КУРСОВА РОБОТА

з історії зарубіжної літератури

на тему: The Evolution of Superhero Image in Literary Tradition

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Київ – 2024

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INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, superheroes have become not just an element of popular culture but a symbol that embodies national and global aspects of human ideals, dreams, and aspirations. Superhero narratives have gained worldwide popularity, transforming from an American phenomenon into a universal cultural code. The images of superheroes, their actions, motivations, conflicts, and interactions with other characters play a crucial role in shaping societal values and norms, making their study significant not only in the context of literary studies but also in broader cultural and sociological aspects.

The relevance of this research is revealed in understanding the complex interplay between the literary images of superheroes and the cultural-social processes of contemporary society. Literary images of superheroes play a significant role not only in entertainment but also in shaping and reflecting cultural norms and social relationships. These characters serve as cultural markers that symbolize ideals, fears, moral dilemmas, and collective aspirations, thereby contributing to the strengthening or reevaluation of value orientations in society.

In the context of globalization and rapid technological development, superheroes serve as universal symbols that help integrate diverse cultural identities. Their stories highlight global issues such as justice, freedom, and moral responsibility, offering a platform for discussing current social challenges that affect various peoples and cultures. Superheroes often act as cultural mediators, facilitating better understanding and acceptance of diversity on an international level.

Research into the evolution of superhero images allows us to identify key changes in collective consciousness, as well as the impact of media on shaping the image of the modern individual. This process involves analyzing how ideas and ideals embedded in literary and cinematographic images transform into everyday values and behavioral norms. This is particularly noticeable in how cultural products influence personality formation, especially among the younger generation growing up in a world where media is one of the key sources of information and education.

The degree of development of the problem of superhero image evolution in literary tradition remains understudied, particularly among domestic researchers. A significant portion of the academic community has focused on the general influence of popular culture on society, while specific aspects related to the evolution of literary superhero characters have remained on the periphery of research interest. This creates a vacuum in the deep understanding of how specifically literary images influence the formation of cultural and social norms.

Our research makes a significant contribution to filling this gap, as it is quite innovative. It focuses on a detailed analysis of the superhero image, particularly Superman, who appeared in the Action Comics series. These comics have become

the basis for our study as they are not only the founders of the superhero adventure genre but also contain multi-layered narratives that reflect social changes and cultural transformations over decades.

The aim of the research is to analyze the transformation of superhero images in literary tradition, with a focus on a character such as Superman.

To achieve the aim of the research, the following tasks need to be completed:

– identify the unique origins of Superman in American culture;
– determine the traits of national identity embodied in superhero images;
– explore the role of the comic book genre in shaping the American character;
– assess the impact of American cinematography on the image of Superman;
– analyze the image of Superman in Action Comics;
– conduct an analysis of the main supervillains in Action Comics;
– identify the characteristics of the evolution of Superman's beliefs.

The object of research is superhero image in American literature and popular culture.

The subject of the study is the evolution of the image of Superman as a reflection of cultural changes in society.

Research methods include the analysis of literary texts (comics), cultural and sociological analysis, and methods of comparative and historical analytics. Content analysis of comics is also used to identify key changes in the representation of Superman.

Structure of the work. The work consists of an introduction; the first chapter is focused on identifying the unique origins of the superhero image and its impact on American identity; the second chapter includes an analysis of Action Comics in general about Superman, his evolution, and characteristics; conclusions and a list of references are provided.

CHAPTER 1. THE IMAGE OF A SUPERMAN THROUGH THE PRISM OF TIME: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

1.1 The superhero concept in American culture: origins and typology

Superheroes are a significant element of American popular culture, with their influence evident in numerous aspects of social life and collective consciousness. Their emergence and development occur against the backdrop of major historical periods, reflecting changes in ideological, social, and technological orientations of society.

The founders of this image, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, chose comics as a medium for their creativity, partly due to cultural and personal circumstances. Antisemitism, prevalent in newspaper publishing, magazines, and advertising agencies at the time, limited their opportunities for self-expression, while the world of comic publishing was largely open to Jews. There is a high probability that without such discrimination, Superman might have appeared in a pulp fiction magazine, which could have significantly limited his impact and popularity [36]. Siegel and Shuster, as the founders of the Superman image, are considered pioneers in the world of superheroes, becoming prototypes for future characters of this genre.

In his study «The Ten-Cent Plague», David Hajdu quotes Bob Oksner, an artist who worked in the industry during the same period as Superman creators — Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster: *«I have no doubt that Jerry saw Superman as a sort of embodiment of his own image or his fantasies about himself. Jerry was Jewish, as was I — as many were at that time — and the rest were Italians. Superman was the story of an unjustly oppressed person who knew that ultimately he could prevail, whoever that person might be»* [24, p. 30].

The science fiction origins of Superman are not surprising, considering the genres of pulp magazines, films, and radio broadcasts that captivated Siegel. The character «Superman» became a synthesis of various ideas that dominated the pop culture of the 1930s — a powerful defender of the helpless (like Tarzan by Burroughs or Doc Savage from Street and Smith — the «Man of Bronze» with the first name Clark), a hero with a secret identity (Zorro in film, The Shadow and The Green Hornet on radio, The Spider in pulp magazines), and a masked fighter against crime [12].

Like Tarzan and other heroes, Superman acted as a protector of those in need. He concealed his identity to protect those to whom he felt affection, as well as to realize Siegel's personal vision of the «ordinary man» who was «special». Most of the key ideas and themes that underpinned the character were developed specifically by Siegel [24, p. 33]. Joe Shuster was responsible for the visual embodiment of the character, particularly his physical form. Like Siegel, he read pulp magazines and had a broad interest in bodybuilding.

Superman, created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, is a vivid symbol of the immigrant experience in the American «melting pot». As the ultimate immigrant from another planet, Superman not only symbolizes the crossing of continents and oceans but also embodies the journey across the universe to America — the country of immigrants. This metaphor deeply resonates with the personal stories of the creators, who felt themselves to be part of marginalized communities in their new home.

Superman's home planet, Krypton, which was disintegrating from within, serves as a metaphor for Europe at the time, which was also experiencing great upheavals. The depiction of Krypton reflects the theme of fleeing a destructive homeland in search of a better future, a key aspect of the immigrant experience.

Like many young talents of their time, Siegel and Shuster aimed to break into the not yet fully legitimized comic book industry [15]. Their persistence in submitting manuscripts, despite numerous rejections, reflects their dedication to the art and unwavering belief in their ideas, illustrating a broader theme of resilience in difficult conditions.

A decisive moment of inspiration for creating the character Superman occurred during a sleepless night when Siegel focused on developing dramatic elements for the comic. This moment of idea crystallization illustrates how personal experiences and creative challenges influence creativity, transforming personal experiences into cultural symbols [17].

Superman and many characters created in his mold, in one form or another, utilize a combination of seven tropes defined in Richard Reynolds' book «Superheroes: Modern Mythology» [32]. The hero, an outcast from society, possesses powers similar to those of earthly gods or deities, and is dedicated to justice, not merely human law, though the hero does not refuse to serve the human legal system if its laws align with his sense of justice. In the role of a hero, he stands out among ordinary people, but his alter-ego, at best, is mundane. Finally, in stories about superheroes, magic and science go hand in hand, and the line between them is often blurred [32].

Superman, created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, represents much more than just a comic book character. He reflects cultural and historical themes that were relevant to his creators and their audience at the time. His story begins with the tragic destruction of his native planet, Krypton, which forces his parents to send their little son to Earth in hopes of a better future. This detail points to strong parallels with themes of immigration and seeking refuge, making him the «ultimate American immigrant», even «patron of immigrants», as noted in comments by De Haven [17].

Once on Earth, Superman develops ideals of American self-sufficiency and idealism, living according to his principles while maintaining the ability to operate within the laws if they align with his moral beliefs. His powers, developed under the influence of the increased gravity on Krypton, enable him to perform

extraordinary acts such as leaping great distances, lifting heavy weights, and running faster than an express train.

The superhero does not operate within the confines of the law, he acts as a vigilante, guided by his own moral code. This characteristic makes him similar to mythological heroes, who often possess magical or supernatural abilities. In comics, science becomes the new magic, contributing to Reynolds' phrase about «modern mythology» [32].

Superman's influence is also seen in the creation of other characters such as Batman, who lost his parents at a young age, Robin, whose parents were killed by the mafia, and Spider-Man, who was raised by an uncle and aunt [34]. Each of these characters has unique abilities and circumstances, but they share a common origin as orphaned heroes who fight for justice, often stepping outside the law (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Typological evolution of the superhero image in American culture

Period	Key events	Cultural impact
1930s (Origination)	The Great depression	Emergence of heroes as symbols of hope and justice
1940s (Golden age)	World War II	Heroes reflect national patriotism
1950s – 1960s (Silver age)	Cold war, Space race	Introduction of more complex plots, new technologies
1980s to present	Social changes, globalization	Expansion of heroic archetypes, increased realism

Source: [16]

Superheroes, who have become a significant element of American culture, play an important role in shaping mass consciousness and reflect socio-historical changes in society. Originating during the Great depression, the first superheroes, such as Superman, embodied ideals of justice and hope, offering a distraction from the difficulties of real life. The further evolution of superheroes occurred under the influence of major global events such as World War II and the Cold War, which led to the emergence of patriotic heroes and characters with more complex personal dilemmas.

Superheroes not only reflect existing social moods but also shape moral guidelines, offering models for emulation or reflection. Their impact on popular culture and social changes underscores the importance of superheroes as cultural artifacts that contribute to strengthening identity and community in contemporary conditions.

1.2 National identity traits embodied in superheroes' images

Superheroes, who first appeared on the pages of comics, quickly became more than just entertainment, they transformed into cultural symbols that reflect and shape the national identity and values of the countries where they were created. In the United States of America, superheroes such as Superman, Captain America, and Batman have become embodiments of American ideals. Their stories and characters reinforce key American values such as freedom, justice, and individualism, playing an important role in the myth-making of modern America.

Table 1.2 Traits of American national identity embodied in superhero images

Traits of identity	Characteristics
Individualism	Superheroes such as Superman and Batman are depicted as strong individualists who independently solve problems and face challenges. This reflects the American value of self-sufficiency and personal freedom.
Pursuit of justice	Heroes like Superman and Captain America fight for justice, often in opposition to corrupt systems or criminals. This emphasizes the American ideal of a rule of law and the supremacy of legal rights.
Patriotism	Characters like Captain America explicitly symbolize national pride and patriotism, incorporating national symbols in their costumes and ideals.
Melting pot	The story of Superman as an immigrant from another planet who becomes a hero of his new homeland reflects the American myth of the melting pot, where diverse cultures unite into a new society.
Innovation and advanced technologies	Characters like Iron Man (Tony Stark) exemplify the American value of innovation and technological progress. Stark, as a brilliant engineer, creates advanced technologies to combat evil.

Source: [19], [20]

American superheroes not only embody entertainment and fantasy, but they also serve as means of expressing and analyzing national identity and cultural ideals. Through the activities and characteristics of characters like Superman, Captain America, Batman, and Iron Man, one can identify key features that shape American society (see Table 1.2).

Individualism is a fundamental value of American culture, deeply rooted in its historical development and social psychology. American superheroes such as Superman and Batman are archetypes of the individualistic hero. They often act independently, without support or assistance from the government or other authoritative structures, solving problems and overcoming obstacles through their

own efforts, intellect, and moral convictions [23]. This ability for self-sufficiency and self-governance reflects the American idea of the importance of personal responsibility and freedom — fundamental elements of the American dream.

The pursuit of justice in American culture is often depicted through the image of superheroes who stand against corruption and injustice, often bypassing traditional legal routes. Superman and Captain America not only fight everyday crime, but they use their powers to correct systemic flaws and protect the defenseless.

These actions symbolize a deep respect for the American ideal of the rule of law, where truth and justice must be upheld regardless of personal loss or threats. This reflects an enduring belief that every individual has a right to justice, which is fundamental to the American government and its constitutional principles.

Patriotism in contemporary American media is often embodied through charismatic characters like Captain America. His image and symbolism not only reflect but actively shape the national archetype of a defender of American values. He not only stands for ideals of justice and freedom but is also dressed in a costume reminiscent of the American flag, directly appealing to deeply ingrained symbols of national pride [25]. This visual connection with national symbols enhances his role as an embodiment of patriotism, giving him the status of a cultural icon who not only fights for American ideals but is also a living symbol of them.

The concept of the «melting pot» is embodied in the story of Superman, which reflects fundamental American beliefs about integration and acceptance. As an immigrant from another world, Superman adapts to life in America and becomes one of its most famous defenders. His story symbolizes the American dream of merging different cultures and creating a unified nation where everyone can find their place and contribute to a shared future. Thus, Superman becomes a symbol of American adaptability and integration, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and diversity.

Innovations and advanced technologies, represented through the character of Iron Man (Tony Stark), play a key role in shaping the American image as a world leader in scientific research and technological progress. Stark, as an inventor and entrepreneur, uses his developments to protect society and advance technological innovations, underscoring American values of enterprise and innovation. His character embodies the idea that American innovations are a force that can lead to social and cultural renewal.

Accordingly, American superheroes play a key role in shaping and reflecting American national identity. Their images actively represent values such as individualism, justice, patriotism, integration of diversity, and innovation. Superheroes reflect deeply rooted American ideals of self-sufficiency and personal freedom, support the rule of law, and embody patriotic sentiments, thereby reinforcing their role as cultural icons. Thus, they serve not only as entertainment

figures but also as means to reflect and express socio-cultural values in American society.

1.3 The genre of comics and its role in shaping the American character

A comic is a sequence of images, each complemented by short texts inside framed speech bubbles, reflecting the thoughts or words of characters. This combination creates a cohesive narrative story. Thus, a comic represents a literary-visual work that integrates a series of illustrations and textual elements.

According to S. Forsville, comics serve as a tool for conveying ideas through graphic images, which are often supplemented by text or other visual data. Typically, comics are presented in the form of a series of sequential panels [22].

D. Olshansky describes a comic «as a series of drawings united by a common plot and accompanied by text» [29, p. 37]. He also defines comics as an entertainment genre based on a sequence of images. In form and impact on perception, a comic resembles illustrations, but it often represents a combination of text and artistic graphics, making it a unique genre that is based on the interaction of arts and literature.

Within the scope of our study, we define a comic as a narrative presented in the form of illustrations, which integrates features of such art forms as literature and visual arts, combining them into a unified whole.

Comics can be described as a hybrid form that combines words and images, incorporating two narrative structures — one verbal and one visual. Time in comics advances through the organization of the page, which features a progressive counterpoint of presence and absence through filled panels (or frames) alternating with empty space. Text is often introduced through elements like speech balloons, captions, onomatopoeias, or graphonics, conveying dialogue, narrative, sound effects, or other relevant information. Images in comics are typically created using caricature and similar forms of illustration, such as fumetti, which use photographic images [18].

S. McCloud, who has used comics as a means to demonstrate how they create meaning, emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between form and content [27]. Over several decades, comics have served as a platform for telling diverse stories, from horror and science fiction to children's tales about «funny animals», superheroes, and their adventures. Since the 1970s, there has been an increase in the number of comic creators using this medium to produce works in more serious genres, such as historical narratives, reportage, memoirs, and biographies.

Although the term «comic» originates from a word meaning humorous or comic, which was common in early American newspaper comics, it has also come to be used to denote non-humorous works. In English, terms from the original

languages are often used to refer to comics from different cultures, such as «manga» for Japanese comics and «bande dessinée» for French comics.

In the scholarly study of comics, there is a debate over whether comics should be considered a genre of literature, given their significant cultural value. Some theorists, such as C. Forsville [22] and J. Dittmar [18], argue that comics can be classified as literary works since they use images that function as language.

However, there are also conflicting opinions among comic scholars and beyond. For example, D. Walk believes that it is erroneous to equate comics with literature. He explains that although comics share many characteristics with literature — such as the use of words, publication in book form, and the presence of narrative content — they should not be considered a higher literary form, comparing them with cinema or opera, which are also considered literary forms [37].

Despite opposition from some philosophers and literary theorists, such as J. Petty and A. Meskin, the broad range of proposed definitions of literature suggests that comics can be classified as a distinct literary genre [28, pp. 221]. In the context of our study, we also support the view that comics are a genre of literature.

Table 1.3 Genres of comics

№	Genre	Description
1	Science fiction	Focuses on futuristic technologies, space travel, and alien civilizations.
2	Horror	Includes elements of fear and mystical scenarios, often featuring monsters and supernatural beings.
3	Military-themed comics	Concentrates on military conflicts, combat actions, and military history.
4	Teen humor	Targeted at a youthful audience, includes light-hearted and comedic situations.
5	Crime	Centers on criminal stories, detective work, and investigations.
6	Romance	Highlights romantic relationships, love adventures, and emotional interactions.
7	Western	Depicts life in the Wild West, featuring cowboys, duels, and adventures in open landscapes.

Source: [27]

The comic book genre plays a significant role in shaping American character, influencing cultural norms, values, and identity. Comics, which emerged in America in the early 20th century, became not only a popular form of entertainment but also a powerful means of social influence. They offer a broad

spectrum of themes and characters that reflect American ideals, struggles, dreams, and fears (see Table 1.3).

During global conflicts, particularly during World War II, comics served as a tool for propaganda aimed at boosting national spirit and supporting military efforts. Heroes like Captain America were not only depicted as warriors against external threats but also as symbols of American bravery and dedication to the ideals of freedom and justice. These characters helped shape public opinion, emphasizing the importance of national unity and support for military efforts.

Comics also play a crucial role in reflecting and influencing social changes. They become a platform for discussing and highlighting issues related to race, gender, inclusivity, and social justice. Characters like Black Panther and Wonder Woman were introduced at times when the movements for minority and women's rights were gaining momentum, demonstrating that comics can serve not only as entertainment but also as an important means of social commentary and human rights advocacy.

Comics often provide a clear moral compass, presenting the conflict between good and evil through their characters. Heroes like Superman or Batman embody American values of honesty, justice, and responsibility [29]. Through their adventures and trials, comics educate generations of readers in the spirit of understanding the importance of moral responsibility. These characters become role models, inspiring youth to fight for justice and help others.

The theme of self-actualization and the transformation of ordinary people into heroes is one of the central ideas in American comics. This theme not only reflects fundamental aspects of the American Dream but also embodies the notion that every individual has the potential to achieve greatness, provided they have perseverance and moral integrity [30]. Comics often depict characters who undergo significant trials or acquire supernatural abilities, which help them resolve conflicts and confront evil. These narratives emphasize the importance of personal willpower and the potential of every individual to change the world for the better. Such stories not only entertain but also serve as a source of inspiration, motivating readers to believe in their own strength and encouraging self-improvement and personal growth.

On the other hand, comics have played a significant role in the process of cultural export, spreading American values, stereotypes, and ideals beyond the country's borders. Thanks to the film industry, television, and other forms of media, comic book characters have become globally recognized icons. This has not only contributed to the international success of these characters but also provided a platform for the dissemination of the American way of thinking, showcasing ideas of freedom, justice, and equality. As a crucial element of global cultural dynamics, comics have become a tool through which America could influence international policy of ideas, shaping not only perceptions of American culture but also facilitating the understanding and acceptance of American values in various parts of the world.

Accordingly, comics, as a significant element of American culture, play a fundamental role in shaping national identity and values. This genre not only provides entertainment but also serves as an important means of social influence, supporting the national spirit during military conflicts and fostering social changes. Comics effectively use visual and textual narratives to highlight important moral lessons and educate the public on principles of honesty, justice, and equality. Simultaneously, they are a key element of American cultural export, shaping international perceptions of the American character and ideals. Thus, comics not only mirror the American Dream but also actively participate in the global cultural dialogue.

1.4 The influence of American cinematography on the image of Superman

American cinema has had a significant impact on the shaping and evolution of the image of Superman, expanding his cultural influence and adapting the character to the changing conditions and expectations of the modern audience. This process illustrates how filmmaking not only transforms the visual embodiment of comic book heroes but also enhances their social and cultural impact.

The visualization of the character is one of the key aspects through which cinematography has influenced the image of Superman. Starting in the 1940s, when Superman first appeared on screen in a serial with Kirk Alyn, and continuing in the 1950s with the television series starring George Reeves, cinema was able to breathe new life into this character. These early adaptations made Superman more visual and dynamic, allowing viewers to observe his superpowers in real time [11]. This not only solidified him as a symbol of American heroism but also elevated the character's popularity, transforming him into a more recognizable and influential cultural figure.

The cinematic portrayal of the character made him more accessible and relatable to a wider audience, offering a more multidimensional and emotionally resonant image. For example, cinema allowed the exploration of Superman psychological aspects, including his struggle with personal identity and the responsibility of using his powers.

The development of Superman's character through American cinema is a key element in enriching the character and his interaction with the audience. Films and television shows, particularly those created by Richard Donner in the 1970s, provided an opportunity for a deeper understanding of Superman psychological aspects [26]. Depicting his struggle with personal identity, his feelings for Lois Lane, and the moral dilemmas he faces significantly expanded the character's portrayal, adding human vulnerability and depth. This not only made Superman more realistic and relatable but also allowed viewers to establish a more personal connection with the hero.

Cinematic adaptations of Superman have also played a significant role in reflecting changes in societal values and ideals. The recent film adaptations created by Zack Snyder present Superman in a much darker and more complex context. The portrayal of the hero in films such as «Man of Steel» and «Batman vs Superman: Dawn of Justice» shows him grappling with moral dilemmas and experiencing deep internal conflicts. This representation integrates modern issues such as isolation, the responsibility that comes with great power, and the ethical challenges of heroism, moving away from the traditional image of an all-powerful and invariably positive hero.

The globalization of Superman's image is a fundamental aspect of his evolution, driven by American cinema. Through the global popularity of American films, Superman has transformed from an American national hero into a global symbol, known and respected in every corner of the world [11]. This process has not only expanded his influence but also changed the perception of the character from a traditional defender of American values to a fighter for global justice and peace.

Superman, originally created as an embodiment of American ideals of strength, bravery, and integrity, has begun to be associated with universal principles of human rights, freedom, and equality in a global context. His stories, where he fights against tyranny, protects the weak, and stands for justice, resonate with audiences regardless of national borders. This universality of the character not only contributes to his popularity but also makes him an important cultural artifact used to promote positive changes and social progress on an international level.

Cinematic depictions of Superman, which show his struggle with global challenges such as crime, environmental disasters, and international terrorism, present him as a hero of the modern era, whose actions exceed national limitations. Such portrayals contribute to the formation of a collective consciousness and encourage global responsibility and cooperation.

American cinema has significantly influenced the development and transformation of Superman image, turning him from a national hero into a global symbol. The film industry has not only enriched the visual embodiment of Superman but also greatly deepened the characterization of the character, adding emotional depth and complexity to his motivations and actions. This has allowed audiences to better identify with the hero, seeing him not only as a flawless superhero but as a character who has his own doubts and ethical reflections.

Accordingly, the role of cinematography in the globalization of Superman image is also important, as it has helped spread his influence beyond America, making the character an embodiment of universal values such as justice, hope, and the fight for good. Through cinema, Superman has become not just an American symbol but an icon known and respected worldwide, facilitating cultural exchange and mutual understanding among peoples.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

Superman emerged during the difficult times of the Great Depression as a symbol of hope and justice, embodying American values such as individualism, a quest for justice, and patriotism. This character became not just an entertaining figure but also a means of social influence, prompting discussions and solutions to issues related to race, gender, inclusivity, and social justice. For example, characters like Black Panther and Wonder Woman appeared at crucial moments for the movements for minority and women's rights.

Comics, as a genre, play a significant role in shaping American character, offering readers a variety of themes and characters that reflect the ideals, fears, and dreams of American society. They serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as an important tool for social influence, maintaining the national spirit during military conflicts and fostering social change.

Cinema also has a significant impact on the portrayal of Superman, expanding his cultural influence and adapting the character to changing conditions and contemporary audience expectations. Movies not only transformed the visual representation of comic book heroes but also enriched their social and cultural impact, making Superman more accessible and multifaceted to a global audience. Due to the global popularity of American films, Superman has transformed from an American national hero into a global symbol, known and respected worldwide.

Thus, Superman embodies American ideals of strength, courage, and integrity, adapting to universal principles of human rights, freedom, and equality in a global context. His stories, where he fights against tyranny, defends the weak, and advocates for justice, resonate with audiences regardless of national borders, contributing to his popularity and role in shaping cultural diplomacy on an international level.

CHAPTER 2. SUPERMAN AS AMERICAN IDOL IN ACTION COMICS

2.1 American character embodied in the image of a Superman in Action comics

Created on the eve of war, Superman quickly became more than just a superhero — he transformed into a symbol of the American spirit, embodying ideals of bravery, justice, and sacrifice, which became crucial during wartime challenges. Utilizing comics as a mass communication medium, the U.S. government employed Superman to support military efforts and boost national morale, forming part of a larger strategy of war propaganda. This reflected not only the scale of popular culture's impact on society but also the specific role of comics in shaping public opinion during critical times.

On December 7, 1941, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor became a critical point in American involvement in World War II. President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed this date «a day which will live in infamy», prompting Americans to unite and enter the conflict on the side of the Allies. The next day, Congress approved the military declaration, and in the following years, mass media, including comics, were actively used for wartime propaganda. The war in Europe had already been ongoing for two years following Germany's attack on Poland in 1939. During this time, while the U.S. supported European allies, American involvement in the war remained passive.

The events at Pearl Harbor brought military actions to the forefront and became a symbol of national unity. War propaganda comics reflected this dynamic, with heroes like Superman fighting against America's enemies, from Hitler and the Nazis to the Japanese, fostering loyalty and determination among Americans to support military efforts.

The issue of Action Comics №43, which appeared shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, contained a typical story about Superman investigating a series of suspicious aviation accidents [4]. This issue was the first in the series to feature an advertisement for defense stamps. At the end of each episode, the hero addressed his followers — the «Supermen of America» — with a letter urging them to support the national defense by purchasing defense stamps. In these appeals, he motivated both children and adults to invest at least twenty-five cents in the cause of national security, encouraging them to *«Let's put our quarters and dollars to work for Uncle Sam!»* [4].

From this point on, the image of Superman began to be actively used to demonstrate patriotism and served as a voice of the government, reminding Americans of the importance of supporting state efforts (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Key features of Action Comics issue №43

Feature	Description
Plot	The main story focuses on Superman investigating a series of suspicious aviation accidents, typical of his narratives aimed at uncovering crimes or mysteries.
Defense stamp advertisement	For the first time in the series, an advertisement for defense stamps appears, reflecting the impact of the Pearl Harbor attack on American society and media as part of funding war efforts.
Address to readers	Superman concludes each comic with a letter to his readers, known as «Supermen of America», urging them to buy defense stamps as a patriotic engagement following the national shock.
Patriotism and civic duty	Superman acts not only as a superhero but also as a voice of the government, encouraging support for military efforts and demonstrating civic responsibility, reflecting the role of popular culture in shaping public opinion during crises.

Source: [4]

In January 1942, the cover of issue №44 featured Superman fighting Nazi soldiers for the first time. Until this point, while the U.S. adhered to a policy of relative neutrality, enemy military forces on comic covers remained anonymous [5]. However, with the declaration of war, the Nazis on the cover were clearly identified by red armbands with swastikas.

Similar to the previous issue, in this issue Superman continues to encourage young readers to purchase war bonds. A new element in his address emphasizes the «seriousness» of the European conflict, using this as a call to commitment to all national institutions, including education, public life, and religious directives, and to make a personal contribution to the national victory.

Issue №47, dedicated to the «Supermen of America», is a vivid example of the wartime propaganda used by comics of that era [6]. This letter was one of the most compelling appeals published up to that time. It motivated youth to engage in volunteer activities in organizations such as the Red Cross or to become junior wardens during air raids, emphasizing their real opportunity to serve their country.

The letter also urged young Americans to be proud of their nationality, to disregard skeptics who doubted America's role in the war, and to keep military information secret to prevent its spread among hidden enemies. It reminded them of Pearl Harbor and called them to follow the motto of «*strength, courage, and justice*» [6].

This reflected the general sentiments in American society during World War II, where wartime propaganda fostered a critical attitude towards those who did not support the military actions and was aimed at bolstering readiness to defend the nation. Additionally, to inspire youth to join the fight, mini-stories about real

soldiers titled «Supermen of the U.S. Army» were added after Superman's adventures, which told of the heroism of American soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country and those who continued the struggle.

These stories convinced readers not to let these sacrifices be in vain and to continue supporting the military efforts, suggesting that they too could become heroes like Superman, defending their country and the world (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Patriotism and military propaganda in Action Comics №44 and №47

Issue number	Cover	Patriotic appeals	Support of national values	Features
Action Comics #44	Superman fighting Nazi soldiers identified by swastikas.	Superman urges youth to purchase war bonds and highlights the seriousness of the European conflict.	Emphasis on the importance of supporting national institutions and demonstrating commitment to the country.	Superman serves as a symbol of American courage and heroism.
Action Comics #47		Call for youth to volunteer with the Red Cross and to be junior wardens during air raids.	Emphasis on national pride, urging to ignore skeptics and keep military information secret.	Calls for active participation in the country and support for military efforts.

Source: [5], [6]

In some issues, such as №52, stories address problems encountered abroad [7]. In this issue, Superman defeats a villain who calls himself the Emperor of America and seeks to turn America into a dictatorship. This plot reflects American fears at the time about the tyranny that could emerge if they were defeated in the war. Superman is also known for his direct battles with the Nazis, including fictional scenarios where he defeats Hitler himself, or participates in repelling an advance of tanks and soldiers, defending democratic values.

In Action Comics №62, Superman directly confronts a Nazi prisoner of war who has taken the crew of a fishing boat hostage, including Lois Lane, after they unintentionally rescued him from the sea [8].

The Nazi antagonist is depicted in a highly theatrical manner, with an exaggerated accent and distinct charisma, enhancing his caricature. He tells Lois and the crew members that their «weak sentiments» are a weakness of democracy and predicts that Americans would have to serve Hitler if the Nazis win the war. Lois responds that they would rather die than betray their country.

This story uses depictions of Nazis to show Americans the enemies they are dealing with and reinforces the idea of the value of devotion to one's country even at the cost of one's life.

When Superman arrives to rescue the hostages, he expresses deep disdain for the Nazi and his followers, referencing his non-human origin and Jewish creators, stating that he is not Aryan and questioning whether they truly know what it means to be a real human. This highlights Superman's position as a defender and a member of oppressed groups, setting him in opposition to those who claim to be the true superhumans.

The concluding moment of the issue dispels Americans' fears about a day when no one can protect them, stating that «*as long as evil is not dead but merely sleeps, there will always be Superman*» [8], affirming the existence of heroes ready to protect them at any moment (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Main features of Action comics No. 52 and No. 62

Publications	Feature	Characteristics
Action Comics #52	International concerns	The plot reflects fears of potential tyranny in case of defeat in the war. Superman defeats a villain trying to turn America into a dictatorship.
	Combatting nazism	Superman encounters nazis in fictional scenarios, defeating Hitler or fighting Nazi forces, defending democratic values.
Action Comics #62	Direct confrontation with a nazi	Superman faces a nazi who has captured a fishing boat crew, including Lois Lane, after they unwittingly rescued him from the sea.
	Caricature of a nazi	The antagonist is dramatically and caricaturally depicted, enhancing his portrayal as a symbol of evil.
	Moral values and patriotism	Lois Lane and the crew express willingness to die rather than betray their country, emphasizing the importance of patriotism and devotion.
	Superman as a defender of the oppressed	Superman highlights his non-human origin and refers to his Jewish creators, opposing nazi ideology and asserting himself as a defender.
	Reassuring conclusion	The issue ends with a reminder that «*while evil has not died but only sleeps, there will always be Superman*», offering hope and confidence to readers.

Source: [7], [8]

During World War II, the image of Superman in American comics transformed, reflecting the growing role of the United States on the international stage and internal changes in societal mood. This character, created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, became not only a superhero with extraordinary abilities but also a powerful symbol of national unity and patriotism. Superman's importance particularly increased after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the USA entered the

war. Comics featuring him began to be actively used to support military efforts, emphasizing national cohesion.

Superman served as a defender of democratic values, actively fighting not only traditional criminals but also ideological threats such as nazism and other forms of tyranny. His conflicts with such enemies, like Hitler or other figures symbolizing evil, positioned him as a moral opponent to anything that threatened freedom and democracy. This highlighted his role as a hero who defends not only American interests but also universal human values.

At the same time, Superman played the role of a voice for government propaganda, urging Americans to support military efforts through the purchase of defense stamps or other war bonds. His depiction in comics often came with direct calls to readers to support military efforts, acting as a national moral leader.

Superman also demonstrated a high level of personal responsibility and self-sacrifice. Through his actions and decisions, he embodied the ideals of dedication and readiness to protect the country from external threats. These qualities resonated with American citizens, who saw in his image the embodiment of the ideal American.

Superman's image encompassed the dimension of protecting the oppressed, which is particularly significant given his non-human origin and Jewish creators. He stood as a symbol of protection not only from physical evil but also from ideological harm, using his power to shield all who suffer from injustice and oppression. This added to his role as an ethical and moral leader, capable of standing against evil in all its forms.

Thus, Superman reflects the complex relationship between popular culture and national identity, serving as a key element in shaping American understandings of heroism, patriotism, and moral duty during times of great trials. In this regard, defining the characteristics of Superman's image in «Action Comics» during the war allows for a deeper understanding of how popular culture can influence societal moods and national identity. Superman did not just entertain, he educated, inspired, and, on some level, mobilized American society to support military actions, playing a crucial role in shaping the U.S. wartime discourse. This reflects both the ability of artistic images to impact real events and the importance of superhero narratives in modeling the national concept of heroism and moral responsibility.

2.2 A Superhero as a villain in Action comics

Amidst a cultural shift in the social sciences, comics have gained new significance as unique research objects that allow for a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics and their impact on society. This approach departs from traditional positivism, emphasizing the importance of narratives and myths that form the foundation of social life. Examining the broad reception of comics, especially among the younger generation, reveals how these stories reflect and shape cultural and moral codes.

Comics represent a significant resource in the context of the cultural turn in social sciences, characterized by a shift in research focus from positivist approaches to a deeper analysis of culture and its meanings towards the end of the 20th century. Cultural sociology points out that myths and narratives play a key role as fundamental structures shaping meanings in social life. In his lecture on «The Standing Woman» by Giacometti, Jeffrey Alexander proposes considering emblematic events as important elements that stand out in social life [9].

Experience nonverbally establishes social norms and values, as Alexander points out. He also refers to Danto analysis of «the disgusting» and «the displeasing» as aesthetic categories, as well as Simmel's consideration that «our perceptions are defined by differences» between higher and lower values [9].

This supports the theoretical view that comics can serve as a window into the existing, complex, and powerful moral fabric of American society, which in turn has helped to shape cultural moral codes [33].

Superhero comics, as conceptualized and developed through the prism of Superman, serve as a high-cultural contextual medium that reflects the fears, hopes, and values of certain groups, as well as their relationships with the broader American society. However, as Ursula Le Guin notes, «*to light a candle is to cast a shadow*» [35]. Indeed, a superhero as a bright light inevitably creates a long shadow. After all, who could stand against Superman? Or what could the world's greatest detective do? The world needed supervillains. The emergence of supervillains provides a unique perspective on the moral story and represents a powerful way to explore the implicit cultural codes that shape society.

In the original issues of Superman comics, enemies typically emerged from current socio-economic problems and did not recur in subsequent series. However, in June 1939, readers were introduced to the first recurring villain — «*Ultrahumanite*». In a plot where Superman pursues ordinary criminal racketeers, he encounters a bald man in a wheelchair.

The description of this figure particularly emphasizes his paralysis, while the man's «fiery eyes burn with terrible hatred and sinister intellect». This villain quickly reveals that he runs a large criminal organization, and characters like Reynolds (previously introduced as a racketeer) are merely his underlings.

He candidly identifies himself, without hiding behind ambiguities, introducing a new element to the world of comics: *«They call me Ultrahumanite, why? Because as a result of a scientific experiment, I have gained the nimblest and smartest brain on Earth! Unfortunately for humanity, I prefer to use this great intellect for crime. My goal? World domination!!»* [1].

In issue №23 of Action Comics, we first encounter Lex Luthor. He is initially presented as an «unspeakably terrifying vision» with a face that radiates horror, though his true identity remains a mystery. Superman attempts to expose his plans by investigating a conspiracy that pushes nations toward war and assassins who remain silent out of fear of death. Lois Lane is the first to encounter Luthor, calling him a «terrible creature». When Luthor introduces himself, he does so plainly: *«Appears to be just a man, but gifted with the mind of a genius. With my scientific discoveries, I plan to become the supreme ruler of the world!»* [2].

The following month after the comic about Ultrahumanite, another well-known antagonist appears in the first issue of Batman — the Joker. In analyzing the early enemies of both our heroes, several key common characteristics can be observed. The first thing that stands out is their physical defects. These anomalies are constantly emphasized, whether it be scars, disabilities, or a terrifying smile. Secondly, most of these villains possess a genius intellect and use science to achieve their selfish goals.

Supernatural abilities among the villains often play a secondary role, indicating a close connection between physical condition, desires, and morality: *«Once again, a master criminal stalks the city streets — a criminal who weaves a web of death around him... leaving stunned victims with the terrible smile of a clown. The mark of death from the Joker!»* [10].

The Joker is one of the most famous and charismatic supervillains in the world of comics, created for DC Comics. He first appeared in Batman Action Comics №1 in 1940, created by writer Bill Finger along with artist Bob Kane and inker Jerry Robinson.

The Joker is Batman's archenemy and is known for his psychopathic nature and propensity for mass murder. He embodies chaos and anarchy, making him unpredictable and particularly dangerous. His appearance is inspired by the joker from playing cards, and his face is always depicted as pale with a terrifying smile, complemented by dyed green hair and bright red lips.

He does not possess supernatural abilities, but his intellect, cunning, and psychological manipulations make him extremely dangerous. The Joker often uses various chemical weapons, the most famous of which is his «laughing gas» that causes his victims to laugh to death.

Over the years, the Joker has become one of the most recognizable characters in culture, appearing in numerous movies, TV shows, video games, and other media. His complex personality and motivations have been explored in many stories, making him one of the most interesting villains in the world of comics.

Based on the analysis of supervillains, we identify their characteristics (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Key characteristics of supervillains in comics

Aspect	Description
Complex motivations	Villains have deep, multifaceted reasons for their actions, often rooted in personal traumas or losses.
Genius intellect	Utilize their exceptional intellect to devise complex criminal plans.
Use of science and technology	Employ scientific knowledge and technological innovations to achieve their goals.
Physical characteristics	Possess distinctive physical features that make their appearance more threatening and unpredictable.
Moral dilemmas	Their actions can provoke moral reflections in readers, adding depth to their characters.
Social impact	Their actions often reflect current social issues and societal critiques.
Unpredictability and danger	Characterized by unpredictable behavior and the ability to cause large-scale disasters.

Source: created by the author based on their own research

Studying the role of comics within the context of the cultural turn in social sciences, one can conclude that comics, as a mass communication medium, play a key role in shaping and expressing cultural narratives and social values. Superheroes and supervillains, such as those appearing in Action Comics, not only entertain readers but also reflect and reinterpret societal fears, hopes, and ideals.

Characters like Superman create conditions for the emergence of antagonists who, in turn, play an equally important role in constructing the narrative of comics. These supervillains allow for a deeper dive into the analysis of moral and aesthetic categories of «the disgusting» and «the displeasing», which in turn play a role in the cultural and moral dimensions of American society.

Accordingly, comics, especially those focusing on the clash between superheroes and supervillains, provide a unique view of moral and cultural dilemmas, reflecting and simultaneously shaping societal values and relations, which is an important element in contemporary social sciences.

2.3 The Character of Superman — From republican ideals to democratic beliefs

Discussing Superman's political beliefs is an intriguing element in analyzing the cultural impact of superheroes. Some fans claim that Superman is a Republican, given his defense of national values and the embodiment of the «American way», which has nationalist roots. Others argue that such a statement may be premature. They point out that while Superman appears focused on solving problems in the big city of Metropolis and rarely ventures elsewhere, this does not necessarily indicate his Republican preferences.

Some arguments for his Republicanism are considered well-founded by readers. For example, Superman's close association with American symbolism might hint at a tendency toward Republican beliefs. However, other arguments are considered either absurd, such as references to Superman growing up in Kansas, a state traditionally supportive of Republicans, or based on the fact that Republicans tend to live in rural areas, where Superman was raised in Smallville, or trivial and based only on minor details. For instance, in the movie «Man of Steel», the hero appears in a church, which led to conclusions about his possible religious beliefs, stereotypically associated more with republicans than democrats.

Among the arguments about Superman's political affiliation, a notable moment from Frank Miller's graphic novel «The Dark Knight Returns», where Superman follows Ronald Reagan's orders, prompted many to believe such an act is uncharacteristic of a Democrat.

In this work, the character of Superman lacks seriousness and independence. Could Frank Miller create a satirical image of Superman in one comic, and then portray him from another perspective? Miller uses a generalized image of the hero as seen by most — a patriot ready to destroy Soviet troops at Reagan's command, and then, at his behest, attempts to kill Batman, Superman's friend. This entire portrayal of the hero, as well as his Republican preferences, are contrived.

As for the unusual argument about his rural upbringing, over time Superman leaves his family home and moves to the big city, symbolically rejecting the Republican lifestyle he is sometimes described as having.

By the 1980s, Superman's depiction had traits of a devoted Republican — in the comics, he fervently defended the interests of the USA, working exclusively for the good of the country. However, over time this image became less relevant, and new variations of the hero began to reflect democratic principles on which he is now based. For example, in Action Comics Annual №3, Superman takes on the role of the President of the USA, and one of his first decisions is to eliminate nuclear weapons in the USA and around the world, which is uncharacteristic for Republicans [3].

Also, in one issue, Superman renounced his American citizenship, opting for cosmopolitanism, which aligns with democratic ideology. This marked shift in the

comic creators' view of the character symbolizes his transformation from a national hero of America to a defender of global peace. Superman becomes not limited to one country, his scope of activity significantly expands, moving away from the image of a hero who blindly obeyed Republican presidents (see Table 2.5).

Table 2.5 Qualities of Superman as a democrat

Quality	Description
Cosmopolitanism	Superman embraces global perspectives and rejects nationalist constraints, acting for the benefit of the entire world.
Peace protection	Uses his powers to support peace and stability on the planet.
Support for democratic values	Embodies the ideals of freedom, justice, and equality, which are key to democracy.
Responsibility	Takes responsibility for the well-being and safety of people worldwide.
Decisiveness in combating threats	Does not hesitate to take a leadership role in combating global threats, such as nuclear weapons.

Source: created by the author based on their own research

The analysis of Superman's political orientations reveals how superheroes can reflect shifts in cultural and political contexts. Initially portrayed as a Republican, over time Superman began to embody democratic values that include globalism and peace protection. This shift from nationalism to universalism underscores his transformation from a national hero to a global hero, illustrating how cultural narratives adapt to changing times and reflect global values.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

Superman embodies American character and patriotism, becoming a symbol of national spirit and ideals. His image was actively used by the U.S. government to support military efforts during World War II, where he opposed enemies such as Hitler. The use of Superman in comics as a means of military propaganda highlights the ability of popular culture to shape public opinion in critical times.

The shift in cultural paradigms within social sciences has influenced the interpretation of comics as an important source for analyzing cultural dynamics. Characters like Superman and his enemies provide opportunities to explore the moral and aesthetic categories that shape the cultural and moral codes of society. The emergence of characters like the Joker underscores the importance of supervillains in creating a comprehensive narrative structure in comics.

Important transitions in Superman's political beliefs reflect changes in America's cultural and political contexts. From an image initially associated with Republican ideals, Superman has transformed into a symbol of Democratic beliefs, advocating for globalization and peace protection. This transformation illustrates the adaptation of cultural narratives to contemporary realities and reflects global values.

Accordingly, the study of Superman's image in «Action Comics» highlights his significance in shaping American identity and moral values, reflecting the complex interplay of popular culture and national identity, especially during wartime and political periods.

CONCLUSIONS

In studying the cultural impact of superhero narratives through the lens of the Superman image, one can identify both the evolution of American national identity and the reevaluation of societal values and political ideals across different historical epochs. Superman, as a symbol of the American pop-cultural landscape, serves as a mirror reflecting changes in societal moods and cultural reorientations.

From his early involvement in wartime propaganda during World War II, where Superman acted as an agent of national patriotism and moral resilience, to his postmodern depiction as a global defender of human rights, the ideals he represents reflect shifts in the American political and cultural climate. In the early comics, Superman supported the American fight against external enemies, promoting military solidarity and national unity. His actions mirrored the governmental aspirations of the time to mobilize public opinion and support.

However, by the end of the 20th century, Superman began to symbolize more universal and inclusive values. He transformed from a national hero defending only American interests into a symbol of global justice and peace, reflecting the changed worldview and ideals of the modern world. This also correlates with global movements for human rights and international cooperation.

Particularly significant is how Superman's portrayal emphasizes his ability to adapt and respond to societal needs at different historical moments. Through his adventures and conflicts with various villains, Superman not only reflects current social issues but also shapes cultural narratives that facilitate the understanding of the moral and ethical dilemmas of the present day.

The image of Superman emphasizes the ability of popular culture to adapt to changing cultural demands and challenges. Superman, as a cultural artifact, demonstrates how pivotal moments in history can be integrated into the collective consciousness through media narratives, which in turn shape social identity.

This transformation of the superhero occurs against a backdrop of a broader understanding of global issues and the need for universal peace and security, highlighted in his latest narratives. Superman, as a means of expressing democratic values and as a tool of cultural influence, reflects the ability to mirror the spirit of the times — from nationalism to universalism. This is evidence of the evolution of the superhero genre as an important component of the media landscape, which not only responds to but also influences cultural transformations.

Overall, Superman embodies ideals that have become catalysts for social change and reflection, playing a key role in forming a multifaceted approach to understanding human rights, peace, and justice in a global context. His character serves as an important tool for discussing and analyzing complex moral questions and reflects the ability of comics to be more than just entertainment content, transforming into a powerful means of social influence.

Accordingly, defining the image of Superman in comics not only highlights the development of the genre but also provides a profound contribution to understanding how cultural artifacts can shape and modify public identity and cultural aspects across generations.

SUMMARY

The term paper examines the transformation of Superman image as a key superhero, in the context of broader cultural and social changes in American society. Studying various aspects of this character in the form of comics allows a deeper understanding of how superheroes play a role in shaping national identity and cultural ideas.

The first chapter of the work analyzes the embodiment of the American character in the image of Superman, showcasing ideals of justice, bravery, and self-sacrifice, which were relevant during times of war.

The second chapter focuses on Superman role in propaganda comics during World War II, highlighting him as a tool for national mobilization and a moral leader. It identifies the main features of supervillains as counterparts to superheroes. It also reflects changes in political and cultural narratives through the image of Superman, from Republican to Democratic beliefs, demonstrating how changes in the American political atmosphere have influenced the characteristics and actions of the character. The analysis includes a review of his transformation from a national hero to a global defender of human rights and universal values.

The conclusion of the study reveals how Superman — as a symbol of superheroes — reflects broader social changes and cultural challenges, emphasizing the role of mass culture in shaping contemporary identity and moral values. It also notes the superhero genre's ability to adapt and influence society, using literary and visual narratives to address relevant issues and challenges.

The work makes a significant contribution to understanding the evolution of superheroes in literary tradition and their impact on American cultural and social dynamics, demonstrating how they act as a mirror to changes in the nation's cultural consciousness.

Key words: *Superman, comics, American culture, heroism, globalization.*

РЕЗЮМЕ

Курсова робота досліджує трансформацію образу Супермена як ключового супергероя в контексті ширших культурних та соціальних змін в американському суспільстві. Визначення різних аспектів цього персонажа у формі коміксів дозволяє глибше зрозуміти, як супергерої відіграють роль у формуванні національної ідентичності та культурних ідей.

Перший розділ роботи аналізує втілення американського характеру в образі Супермена, демонструючи ідеали справедливості, хоробрості та самопожертви, які були актуальні під час воєнних часів.

Другий розділ зосереджується на ролі Супермена у пропагандистських коміксах під час Другої світової війни, виділяючи його як інструмент національної мобілізації та морального лідера. Він ідентифікує основні риси суперзлочинців як противагу супергероям. Він також відображає зміни в політичних та культурних наративах через образ Супермена, від республіканських до демократичних переконань, демонструючи, як зміни в американській політичній атмосфері вплинули на характеристики та дії персонажа. Аналіз включає огляд його трансформації з національного героя у глобального захисника прав людини та універсальних цінностей.

У висновку дослідження виявлено, як Супермен — як символ супергероїв — відображає ширші соціальні зміни та культурні виклики, підкреслюючи роль масової культури у формуванні сучасної ідентичності та моральних цінностей. Жанр супергероїв має здатність адаптуватися та впливати на суспільство, використовуючи літературні та візуальні наративи для вирішення актуальних питань та викликів.

Робота робить значний внесок у розуміння еволюції супергероїв у літературній традиції та їхнього впливу на американські культурні та соціальні динаміки, демонструючи, як вони діють як дзеркало змін у культурній свідомості нації.

Ключові слова: *Супермен, комікси, американська культура, героїзм, глобалізація.*