. Their life is described here from the times when they became friends and started to publish comics issues at school to their creation of Superman. Next part of this chapter describes the story from its beginning, important events and situations and also characterizations of the main characters are included.

The third chapter is analyzing work of Osamu Tezuka *Tetsuwan Atom* translated by Frederick Lowell Schodt as *Astro Boy*. Osamu Tezuka was a talented person who learned to draw by himself without attending any specialized school so that is the reason why his life is described here from his elementary school until Astro Boy publishing in the era of “American occupation”. Frederick L. Schodt was in charge of translating Astro Boy into

English and he decided to cooperate with Tezuka himself and became his friend and also interpreter so that is the reason why the information about him is covered here. Rest of the chapter is devoted to “Astro Boy” story where we use the original translation from Frederick L.Schodt and its character analysis.

The fourth and the last part of this bachelor’s thesis covers the main purpose and that is the comparison of *Superman* and *Astro Boy*. All information that was described in separate chapters about these two comics is used in this comparison. Both works could be considered as hero-type comics with similar features on the first sight and they are reflecting historical era of the time when they were created. On the other hand, there is a big difference in the symbolic meaning. While Superman stands for “strength and justice”, Astro Boy represents “innocence and purity”. Focus of attention was put on comparing and contrasting two main characters Superman and Astro because their messages and existence gave foundations to their next successors which carry on the legacy until today.

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