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The Role of Superhero Comic Books in Representing Some aspects of American Cultural Ideals.

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DEDICATION

*In the name of « ALLAH » the Most Gracious the Most Merciful and the most
compassionate.*

I dedicate this modest work to my wonderful and my dearest parents;

Didiche Mohammed

And

Saadi Raffika

Thank you for your support and your endless love.

To all my friends with whom I shared the university life with its lights and shadows.

To all who love me

Especially my best friend of hard times that made my dreams come true

Bellebcir Halima

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Abstract

This study sets out to demonstrate that comic books are useful in identifying and promoting to the American's cultural ideals. And our case of study *Captain America* serves as a cultural artifact that stands for all what America presents. Thus, the present research was intended to investigate how *Captain America*, the story, reflected the American's cultural ideals. In accordance to this study, it was hypothesized that comic books reflected the whole society and stand for all what Americans believe in, thus whenever any comic book is read, the reflection of American values, cultural symbols would be clearly obvious. Moreover, in order to confirm this hypothesis, the analysis of this research was based on the application of the analytical approach on the super hero comic books *Captain America*. We used the historical approach to answer the research questions and provide insights on the background and the development of the story's events. The conducted study is divided into two theoretical chapters part, and a practical. The first two chapters are theoretical in nature, which made a general overview about American's cultural ideals and some important elements that include it were given. Also, different aspects of superhero comic books, and a detailed description of ages in comic books were provided. Moreover, the analysis in chapter three on *Captain America* was applied to help find out that this story was a medium in identifying the American's ideals. In short, the analysis ended up with that the hero "Steve Rogers" or "Cap" embodied many American cultural aspects; he reflected the American Dream. Then, he promoted liberty, equality and called for humanity. In this respect, Captain America plainly connected his readers via the body of the hero to the scale of the American nation.

Key words : American Dream, Captain America, Comic- book, Cultural-ideals, Super-hero.

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General Introduction

Background of the Study

The Comic book is an unique American art that is traced back to the first half of the twenty century. It comes in a form of narrative series that is designed to be a significant cultural artifact, which generally presenting through its content the essential elements of America's cultural ideals. Since the superhero comic books art had been created first in 1938s, during the period of The Great Depression, it succeeded in forming a huge fan base , dominating the public atmospheres and receiving the praise of millions of Americans who admired those books . Superhero comic book characters are not merely fictional characters, which can only provide entertainment and fictional content rather it presents a sophisticated art that functions as social mirrors that depict society's desires, fears, hope and norms.

The content of Superhero comic books is influential to public literature in America that narrates and addresses its society major themes, concerns, which qualifies it to be a good primary source and a significant artifact to showcase and reflect the major social changes and the most influential events of each decay they had been created in .

In addition, the main concern in our research is to investigate how superhero comic books reflect some important American ideals. The present study is composed of three chapters: the first one is an over view of American ideals and the main characteristics that present it. Then, the second chapter investigates superheroes' comic books, and its significant. Moreover, it highlights the history of comic books and the five ages, from the Golden age to the Modern age. Finally, the third chapter is devoted for the analysis of the comic book "*Captain America*" that represents American's ideals.

Statement of the Problem

It was always believed by many people and primarily researchers that comic books present silly content and they are only meant to entertain both young and adults. Their subjects and contents were not believed to be serious or meaningful, rather superficial reading material. However, with time, this art proved the opposite and they offered the literary ground with serious, meaningful and interesting topics. With this huge jump, the genre of superhero comic book came into existence, independence and carries equal weight as other literary productions.

Comic books reflect as well the culture of the society they were written in. they embody all the realities, the concerns, hopes and the desires of societies.

Main Question

How does the superhero comic book "Captain America" embody many American cultural ideals?

Subsidiary Questions

1. What is the relation between *Captain America* and the American's cultural ideals?
2. What are the American cultural aspects that *Captain America* reflected via?

Significance of the Study

In a broader context, this thesis may help in driving more attention to comic books. Through the analysis that we applied to our story *Captain America*, we spot more light on how important are comic books as a reading material that can be helpful to be used in schools as a subject to teach. Moreover, the specialized in the academic field might open a branch at universities to study these comic books.

Aims of the Study

This study aims at

- ✓ Demonstrate that comic books are useful literature means through which American ideals can be identified.
- ✓ Highlight The significance of comic books in translating the cultural content to its readers and even exporting it abroad.
- ✓ Examining the trajectory of superheroes comic books in relation to the American ideals according to the social and cultural environment which they were created in.
- ✓ Proving that Steve Rogers, the main character in the story, embodies most of the cultural American ideals.

Research Method

In conducting the present study, we have depended on the application of two approaches: the analytical and the historical ones. The choice of the analytical approach is for the sake of gathering data for our investigation, and to analyze our sample of *Captain America*, the superhero comic book. The Analytical Approach is a method used to answer how and why the phenomenon come to be, therefore, it is useful in this line of study, which aims to find out how American super hero comic books are an epitome to reveal for ideals and values of American cultural ideals. We think also that the use of Analytical Approach for this paper is not only necessary but vital in order to present credible arguments and results.

Moreover, the historical approach is used as well to provide us with answers to the main question and the subsidiary questions to know how, when and where the cultural American ideals are reflected via comic books. Historical Approach is the one through which we can examine the background and the development of a specific

phenomenon as it enables us to encompass their growth, beginning and landmark able events.

Chapter One: America's Fundamental Cultural Ideals.

1.1 Introduction

America is a powerful nation, with immense wealth, military strength and global influence and this is show how it likes to represent itself to the world through its cultural characteristics. Moreover the question of American national identity is the important key theme in the culture and history of the United States. Thus the ideals of liberty represent American identity so American has to be comfortable and familiar with the contours of their identity and culture because it determine behavior through traditional beliefs and observances and language of the foundation for any culture.

In this present chapter, we will cover several relevant elements related to American ideals .Also we will discuss its the nation's some ideals and philosophies. We shall also discuss an overview of American cultural ideals context. We will also explain the importance of maintaining the legacy. In addition, we will present some fundamental element of American ideals and philosophies, we will investigate in this study freedom and liberty, American dream, manifest destiny, human rights , progress and looking for future, hard work achievement and success, and patriotisms.

1.2 American's Ideals

According to Caroline Gilpin, American nation is a nation of idea that can only be defined through its unique cultural ideals and philosophies beliefs that they should strive to protect and preserve it "you cannot define Americans by what they look like, where they come from whom they love or how they worship. Only our democratic values define us. And if we lose sight of this in our conduct at home or abroad, we jeopardize the respect that has made the united State the greatest nation on earth." source For Gilpin, the American nation is defined by a system of ideals, values and beliefs which formulate a unique cultural content to millions of American citizens

form different cultures all over the world (par.07).

In the same path, Dallmann et al. had claim that American national cultural body is composed by exceptional common myths and ideals that is fundamental to American nation "[...] US-American national culture are unique and all expressions of a national culture's ideals and values; at the same time, they strongly influence the behavior of all Americans who recognize dominant myths as part of their national ideals (16). We understand from the last quotation that American nation's cultural is based on set of ideals, beliefs that titled or impacted the American society manners and attitude and enduring their cultural identity. Therefore Americans consider those abstract concepts as an integrate part of their cultural legacy.

He added further, those ideals and values translates the American society thinking methodology thus Americans was careful to create a constitution and national political, social, educational, cultural institutions that embody their ideals and with full charge and responsibility to hold and represent those abstract concepts as a moral code for their social life (53).

1.4 Overview of American's Cultural Construction

Stuart Hall agrees with Rutherford in defining the concept of cultural identity. For them, the concept cultural identity is defined as a not: "fixed essence...lying unchanged outside history and culture, and is not once-and-for all... to which we can make some final and absolute Return." (qtd. in *American Cultural Studies* 20). As far as cultural identity is concerned, it is based on one fixed element which is history. If one society has one history, thus it would have one cultural formula that is shared by the whole community and society; no matter the changes of history occur.

Campell and Kean assured that Cultural identity is derived within a person's primary cultural context (communal mythologies, narrative, memories, etc) that

people inherited from their early ancestors and that was shaped by historical and cultural experiences. However, the American nation has a history of diversity. It is a place where various multiple cultures, and identities blend and clash together and they formed a multitude community (22).

Therefore, the American society is known as the most diverse community in the world; its policy of welcoming and inviting people of all races, cultures in the past and the advertisements that the American dream was attainable and accessible to everyone encouraged immigration and led to large scale waves of new comers to America. Thus, the United State became a "salad bowl", multi bending of ethnic elements and features. The American society become like a movie or a story with plenty array of various characters and facts (22).

The aforementioned writers added that despite the fact that the American society was a construction of different elements that could be broken into various units, they succeeded in finding a way through which they arranged themselves and pull strengths from different regions of the world to build a unique cultural identity, where a set of communal myths (American dream , Manifest Destiny) generate a shared cluster of cultural and social values and ideals across the country that could be articulated (22). It is not easy to have a melting pot society like the American society, however; if the set of values and principles that shape that society are universal, thus communal differences melt within the overall system of the nations. Communities adapted their rules, in accordance with the general American shared principles.

1.3 The Importance of Preserving the Cultural Legacy.

According to Meney, one sign of a sophisticated and healthy society is its ability to preserve its cultural legacy and heritage, that is very necessary to the efficiency

and evolution of its community and to the production of effective strategies and systems to develop a prosperous society. It is unquestionable that there are plenty of positive outcomes that the person can link it to the necessity of cultural identity. As an example, cultural identity plays a significant role in promoting the social welfare and materials for high living standard. Individuals with intensive defined sense of cultural identity typically show a good social performance, and attain positive outcomes in different life aspects, like education, arts, social communication, etc (parg.1). In short, People who have a sense of full understanding and awareness to their social criteria can easily construct a basic platform, which guides them to launch their selves into bright future.

In addition, According to Wendy, cultural content can be an important element in creating social stability and cohesion between nations or the members of one society, and the more the country's population shares the same cultural identity, the more the country will have opportunities and chances to step easily forward to establish a social cohesion, thus the harmony among the citizens will immediately help in moving into a better future. It is thanks to their tolerance, and the shared mind set between them that creates a kind of social harmony and cooperation among them (Par.04). Moreover, people who have defined cultural traits are more likely to have a high sense of belonging and security. In short, ignoring such social institutions can result in serious profound problems, because it is undeniable that no community, whatever its size is or location can, exist without its own distinctive identifications and legacy.

1.5 Fundamental Elements in American ideals and philosophies.

1.5.1 The American Dreams

For Cullen, along with the course of human civilizations and history, people are related to certain criteria or features that define them as citizens, such as: language,

clothes, religions, and beliefs. However, the American nation was found on a collective aspiration and ideals that were envisioned by their forbears and embodied in a written constitution to become later national ethos. One of those features is "The American Dream", which remains till the twenty first century a fundamental touch stone in the American national identity and cultural heritage (06).

For Barone, the idea of the American Dream itself is older than the United State. It dates back to the 1600s, when people from different nations gave up their families, native homes and travelled to unknown continent with all sorts of aspirations and hopes, and they took risks and were engaged in many wars while putting their lives on the line, all in fervent pursuit for life, freedom and the elusive success (par.04).

The term American Dream, in addition, was first coined by James Truslow Adams in his book *The Epic of America* that was published in 1931. He defined the American Dream as "the Dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement." (xvi). By this quotation, he meant that the American dream is a dream of prosperity and social order, where all individuals, regardless of their fortuitous features of position or birth have the right in social and , economic opportunities in order to attain his success or a social full status.

Americans, for Lenning, believe that the concept of American dream made their country a land of chances and opportunities, where human ambitions are given a high interest. Therefore, this national belief for Americans is another word hope, success and freedom in all of its dimensions, and it is as well a call for social justice, and democracy system. All American generations have always believed that maintaining and glorifying such cultural creed is necessary for the greatness and development of their nation, however, this necessity is conditioned to permanent success, liberty,

security, and prosperity, as it could be a national appeal for all Americans to be united together for the welfare of themselves first and their nation next(09). This justifies why the Americans valued and held such concept, that is for them is a prospect of success and a motivation for their desires to improve their lives.

1.5.2 Manifest Destiny

Mountjoy Shane noticed that the phrase "Manifest Destiny" symbolized the wide spread philosophy and belief which had dominated the American's public mood in the mid of nineteen century. It is about the idea that America is a blessed nation that is recognized by a divine mission to conquer the new continent and to expand its boundaries to promote for its democratic institutions "capitalism". The reason behind spreading democracy is to make the world a better phrase of civilization and development by cultivating the primitive, fusty nations and redeem them based on the American model (09). Thus, for them manifest destiny is a national duty and divine sublime that they were chosen by the God to fulfill it, however, the idea of Manifest

Destiny is not especially new, but old as the United State itself. In 1630s, the Puritan leader Jhon Whinthrop described the first colonies years before Americans won their independence from Britain by stating that the new comers who sought to immigrate and live in new world "shall be as a city upon hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world." (qtd. in Manifest Destiny: Creating an American Identity par. 02). This demonstrates or leads us to conclude that this concept was deeply rooted in the American history.

The political philosopher Thomas Pain also wrote in his pamphlet "*Common Sense*" that the American Revolution was established on a great vision. He illustrated

by saying: "the sun never shined on a cause of greater worth", and he added "the affairs of a city, a country, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent." (qtd. in *Manifest Destiny: Creating an American Identity* par.04). Thomas Paine, in his quotation, highlighted the greatness of the American continent and he added by described in it as that the cause that is shined by the sun. More than that, in 1776 another author called *Salus Populi* stated in his work *The New York Packet* that "God has formed America to form the last and the best plan that can possibly exist." (qtd. in *Manifest Destiny: Creating an American Identity* par 04). America is not a worldly place, rather it is a divine land that was specified with certain divine powers and duties which it has to accomplish.

In addition to that the phrase Manifest Destiny itself was not recognized in America's common speech until the nineteenth century, when a journalist named John O'Sullivan coined it in a published article in 1845 to demonstrate his aspiration and vision about his nation's future destiny. According to him, "the fulfillment of our Manifest Destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." (qtd. in Mountjoy 13).

Jhon O'Sullivan asserted that for the accomplishment of the American welfare for all Americans, the American nation should move west because it is its Manifest Destiny. The article was written by John L. O'Sullivan received a large public support, because it described what the majority of American people believe. It is their sublime mission and a representation to their cultural superiority and the faithfulness and virtue of American society, then it is their duty to overspread their puritan method and cultivate or enlighten the other strayed nations. This rhetorical background becomes a symbol to the American ideology of expansion and patriotic ideal bounds to American nationalism.

1.5.3. Human Rights

According to Jeff Blood Worth, "The concept of Humanity was basically a liberal project inspired from the Enlighten 's beliefs and philosophy, which emphasize on idea that the lives of all human beings is important and equally worth " (42). Based on the latter quotation, the human rights, as an idea, came in response to the brutalities of wars that people witnessed. As a result and based on enlightenment ideas and philosophies, the "Humanity" concept was crystallized. Human rights and humanitarianism philosophy have emerged first in west world and takes its global cast since the mid of nineteenth century, exactly after World War Two. According to Fabian Klose, humanitarianism is a set of attitudes and human sympathy that is concerned with the misery and suffering of other human being, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, race or gender. The aim of this liberal project is to save people lives, and stand against war crimes, oppressive political regimes, and preserve humans' dignity and protect them from any infringement on their being (13).

For Redcliff, social scientists and researchers claim that humanitarianism sensibility, which is related to the general idea of charity and the specific one of western missionary and imperialist enterprise, is a fundamental aspect of American culture and society. However, they had supported their claim by providing a clear historical evidence; human spirits that encountered the American society of the United State are traced back to the colonial times , when helping the poor , homeless people and victims of violence and brutality was an important moral duty to the communal life and as it was necessary to maintain the survival of community in the face of ill fortune, thus, Humanitarianism concept was plainly merged into the American religious values and social practices with the early settlers who praised and embraced the Christian virtue of charity and goodness (309). This demonstrates how

old the concept of humanitarianism is in American society that provides a huge interest to human rights. This interest came as result to a their sufferance from brutality during the time of American Revolution, and civil rights movement, therefore , today they seem always supporting and defending human rights.

According to Bloodworth, today, the evolution of mass media, press and the significant role of social and nonprofit institutions (the United State, human rights) contributed to transform the humanitarianism into a worldwide movement. In addition, the American nation unfurled the banner of humanitarianism and wants to lead the universal struggle and fight for freedom and human rights to save people from repressive political systems (42). This demonstrate the high sense of humanity in American nation and the high responsibility it holds to stand for all human crises in different parts of the world, for example, in Rwanda, Iraq, Bosnia...The people who live in freedom and prosperity should feel responsibility towards them , because working to help all the humans who live under aggressive conditions is a primary ethical value of human solidarity .

1.5.4 Equality and Justice

For Bumagarner, American cultural heritage teaches us that the believe in equality and justice still a fundamental values that have been treasured as an integral element of American mosaic culture since the establishment of its nation. He said: "The image of lady justice blindfolded while holding her scale is rooted in a very important American (and generally western) concept: that all people, regardless of class, race, sex, religion, disability and so on are fundamentally equal worth and should therefore as equal."(01) We understand form the last quotation that the belief of equality and justice is deep rooted concept in American society where all humans believe of justice.

Moreover, Ross Evan Paulson, claims that America is a nation that can only be defined through its cultural ideals, concepts and principles that are bound to its various society and represents the respect of their country as a developed nation he said: "Unlike many other peoples ,Americans are not bound together by common religion or a common ethnicity. Instead, our binding heritage is a democratic vision of liberty, equality and justice."(01) Paulson demonstrates that the American country based its social and cultural system of equality and justice which shaped such binding heritage for its diverse society.

In addition Maria Flemming, claims that American's ideals of equality and justice are a source of pride for Americans. As they are a fundamental philosophy upon which their nation became the wealthiest and developed nation over the world and a destination to many immigrants from different races, ethnicities and religions dreaming of the impartiality upon which this country was lauded. She said: "As Americas, we are justly proud of the ideals of freedom, democracy and equality that are enshrined in our nation's Founding Documents –the Declaration of Independence, Constitutions and Bill of rights; Our challenge is to make them more than promises on paper."(09). Flemming demonstrates that equality and liberty are core and fundamental values and ideals that Americans strive to maintain and stand for, therefore; those morals were adopted in Independence Paper and other national documents as natural rights that should be implemented.

1.5.5 Progress and Looking for Future

For Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Benneit, the notion of progress is to be optimistic and to have a determination to achieve a better future. Americans believe that being ambition and self-reliant, and hard worker will bring a better future and opportunities, however , people generally should not either compare their success

with the success of others, or envy their progress and achievements, because America is a country of equal opportunities and abundant resources, where every citizen has a valid chance to progress (35). This illustrates that the idea of progress is a prospect of success comes with a strong determination and willingness to realize our inspiration and development in our lives, through hard work and ambitions.

Henry Luce, the publisher of "American Century," proclaimed that "the business of America is to progress; and progress is the business of America. We are the only nation for ever on the march" (qtd.in *The belief In Progress in Twentieth Century America* 197). Henry plainly summarized the essence of American's creed that was strongly held by American people for generations. He refers to the notion of development and achievement and progress as a synonym to the America nation, which always seeks for the continuous development and prosperity in all fields.

Paul T. McCartney believed that the American destiny is strongly related to humanity, and that humanity that is lead by America is meant to accomplish collective objectives. He added further by stating that "They often described the historical process in quasi-Hegelians terms , wherein the human race progresses as "enlightened" civilization replace their more "primitive" Since ever, the concept of precursors, either from within ,through natural evolutionary development ,or from without, through conquest." (47)

The person can deduce from the aforementioned quote that the concept of progress and change was always in the Americans mind, since the time of first colonies, where wars were fought on the ground of progress till they succeeded in establishing great nation envied by all. Each generation of Americans have believed that they should work so hard to guarantee that their children would inherent a better planet and enjoy fuller lives. Therefore, they contributed and tried always to offer

social and economic support programs and ideologies for a prosperous, shiny future and developed society that is continuously developing to be a blessing and not a burden to human kind.

1.5.6 Hard work, Achievement and Success

According to Palmiotto, the American nation has been known or defined by its dynamic driven nature; achievement, success, hard work, competition are intrinsic values that the American society was initiated on. Those perspectives were derived from the puritans heritage (hard work), which emphasize on self reliance, hard work and accomplishments. Through the course of United State history and especially when America was a collection of thirteen colonies, and on competition, hard work, and success were dominant values in the west that had shaped the American character, morals and institutions.

At that time, the fact that a person had skills and worked hard was a high moral that had an intrinsic value in the American social context, for its role in persons' success first and nations' developments as well. This is due to the fact that holding the strong desires in achieving success is important to the accumulation of power, wealth and property (36). Based on the latter quotation, success and achievement are fundamental perspectives in the American society; it is almost a religious and cultural value that participates in the evolution of American nation.

Moreover, for Talott Paterson , humans are instinctively motivated to progress, achieve and prosper, therefore, Americans are careful in teaching their children, since an early age to glorify hard work, accomplishment and only relying on themselves to attain success. Such values shaped a strong nation, provided the people with pride and high self-esteem, and the needed confidence to achieve (*The Social Thought of Talott Paterson*'138).

1.5.7 Freedom and Liberty

According to Forner, no notion is important to Americans' sense of dignity and pride than freedom. It is a sole basis for the American society, and one of the major driven motivations that led to the birth of their great nation that was engaged through many wars and revolutions against the tyrannical regimes, yearning for the liberty and life (par.01). Forner demonstrates the importance of freedom concept in American nation; it is a fundamental factor that led to the creation of America the great nation that considers freedom as a doctrine that it adopts.

After Americans won the national independence The Founding Fathers among them Thomas Jefferson adopted the concept of freedom and liberty that become latter a fundamental concept backed within its society , thus , the new nation had declared itself as a nation with a divine mission (Manifest destiny) and a symbol of freedom in a world overrun by oppression. So much so, they outlined a national constitution that includes amendments to protect people's right in freedom, as one of the divine rights endowed by the creator to all humans. And that what was assured in the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson who said:

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness (par.01).

Through the quotation, we understand that those are the priceless rights that the American Constitution ensured to all citizens ,thus Americans entirely enjoy the freedom to live, and to express their opinions or thoughts freely, also they have

the freedom to believe and worship any religion they choose. Each American generation appreciates the necessity of such bestowing, as an important notion for self-definition and respect, because they believe that when individuals enjoy a good sense of freedom and liberty, they will have more honor and pride in their lives, moreover, they can acquire more satisfaction and happiness without being pressurized by anything that may destruct their happiness .

According to the Two U.S Government People who have free minds are more likely to develop a high moral consciousness and high levels of creativity and productive abilities. In addition, freedom can be a major factor for human development and social welfare ; any nation or society with more sense of freedom is able to build a prosperous and creative society, and this in turn means that individuals will have a bright future with a better, high living standards (Par.01). In short, we conclude that the American society considers freedom as a necessary notion in the creation of a healthy society, where individuals enjoy a high sense of pride, satisfaction and liberty that enable them to act freely without any kind of restrictions to their creativeness. And that is the correct basic via any society can reach a high level of living.

2.5.8 Patriotism

According to Hertler, the description of the American Patriotism is a " loyalty to national institutions and symbols because and in so far as they represent value that are the primary object of allegiance "(qtd. in Steven Nathnson 58). He refers to the concept of patriotism as a sense of loyalty and reasonability to country's institution and symbols. More specifically, the notion of patriotism is related to citizen's deep love and devotion to their country, in addition to their full responsibility to defend and support its sovereignty and interests. America's citizens are so proud to show their

love to their nation, therefore, it is come across many American citizens who make their American flags over their houses as a kind of allegiance to America. ('American Patriotism' par. 01)

Originally, this concept is deeply rooted in the American history and culture. It is in their resistance against the injustice, and brutalities during the time of first American colonies, when this new land was viewed by the new immigrants as a land of liberty, opportunities and last hope for them to evade the oppression they faced in their native homes that was dominated by cruel regimes. These refugees found safety and new chances to establish new nation less ruled by European tyrannical systems.

Mikaela Sifuentes, asserted that after few years, Americans once again refused the age of being governed without being represented in the American Revolution. Then, after America win the national independence it was assured in the national constitution that the government cannot rule without the consent of its citizens. Thus, the national constitution of the United States represents and holds the principles for the government as it functions till nowadays, and this is one of the major reasons why Americans are so proud and patriotic. Their pride is embedded in the justice of their judicial system and the government which ruled their country today that was directly defined and instituted by American citizens to be a reflection to their free soul democratic proclivity, rather than being a creation of oppressive monarchy (para.01). Moreover she illustrated why the Americans view their county's legacy, history as something that belongs to them, because they had a hand in its creation, this what makes them tend to feel proud of it and responsible for its protection and maintaining its security (par.04).

Furthermore Sifuentes added that the American's great sense of patriotism is the first reason that enable America to be stable nation, because all the American citizens

share the responsibility to maintain their nation greatness and evolution, whatever the cost it is (par.06).

According to Brandon Ficher, the 11 September 2001 is a perfect situation that translated the American's sense of patriotism, when Americans showed a strong condemnation to the attacks against their nation, they were so eared. Therefore, all of the nations' citizens from young, old, men and women did not hesitate to put their life in line and volunteer to join the American National Army to serve in Afghanistan for the sake of defeating their nation's enemies and protect its sovereignty (par.01). Ficher demonstrates how important patriotism, as a concept, to American society is. It was one of their basic motivations that pushed them always to sacrifice and work hard for the welfare and sovereignty of their country.

1.7 Conclusion

Thought this chapter, we have introduced some fundamental aspects or components of American's ideals and philosophies. We have presented how American cultural believes, and its philosophies and ideals served as sources of pride for the Americans, because they believed in their importance. Those ideals contributed to prosperity of the American nation, and they are integrated part of its cultural legacy world. Thus, we have highlighted the uniqueness of American 's cultural identity that bounded or united one of the most ethnic and diverse society in the world , regardless of Americans' origin or color it pulled the strengths from each culture , and origin and shaped one unique American identity. And superhero comic book came as prominent mean to explain the those ideals.

Chapter Two: Superhero Comic Books

2.1 Introduction

The comic books have an important role in identifying American popular culture. It has produced familiar culture icons like Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and X-Man. In this present chapter, we are going to shed the light on the survival of the superhero comic books, as well as the development of its main decades. In addition to the superhero genre and we will look at the five ages which are important in comic books.

2.2 Defining the superhero comic books

Many different definitions are related to the term 'superhero comic books'. Richard Reynolds gives a different definition of what a superhero is in his *Superheroes: A Modern Mythology's* book. He stated that:

Superheroes are by and large not upholders of the letter of the law; they are not law enforcement agents employed by the state. The set of values they traditionally defend is summed up by the Superman tag of 'Truth, Justice and the American Way'. Sometimes the last term has been interpreted in a narrowly nationalistic sense...but far more often the third term has stood for the ideals enshrined in the US Constitution. Superheroes have been better Americans – as the founding fathers would have understood the term – than most of America's modern political leaders. (6)

Reynolds defined super hero as a representative to American nation and sovereignty, they are cultural heroic icons, who hold the American values, in addition they often act as a social mirror that translates the American society's desires, inspirations and ideals.

In the same path, Fingerioth claims that "Superhero narratives, as they are traditionally understood, involve colorfully garbed heroic icons that demonstrate uncanny strength, intelligence, supernatural powers, and near infallibility" (16). Fingerioth viewed superhero narratives as narration formats that based on heroic characters that is definitely have unique criteria and abilities.

In addition to, Paolo described superheroes as characters that were awarded by supernatural abilities and acts as mirrors to reflect and deal with society's main concerns and issues. He said: "A crucial quality that a superhero is bestowed with is the ability to adapt and change over time. Superman was born out of a need for hope, in a time of depression. Thus, it is unsurprising that superheroes have to adapt to the societies within which they are functioning."(02)

According to Paolo the superheroes are instantly awarded with super natural abilities which enable them to accumulate with different situations even the impossible ones. Superheroes reflect the popular attitude, tastes and they connect directly to human's need and desires with all of their kinds. Superheroes comic book's stories could be a significant narrative medium and potential guide to deal with our world-real issues.

2.3 Survival of the Superhero Comic Books

According to Dan Rviv the industry of comic book art had passed through many crises and obstacles to maintain its existence. He comments by stating that "In the mid-1990s, Marvel Entertainment became embroiled in a crisis as strange as one of its comic book stories. Locked in a battle for control of the half-century-old company were two Goliath-style corporate raiders and two virtually unknown Davids: Israeli immigrants with a passion for the toy business." (06). He added "This was a test of wills that led to a unique Wall Street showdown. Combining hard-hitting journalism

with entertaining storytelling, *Comic Wars* takes readers behind the scenes of America's most bitter bankruptcy and captures the high-stakes, often hilarious twists and turns of this financial fiasco." (06) We understand from the latter quotations that comic book art in different period of its evolution had stumble and was about to lose its successes, it went through struggles and battles with the critic journalists and art critics to maintain its existence .

Moreover, for Harris, superheroes have changed to act as indicators of the changing needs and interests in the society. For example, "Superman" who was his main aim in his patriotism is fighting for "truth and justice". However, after the Second World War broke out, he changed his aim to fight for "truth, justice and the American way." (07)

When it comes to the concept "Super gods", Morrison discriminated between *Superman* and *Batman*. In doing so, Morison described the two differently when he said that:

Superman began as a socialist, but Batman was the ultimate capitalist hero, which may help explain his current popularity [...] Batman was a wish fulfillment figure as both filthy-rich Bruce Wayne and his swashbuckling alter ego. In a world where wealth and celebrity are measures of accomplishment, it's no surprise that the most popular superhero characters today-Batman and Iron Man-are both handsome tycoons. (56)

Both Batman and superman reflect a special ideology; Batman represents capitalism and Superman represents socialism.

In a similar point of view, Wandtke highlighted that the everlasting characteristic and the continuity of the superhero over decades was because of the readers. In other

words, it's the reader, who willingly choose to see their heroes change via time and to be updated each time to take other forms in the media (5-6).

In this case, Morrison suggests that what separated Superman, who is given God qualities and God is Clark Kent. In other words, since Clark Kent is an ordinary human being, but he is given superpowers, thus he is the demarcation line between Clark the human and God (09). Hercules was always Hercules. Agamemnon and Peruses were heroes from the moment they leaped out of bed in the morning until the end of a long battle-crazed day, but Superman was secretly someone else. So, the ability of superheroes to conform to society's needs is matched with society's willingness to accept their frequent revision.

2.4 Superheroes Genre

In order to figure out and analyze the focus of this research, we have first to introduce and define the genre it belongs to, that is "superhero genre". According to Bongco, a Superhero is a key term in comic book's art that is related to all the fictional heroes, who hide their real identity by wearing masks costumes and characterized by some unique skills and distinctive , genetic features and powers that make them superior than the common humans (102). They are extraordinary persons with super natural abilities, for instance, the abilities of flying, and invisibility are among the many qualities attributed to the uniqueness of the comic superhero.

According to Postz, since the superhero comic book genre had been invented and appeared in 1938s during the period of Great Depression , it got a huge fan base and received the praise and attention of millions of Americans who admired those books , and showed that Americans, by nature, are obsessed by and with the idea of the superhero, especially after the devastating results of the Second World War when people lost the trust and their belief in the federal government and the

system who failed in fixing the damages. This resulted in the American citizens feeling of being defenseless, unsecure and in need for a power to encourage them during their crisis (02).

Thus, those mythological heroes provide hope, comfort, optimism and serve as an excellent popular art of fantasy and entertainment, which offered escape to millions, who are frustrated from the destructive, horrible memories and atmospheres of the war. Not only this, it also functions as propaganda to maintain the American national content to bound the unity of its nation in difficult times by demonstrating its basic national principles, which emphasize on the beliefs in fighting for freedom, justice life and the American way (02). The author Johnson had assured in his book on the fundamental role the superhero comic book play in the society's fabrication. Jhonson stated that:

What my seven -years-old self did not know, and what much of American public still does not realize, is that comic book superheroes are an important part of American's social fabric. Since its creation in the late of 1930s, the superhero has become the United State dominant cultural icons. Superhero quickly expanded from their comic book origins to become Hollywood staple, numerous comic book related television shows fill the airwaves, and hundreds of other outlets showcase our fictional spandex-clad guardians. Artists like Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein create comic book influenced art and many museums have presented superheroes related exhibitions" (01).

Based on the last quotation, The role superhero stories have played as influential public literature in America in narrating and addressing its society major themes, concerns, qualified it to be a good primary sources and significant artifact to

showcase and reflect the major social changes and the most influential events of each decay they had been created in. Moreover, it may also serve as a mirror to promote its society's mind, feelings, values, beliefs, for the purpose of rising individuals, especially children's awareness and help them in acquiring a better understanding for themselves first then the world after.

Moreover, for Johnson, the superhero genre in its beginning was a marginalized art that did not perceived as a worthy phenomenon for academic scholarly study, but only as children's entertainment books, which had not that much value or artistic considerations, till the date of 1980s and 1990s, this fact changed, and this recent American's indigenous art dominated the public atmospheres, and inspired many generations, thus, it became a prominent art and important reading materials in the United State, to the extent that scholars and social researchers began to conducting studies and thesis about it, in order to investigate and question the role and influence of comic book art that may play in the fabrication and changes of the American society since its beginning. (01)

2.5 The History of Comic Books.

To understand the creation of Captain America, one needs to have background information of the comic book industry as a whole, and also have an understanding of how superhero comics in particular came to be. If there weren't any comics to begin with, then Captain America would never have existed. So it is important to gain an understanding of the history of comics. Browsing through bookstores we find that comic book art is composed of five major decades that included many remarkable changes and events.

2.5.1 The Golden Age of Comic Books (1930-1949)

According to Steve Geppi, in the beginning of 1930 and during the post world

war two the unique American entertainment art of comic book springs as a way to binding Sunday funnies into magazines like-format . Comic book grow to be prominent /dominant art in the American nation especially after the creation of superhero genre that would remain till nowadays a touch stone in comic book art (02).

According to Ramsey Taylor Marvel and DC are the two comic empires, who were the first ones to introduce the two of the most famous superhero characters, Superman and Batman that amazed the American fans and received massive popularity. The idea of the superhero character is to fight for human interests and dignity against the injustice, cruelty and to punish the wrong deeds and protect the weak. This sensitive content was presented by superhero comics especially during the war time let to a massive blossom and success of comic book industry, which becomes a primary source or an interesting means for comfort and security that arose the American public's confidence and sense of well being during the difficult times. After that, and along with time new superhero characters was created like Captain America, the Wonder Women, and the Green Lantern (par.04).

He added that in 1940s, World War Two was the most prominent event at that period of time. This was a boon for comic books industry, maybe because it severed as popular medium that used its materials to prompt for the most fundamental ideologies at that time, such as new system of social repairs and world war two patriotism, because Dc superhero assured on its support for the national common interest and American federal government. Thus, it managed its materials to achieve such an aim (par.07).

Moreover, Ramsey described the comic book during the Second World War where it was very significant and effective art, as it shaped 30 percent from the

reading material that was sent to the soldiers in the war areas, and despite of its cheap quality, because of the limited resources during the war time, for them it was never a matter, but the connection to their countries which they felt, when they read comic stories (par.08).

In addition, Ramsey mentioned that in 1940 comic book industry has witnessed the blossom of superhero genre; and thus the creation of other new superhero characters. The most famous one was Captain Marvel that was produced by Fawcett publication home. Nevertheless, later on, the issue of copy right infringement lawsuits that Fawcett publication had led to the decline of most of its productions among them Captain Marvel. And it was till 1960s when Dc comics won the lawsuits and decided to bring Fawcett and republish its stories again, such as *Shallom*, but unfortunately it did not receive the expected success or gain the interest of the main-stream fans as the original copier of *Captain Marvel* does. At the end, the legal battle between DC Comics and Fawcett influenced comic book industry negatively (par.09).

2.5.2 The Atomic Age (1949-1956).

It is mentioned in the database the "Atomic Age of Comics" that the emergence of Atomic Age of comic book was related to many factors and among them was the evaluation of the knowledge about the nuclear fission and the heavy inceptions of atomic nuclear weapons at the end of World War Two in Japan and with its vast effect for devastation, in addition to the limited knowledge concerning nuclear weapon of atomic energy made it a major public concern theme, both in term of fright and awe of its potency (para.02).

Moreover "Atomic Age of Comics" clarified that the decline of superhero's genre at that age can be also a result to many other reasons as well. While many other heroes were presented with the time of Golden Age, for instance Batman, Superman,

Captain America and Wonder Woman who based their focus on social interests like saving humanity and fight to save its freedom and dignity by defeating Axis and all oppressive systems. Thus they serve as form of patriotism and inspiration to the people who were in need to outlet from the horrible events of World War Two (para.03).

Furthermore, "Atomic Age of Comics" added to the previous reasons that the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent* book in 1954 was also a difficult dilemma that has plagued the comic books industry; it was a curse on comic's art. Its production had led to many tenuous and criticism attacks that accused comic books by promoting for homosexuality through its story content and the normalization actions of its characters, this entire end up with a moral panic about the negative impacts and subsequences of comic book art (par.04).

In addition, the "Atomic Age of Comics" stated that as result to this ethical dilemma comic's code authority intervened and implemented what is called comic book' code in a way to rescue comics industry and avoiding the fears of parents concerning the content of comic books. Structured rules and reconstructions were implemented on comics creators, thus new themes were adopted, such as science fiction, technology and space serials that questioning science fiction issues like the origin of mankind and planets, aliens invasion plots, in additions to many other mysterious super natural phenomenon (par.06).

After all "Atomic Age of comics " declared that historians are still argue about the characteristics and the fundamental developments that Atomic Age had added to comic book art, some viewed that there is no considerable addition expect some trends among readers of the Golden Age, and others argued that it was an distinctive age that brings unique changes and developments from Golden (par.08).

Finally "Atomic age of Comics" affirmed that the end of Atomic Age can be traced to the beginning of Silver Age. The comic book's creators adopted the scientific details in designing their works, therefore a new superhero genre exhibited, such as Spider Man Iron Man, Thor dominated the themes of atomic ages. The touch of science fiction was clear through the content of comic book, which give it more reality and connection to the real life issues far from the superficiality of exaggeration of fictional plots (par.09).

2.5.3 The Silver Age of Comic Book (1956- 1970).

According to Ramset after World War Two, the comic book industry has witness dramatic changes, and the idyllic time of comic book 's golden age had declined precipitously, which resulted in comic book stories losing its popularity and stream. This was due to many reasons, one of them is the horrible memories and results of the war on people's psychology , who were tired from fights and combats. Thus, the concept of a fantasized and unconquerable superhero solider, who fights and defeats the humanity's great evil enemies and protects human life become less popular than before , what was reflected negatively on the comic book 's sales, which drooped and stumbled dramatically , and continued to slide down , to end by the death of superheroes comic series. But during that period, another new comic genre about horror , science fiction , monster , crimes ,romance started to surge up in popularity (Par.01).

In addition Ramsey added that those new created series were decisively designed to cover darker themes and mature plots , because editors and writers of comic books wanted to drive the attention of people to the significant role of comic books in translating a serious issues and prove that comic books are not just a wacky , silly identity that are introduced to the public, but it is also a significant

reading material that could adopt real, mature subjects and society's most controversial issues (par 02).

Moreover Ramsey stated that thanks to the creation of those new gruesome genres comic books art were rescued from its fate of decline and disappears. More than this, those new series did not only manage the challenges, obstacles that faced comic books, but also developed and empowered its industry by focusing more on the visual element, and adding new writing techniques, for instance imagery and serialize style. Despite that comic books art regained its large fan base and immensely popularity, this success was coupled with an increase in juvenile delinquency, because of the opulent, dreadful, horrible nature of mastery crimes and horror comic genre, what led at the end to a sudden rage of a morality group headed by the psychiatrist Fredric Werthan, who regarded or deemed comic books as "junk food for the young minds" (qtd. in History of Comic Book Decade by Decade par.03).

Fredrick, also stated that comic books are mentally distrusted device that motivate Juvenile delinquency and moral declination. This criticism resulted in the formulation of comic book art's code guidelines (par.03).

Furthermore Ramsey added that For comic's editors and publishers, this kind of revision and reconstruction was an obstacle in the creation process of many storylines that normally could not adopt a real, mature issues any more, and unfortunately, comic books art again had faced serious and profound damages. In order to rescue it from its fate of vanish and decline, writers and publishers tried to work on all the challenges of the reconstructed, wacky and lighthearted themes and plots, which bore no relation to reality, and make comic books more exciting and readable stories by adding new modifications and elements, such as: science

fiction and many superheroes of golden age were re-designed with science fiction characterizations as X man and the Alien Conquer (par.09).

Then over time, the backlashes, and morality groups' indictments against comic book art were faded, after the stories content was developed to adopt a deep, serious, complex issues to distance the content of comics' story lines from the nonsense and banality of silver age mood.

2.5.4The Bronze Age of Comic Books (1970-1980).

According to Bongco, the term Bronze Age was first coined by Comic Book Fandom and Street Price Guide to describe serious content that dominated the comic art of that age. Bronze Age of comic book took place between 1970 and the mid of 1980s. It was a significant twist in comic book art especially in terms of themes and plot, unlike the style which remained as it is from the time of previous ages (57).

He added that the abolishment of comic book's comic code was a fundamental change thanks to which darker plots complex styles and more mature story lines featured the content of Bronze Age's comic book, for instance the issue of drugs adopted by Spider Man's comic book, because the writers was eager to challenge the skeptical audiences and proof that comic books are more than fancy reading material, with childish identity, rather they can be a significant medium helping in the fabrication of healthy and attentive generation or societies(57).

Therefore, for Bongco, the Bronze Age was marked by its focused around realism decisive issues. In addition, with the abandonment of comic code, sexuality, religion became popular subjects comic books discussed openly. The Bronze Age of comic books have witness numerous major changes that can be perceived as exceptional shifts from the tone of the previous decades (57). One such change the comic book

artist The king Jack Kirby left Marvel comics in 1970 breaking up an important partnership of the Silver Age with Stan Lee the father of comic books. After this disagreement Kirby joined DC Comics where he designed incredible, successes new series, for example "*The Fourth World series*" that contain "*Jimmy Olsen*"¹³³ in December 1970, "*Mort Weisinger*" in 1970, "*Superman*" and "*Julius Schwartz*."

The end point of Bronze Age comics was in 1985-1986 and like the pervious Ages the decline of that age was result of many events and mistakes which acquired in the same time one of them is the serious challenge between DC and Marvel Comics.

The Bronze Age era was featured and defined by adults oriented content, from the rise of the *X Men* to the "*dominant intellectual property*" and reorganization on the industry of apportionment system (64).

2.5.5 The Modern Age of Comic Book (1980-present).

According to Maguitmann, the Modern Age of Comic Books is a period in the history of American comic book, which is generally considered to have began in the mid-1980s and continues through the present day. An alternative name for this period is the Dark Age of Comic Books, due to the popularity and the artistic influence of titles with serious content. This was a time when comics became darker, adult oriented, political and featured controversial themes. This was the second Golden Age that surpassed the original Golden Age. No longer comics were aimed at a young audience, there were stories aimed at a mature audience, which unleashed a renaissance for the comic book industry and pop culture (par.01) .

However, he added that the abolishment of comic code during the bronze age was an important turning point in comics industry ,because such change gives a way to creativity of comic book's writers, which ended up by the publication of new ,

twisted stories , plots with sophisticated and diverse narrative style. Also, it supported the marketing for more serious and complex subjects, such as: crimes, drugs, sex, violence and most society controversial concerns (par.02). This illustrates the significant changes that resulted after the abolishment of comic book's moral code, thus the creators were excited to express their artistic quality and creativity without any kind of prohibitions or legal reconstructions.

Then, they began to craft new characters, which seem darker, dangerous, and often psychologically complex. Those fundamental changes and developments in comic industry paved the way for independent comics' publishers to born, which arose the tensions of competitions , and pushed the creators ,who were working so hard to develop and expand comics industry that lately prospered and received unprecedented popularity at this period. Harvard's study had described the development of comic book during modern age where it finally became credible and sophisticated art form:

Before 1986, most people in America thought comic books were just bad entertainment about superheroes: men and women who fight crime with extraordinary powers and methods. People thought comic appealed, could only appealed, to children, entertaining adults secretly and unintentionally, if at all. Then, in a flurry of news articles the mainstream announced the existence of adult comic books and adult comic fan . Some news stories focused on the collectors who invested in comics hoping for a big payday .Others focused on the content of these comic books Headlines amounting to "Wow! Comics about holocaust victims and psychopathic superheroes' topped newspapers people were surprised by the new comic' adult content , sex , violence , and strong political opinion. These comics also had a largely overlooked adult sensibility: depth, seriousness and, complexity. They

presented complicated topics using complex narrative forms that are open to multiple interpretations. The media declared 1986 the year comics finally 'grew up'. (Geppi124)

Before, people thought that comic books were meant only to entertain adults and children and that they are valueless, since they tackle no serious subjects that touch reality and the real world.

2.6 Conclusion

In this present chapter, our main aim of this study is to show the relationship between the superhero comic books and the American ideals. Moreover, the literature gives more focus on the topic of comics vary slightly, but tend to focus on the developments over the years on the comic book industry, also their main focus on the creation of the superhero comic books and how it has impacted American culture and society. So comics served as a useful tool in engaging readers of all age .In this present research, we found that comic book storytelling messaging reflected a theme of American isolation and its involvement in the war . Therefore comic books have a great impact on the American ideals.

Chapter three: Analysis of *Captain America* comic book .

3.1 Introduction

The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of *Captain America*, the comic book story looking for representation of the American's cultural ideals. We chose only six aspects of American's cultural ideals that is patriotism, the American dream, Manifest Destiny, freedom and liberty, humanity and uniqueness. For the analysis of the story, we followed the historical approach to help contextualize our work and link it to our thesis. In doing so, we linked our analysis to the main historical periods that relate the story and the real events that occurred during then.

3.2 Jeo Simon's Biography

For Hamilton, Jeo Simon's complete name is Joseph Simon, who was born in November 1913 in Rochester, New York. He rose up into a quite talented artist, who wanted always to draw. Thus, since a very young age, he used to create art for school year's book using his incredible skills to draw beautiful pieces of art (*Comic Book Creators of Joe Simon* 04). He further added that after Joe Simon graduation from high school, he started searching for jobs (Hamilton 06).

In his long journey to find a suitable job, Simon faced many challenges and difficulties. He tried many jobs till a considerable opportunity presented itself to him (08). Jeo took job for a company that is named Funnies, which believed in his talent and provided him with a golden chance to create his story *Dr Jack Castle*, as his first work. Jeo's story was published in Martin Goodman's in 1940. It was the first step in his job's carrier. Moreover, Jeo, the ambitious young artist, wanted to move upward and achieve more advancement in his life. During that time, he met his partner Jacob Kurtz Berg, whose is called Jack Kirby, he became his best friend and best partner at work.

Thanks to their incredible collaboration, their works received huge success and fame, amongst all the other works especially, *Sand man* and *Captain America* that is deemed one of the most enduring superhero character's in America. Moreover, the two artist partners' provided the comic book industry with new artistic techniques and themes, for instance, romance comics. In addition, both were among earliest pioneers of horror comics. However, by 1956 after many successful series, the duo's professional relationship was frustrated, due to difficulties and the high tension of market's competition and their relation ended.

3.3 Jack Kirby Biography

According to Hamilton, Jack Kirby was born during the time of Great Depression. He left his high school and sacrificed his ambitions to subsist his family during hard times. He used to do his family's need; however his life in the street at early age made him taught, and skillful, thus his talent sprang at early age. He once said:" I was there in the showed of the chipped brick walls of the shimmy first drawing board." (*Comic Book Creators Jack Kirby* 06). He used to draw pictures and he was amazed by fictional books and heroism movies. All of these helped him learn how to create sophisticated stories.

He was insisting to refine his talent by teaching himself, and in 1931 he joined Boys Bro, which is The Hood Republic when he was a teenager artist. At age of 16, he became a news paper's artist and created his own strip, that is labeled K's Conceptions (Hamilton 06). Jack Kirby was bored of his poor life and wanted to do more for his ambitions and life situations, therefore he succeeded in taking job on Fleischer's animation studio. After two years of work, Jack Kirby felt bored again and wanted to abandon his work.

Hamilton highlighted that Jack's self confidence in his talent made him more ambitious, thus he started to look for something new, and he found it. At age of 19, Jacob started a work for Lincon Features Syndicate News Paper Carton and Comic strips. Jacob worked with many comic book legends, for example *Bob Kahan*, *Batman's* creator, but it was his next plan or step to produce a work that really supported his carrier. At age 21, Jack Kirby started a new work for Victor Fox, it was there where he met Joe Simon, the senior editor for the company and they collaborated together. Thus, an amazing professional relationship was born between the two sophisticated artists, who provided comic book art with successful works and new stylistic and thematic inventions, for instance, the romance comic book. Hamilton added in his book that after long carrier and considerable literature accomplishments Jack Kirby passed away on February 6th, 1917 (10).

3.4 Description of Captain America Contextualizing the Work

For Duncan Captain America the fame comic book was created by the artistic team Jack Kirby and Jeo Simon in 1941s. Since its creation the comic book derived the attention of millions of Americans who admire the character of the superhero.

Duncun mentions that Captain America with his emblematic red, white and blue shield with a star in the middle was designed to be a definitive super patriot solider who inspires Americans and symbolizes American nation's power during World War Two.

He added that Captain America story narrates the heroic deeds of Steve Roger, an ordinary solider who wants to defend his country and join its military forces, but he is rejected as being unqualified for such task ,because of his physical lack of needed power. However, he was selected to collaborate in secret experiment known as "Operation Rebirth" when he was injected with super serum and " vita rays" thanks to

which his body transforms into the peak of human power. After the success of that experiment the American military determined to create an army of super hero soldiers, but the scientist who created the formula is assassinated by a German spy and the military project was canceled to end up with Captain America the only American super powerful soldier on the earth (Icons of the American Comic Book 101).

Thanks to Steve Rogers' successful transition and the strategic training he has been given, Cap becomes an invincible super-hero, who engages with his country's military forces with full operational authority over all forces. He outranks any other military officer and becomes a national hero, who fights for all that is good and symbolizes his nation's authority during World War Two (Duncan and Smith 102).

Duncan and Smith had described Captain America as being a symbol of the national cultural content and ideologies especially during the context of World War Two, when the U.S.A was engaged in a war against Nazis

Captain America has permeated U.S. culture to such an extent that the character even inspired independent musician Will Kouf to create a musical tribute to the character released in 2007. Set in World War II, it tells the story of Captain America's creation and his fight against the Nazis and the Red Skull. It is a riveting story of Captain America's struggle for democracy against the forces of tyranny (qtd. in Icons of American comic book 109).

Cap becomes a secret agent needed to encounter and get rid of the oppressive systems on national and international level in a mission to keep Americans and humanity safe and to spread democracy and American ideals among human beings. In his path to do so, Captain America with his super powers to maintain peace to the whole world depended not only on his physical strength, but he also on his ethical virtue, in

addition to his innate goodness and righteous cause he sacrifices his life for the sake of others. Captain America is an embodiment of hope, freedom and a hero of peace.

3.5 Captain America as an Ultimate Hero of American Nation.

For Duncan and Smith Captain America is a significant epitome to American traditional ideals and beliefs. He always stands for and protects his nation's ideals whatever the cost is "the ideals of the founders in documents like the Declaration of Independence are represented in the concept of Captain America. He embodies what America strives to be, not what it sometimes is At times Captain America has gone against government directives when he thinks such directives go against the value of individual freedom and liberty." (111).

It seems obvious that Captain America is a symbol for the American's cultural ideals, and it is his characteristic that makes him so appealing and useful for the study. He provides an opportunity to analyze the set of ideals and beliefs that shape the America culture and makes it unique in all aspects. Therefore, Captain America reflects, in a way or another, the American ideals, because he translates a clear picture about the American social reality and cultural ideals. Captain America, the story, furthermore, mentions the power of America in the world of globalization. The message was that America was a mere shadow of its former greatness.

Captain America clearly can be identified as a territorial symbol of America solely by his red, white, and blue star-spangled uniform. He is part of what is known as the 'cult of the flag.' Villains often mock Captain America for his uniform, so Cap is the American symbol to be unique in the whole world and his great role is to spread peace in all American cities. After that this hero represents the perfect behavior like honesty which is the central dream of America ideals. Moreover, Captain America, in nature, acts as a secret agent who protects his nation first and the world as well. In this case,

Captain America is loaded with a huge responsibility to keep his country secure and safe. Thus, he creates solidarity between the American citizens. Furthermore, this hero shows American culture in details and how does his nation live. Then he clearly represents the American people's uniqueness, and definitely signifies their exceptionality. In short, Thanks to Captain America's heroism and moral character, that successes to reflects a good picture of the American nation as a strong, unique one.

3.6 Analysis of Captain America character

3.6.1 Patriotism

It is mentioned in American Patriotism article that the concept of Patriotism in United State is not about feeling belong or pride to your country, rather it is about practicing that sense of pride in form of actions. It is about being thankful and proud to accomplishment of your nation, it is about holding the responsibility to protect it, and most of all, it is about to hopeful of America as a land of liberty, freedom and justice to all its citizens (par. 01).

For William Peitz, Comic books stories are often rife with the concept of patriotism, and Captain America is a good example of a comic that captured the essence of nationality and the true love to the mother country. His willingness to put his life on the line and scarifies his life to defend his country illustrates the necessary centrality of the nation to him, thus Cap was a national super solider hero who strongly represent the high sense of patriotism as an American solider

Captain America's willingness to die for his country illustrates the centrality of the nation to him and, by extension, to every American reading the comic book, This makes the symbol of Captain America much stronger than other traditional symbols of America, such as the bald eagle or the American flag because Captain America can both embody and narrate America in ways that

the bald eagle, the American flag, or other American symbols cannot. Captain America adds a personal connection those other symbols cannot. “Captain America serves as a cultural product that vaguely and invisibly connects the reader through the body of the hero, to the scale of the nation (qtd .in Captain America: The Epitome of American Values and Identity. 16).

Based on the last quotation, the protagonist, Steve Roger had always proved his honor, patriotism and responsibilities to his nation via his great sacrifices that was obviously reflected in his choices. For example, his passion to join his country military services and to be a soldier indicates his good intentions to serve his country; although, he is aware of the mission difficulties and the limited possibilities to be accepted in the military.

Jack Kirby and Joe Simon narrated in the comic story of *Captain America* that:

Before America was even 200 years old, it was called upon to fight alongside other countries in a terrible war that was destroyed the world. The news of war moved people .It seemed like everyone in the country wanted to join the army to help .Including a young man named Steve Rogers. Steve had been upset about the war for some time but now that America involved, he could do something about it (6-8).

It is clearly that Jack Kirby and Joe Simon collaboration was amazing that they succeeded in creating a national champion hero that was a response to the American need of a super-patriot and a noble figure to lift up the American national mood and feeling, especially for children, who shaped a huge portion of Captain America's readers because Cap is a manifestation of members of their families who had been sent overseas to defend their nation. Moreover, he may provide a good vision of the American war overseas and the heroic accomplishments of their fathers that enable

those children to be proud of their parents and to value what they are doing of sacrifices for their country.

Therefore, this direct affection, from the part of the hero, may inspire American young adults or children to be another heroic and patriotic Cap for the American nation. At the end, Steve Roger's (Captain America) high sense of patriotism and nationalism makes him a perfect candidate to symbolize America the strong nation.

3.6.2 American Dream

The American dream is a core concept and beliefs that has permeated the American cultural ideals since ever. The idea of taking all the possible chances you may have to become a better version of yourself, more powerful, more successful, is plainly preformed in the comic book *Captain America*.

According to, Peitz Captain America is an alternative to American ideals. He represents its unique concepts and beliefs in perfect way,

Captain America, the costumed hero, is the embodiment of all that's best and brightest in the concept of America: a concept that transcends the nation that birthed it. Steve Rogers, the man, represents everyone who seeks a better world for himself and his neighbors, who strive to live a decent, compassionate life. That makes him one of us—all of us, no matter our country or origin—and insures that that character will still be with us, in all his gaudy, vibrant glory, for decades to come (qtd .in *Captain America: The Epitome of American Values and Identity* 41).

Cap, the super-hero is regarded as an emblematic figure of today 's pop culture because beyond being an extraordinary individual, robust, and patriotic super-solider, he is an inspired and moral character, who encourages people to seek, successful and happy life through self reliance and working hard. This latter idea is based on America the utopian land of possibilities and that all people should take all their

opportunities, and strive to realize their dreams and inspirations through self independence and working hard. The belief in the American dream can not be more exemplified in place else than Captain America's fictional story, that was connected to concrete social issues, and cultural norms.

The way Steve Roger, as the hero of the story, has embodied and reflected the American Dream concept is when he is described as a scrawny, average person, who dreamed hardly to enlist in the America military services, but he never passes the exam due to his lack of physical power. After many tries to be a soldier, an opportunity presents itself to him to be a part of a secret experimental program of super soldier. This occasion, for Roger, is the last hope that he can hold on to achieve his dream, after he is almost desperate.

In fact, it is the turning point that completely changes his capacities in incredible ways, then his life. He shifts from being a common ordinary unsuccessful person to be a worldwide hero with super abilities. This chance is deemed to be impossible and exceeds all the expectations and imagination. It is mentioned in the Captain America Comic book,

[...] but the doctor told Steve that he was in no shape to join the army then he told him that there was another way to get into the army. He handed Steve a file marked: The doctor told Steve that if the experiment worked, he would be able to join the army after all. Steve said he would try anything to become a soldier. The doctor called in a general named Chester Phillips. The General was in charge of project: Rebirth (10-11).

Many changes have occurred in Rogers' life. First, his position from an unknown person, who is Steve to a well known ideal figure whose name is Captain America. All doors opened to Cap only in a blink of an eye. Thanks to his successful transition and the strategic training he has been given, Cap becomes an invincible super-hero,

who engages with his country military forces with full operational authority over all forces. He outranks any other military officer and become a national hero, who fights for all what is good and symbolizes his nation's authority during World War Two.

Captain America strong belief in his dream and his inspiration, which for a while seemed impossible to achieve, pushes him harder in trying to chase his passion. This is what motivates him to take all the chances, even the risky ones.

The story of Steve Roger, the ordinary man can be a good inspiration for many Americans to be more than their selves and to believe in the possibility of achieving their dreams in America the land of possibilities. The hero, indeed, was the only means for the writers to illustrate how an ordinary person can alter his /her life for the best and to pursue and achieve the designed aims. The way that Joe Simon and Kirby create the character of Captain America was a perfect story to embody and represent clearly the notion of the American dream and what to be an American citizen.

3.6.3 Freedom and Liberty

It mentions in Baterly essays' freedom is a recurring concept in the United State's general context. It is one major motivation that led to the birth of America as a great nation

"I believe America was at first defined by freedom, then after time, America defined freedom, altering the definition to fit the niche it fits in, but still keeping key components so it still seems to be staying true to the ideas of America's founding fathers. When the colonists from England came to America to escape religious and social prosecution, political constrains, and economic hardship, they had a utopia of freedom in mind, which they did set up in the new constitution.

According to Karbank , liberty like many American ideals and philosophies, was clearly exhibited through Captain America, the comic book, where Cap, the national

hero of America, seems that he first designed to embody lots of classical and cultural ideals that have been important to Americans, since the creation of their nation.

Steve Rogers, Captain America, the Sentinel of Liberty and the Star-Spangled Avenger, is the quintessential hero. Seen as the physical embodiment of freedom and everything that makes the United States of America a noble and honorable country, there is no other hero like him. Steve Rogers hasn't always been Captain America and others have stepped in to fill the boots and take up the mantle. Some served the position with top-notch excellence while others struggled to represent what it means to be Captain America. Yet for all the many alternate Captain Americas, there are just as many Captain America analogs and rip-offs. With a character as popular as Captain America, it comes as no surprise when one looks at all the copycats he inspired [...] At the end of the day, all these Captain America rip-offs are a wonderful testament to the Sentinel of Liberty's legacy and the influence he's had on our world. (Karbanc par. 10)

For Duncan and Smith Captain America is a significant epitome to American traditional ideals and beliefs. He always stands for and protects his nation's ideals whatever the cost is

"the ideals of the founders in documents like the Declaration of Independence are represented in the concept of Captain America. He embodies what America strives to be, not what it sometimes is At times Captain America has gone against government directives when he thinks such directives go against the value of individual freedom and liberty" (111).

Captain America is a real leader and alternative to the concept of liberty and freedom, the way he symbolized his nation ideals and principles makes him a source of pride for America. For more illustration, it is mentioned in the comic book that "Captain

America kept in fighting for liberty, until finally ...the war was won. Through the country might not always live up to its promises, Steve vowed to protect America and its ideals: justice, equality, freedom..."(22). This is a clear indication of Cap's great sense of nationality, and his loyalty to his country's attitude and his fight against tyranny regimes, when he adopts the fight for human's liberty and dignity against the Nazis brutalities and villainous deeds. No matter the cost is. His mission stands up of all what Americans believe in, thus, he gladly sacrifices his life for his nation's noble causes.

3.6.4 Manifest Destiny

According to Mountjoy the concept of manifest destiny symbolized the wide spread philosophy which had dominated American's public mood in the mid of the nineteenth century. It is a patriotic idea that is bound tightly to American nationalism (13). Jack Kirby and Joe Simon succeeded in presenting the ideal of manifest destiny thought the lances of Captain America's story, where the role of Cap, as symbol of his nation in World War Two was proverbial.

Through Captain America story, the United States, was described as a leader of the free world that reminds the whole world of how inspiring democratic mere American ideas on other oppressive countries, because it helped to liberate from the Nazis or Japan brutalities, America was and still an inspiration to all the rebellious communities, because American peoples grew up believing in their national mission that is related to their duty to have a better democratic countries and to help in starting a new phase of a new democratic civilized world via spreading democracy and bringing peace to oppressive people, fight terrorist organizations, and provide equal rights (justice, liberty, dignity) to all humans.

Therefore, Captain America always assured that he essentially exists to lead dangerous wars and fights, not only because that it is his duty as a soldier, but because his existence is in permanent opposition to the eternal ideas of tyranny. Thus, he prevents German enemies from destroying the idealistic concepts of realizing peaceful, democratic and prosper world via their dehumanized practices and standing against human will.

3.6.5 Humanity

For Best and Radcliff humanitarian sprit that encountered the American society of the United States is traced back to the colonial times , when helping the poor , the homeless people and victims of violence and brutality was an important moral duty to the communal life and as it was a necessity to maintain the survival of community in the face of ill fortune. The humanitarian concept was plainly merged into the American religious values and social practices with the early settlers who praised and embraced the Christian virtue of charity and goodness (309). And today the American nation unfurled the banner of humanitarianism and wants to lead the universal struggle and fight for freedom and human rights.

There is no doubt that such an idealistic concept was adopted though captain America's story content, because Cap's loyalty to the issues of humanity was clearly translated through his sacrifices. Thus, he is known as a moral back bone for Marvel comic books and as an ultimate example of humanity and goodness, who manages to save humanity from villain threats in hope to keep their lives safe. His strong determination to save humanity from tyranny, and defeating the world's evil enemies is the reason why Cap scarifies his life and be able to endure the excessive pain caused by complicated treatment, when he first volunteered, and is injected with a new dangerous serum that gives him super physical abilities. Also, the injection

reinforces more his good innate decency, as a good person and the most virtuous hero ever.

Therefore, for Captain America, achieving peace and defending human dignity is vital personal cause, rather than realizing personal victory or even titles he strives to accomplish. Unlike Red skull, who is a powerful German soldier, who believes in the Nazi superiority, and considers other human being as a great threat to the Germany existence. For this reason, Red Skull determines to make mankind extinct, thus he prepares a great army and plans to end humanity for good. But, Cap the American super-hero, who traditionally stands up for the principles of America's moral code and classical virtues, interprets Red Skull's idea of anti-humanism and saves millions 's lives from the destructive power of Nazi.

3.6.6 Uniqueness and Exceptionality

Back to the American Independence, the Founding Fathers wanted to establish a new country based on what they believed "a city upon hill." Their vision was fulfilled with a spirit exceptional and unique in all terms. The declaration of independence which the set, was based upon believes principles which seems to many obvious, but no one thought of them before.

The Declaration guaranteed for all American citizens the necessary and ultimate needs that any ordinary human should enjoy to a very diverse society in the whole world.

The distribution of these freedoms and commodities led and established the farewell to all, and raised the competition sprits in all domains, which led ultimately to the wealth and reflection of the American as one entity. Americans believed in that American is unique nation, thus, they are a unique and exceptional in their way too.

No one doubts that this high spirit of exceptionalism is reflected in all domains, even in literature and comic books which have been also touched by it. Despite that Captain America is in no means not the first genre that depended on the hero as a super hero, with super powers.

According to Peitz captain America the most powerful hero and the symbol of United State was a unique superhero who identified himself with some special soldier characteristics that differs him from any other hero and make him the most powerful hero human had ever know

"Captain America was created with the "super-soldier serum," which is responsible for his physique and strength, he is unique among the world of superheroes. Whereas many superheroes fly and smash enemies with ease, Captain America's real abilities lie with his athleticism and leadership skills"(15). Though the last quotation we may conclude that Captain America had not be an ordinary hero with super powers only .He should to reflect clearly the American exceptionalism, he should be noticed among the other heroes.

During the war time, he wanted to translate clearly the American spirits and how much noble mission that American soldier are doing in the world, in addition too, to justify in a way the good intentions in the world and spread his spirit overseas. Cap the American flavor was the unique site of the Cap. It was noticed everywhere among all , and it was made up of the colors and the shape of the American flag, again to remind the American soldiers of the noble mission the greatness American in general.

3.7 Conclusion

After we approached *Captain America*, the story, depending on the historical and analytical approach, it turns that the story is an embodiment of various American's cultural ideals. Both writers designed the story by depending heavily on the superhero character, as the main one in the story. The comic book that we used turns around Steve Rogers, which through the writers represented the set of American ideals and principles that America is characterized by. For example, humanity, liberty, exceptionality, the American dream, patriotism and manifest destiny.

General conclusion

Over the course of this dissertation, the researcher has explored American ideals themes as portrayed by superheroes within the mainstream of American comics industry. In line with the research hypothesis that purported the significant impact of superheroes comic books can be traced according to the social and cultural American environments within which they were conceived.

This research sought to demonstrate how the metamorphoses of some of the leading and most recognizable superheroes comic books like captain America from the Marvel universe has been identified by the American ideals.

Concerning the role of captain America one of Marvel flagship superheroes. He is an alternative to American nation. He embodies and represents a great part on American ideals of liberty justice and humanity. So when asked to think of a superhero that best reflects the United States of America and what it stands for, it's hard not to think of Captain America. He is a man that wears a stars spangled outfit, carries a shield with the American flag branded on it, and how he fights in the name of the American Constitution. For a man who is so physically strong and immensely influential.

As is the case with other periodicals, including satire, comic books are reflections of their place and times. They are American origin Art produced by American writers and artists for American audiences. Through them, the fundamental changes, events in America since the Great Depression can be seen and analyzed. He provides an opportunity to analyze the set of ideals and beliefs that shape the America culture and makes it unique in all aspects. Therefore, captain America reflects, in a way or another, the American ideals, because he translates a clear picture about the

American's social reality and cultural ideals. Captain America, the story, furthermore, mentions the power of America in the world of globalization. The message was that America was a mere shadow of its former greatness.

As the gods of myth teach much about the ancient Greeks and Romans, so, too, may the spandex-clad heroes of modern myth like Captain America teaches much about America as a super-power. Addition the main concern in our research was investigating the relationship between superhero comic books and some important American's ideals. The present study was composed of three chapters; through the first one we concluded the following results. America is a nation of ideals that is based on set of beliefs and morals. Those ideals were founded since the establishment of American nation; therefore we cannot identify America without talking about those fundamental ideals which are American Dream, liberty, high sense of patriotism, equality, hard work and successes. Then, through the second chapter we concluded that comics that were considered mainly as children's stories but on so many levels they reflect the whole society and stand for all what Americans believe in , thus when ever were read any comic book , we can plainly notice the reflections of America in its story lines, its values, norms, cultural symbols. It is ultimately on popular culture of America and documents to presents the interests and criteria of American's society. Finally, the third chapter was devoted for the analysis of the comic book "*Captain America*", as a matter of fact, that represent American ideals. As a result, the analysis of the story demonstrated that captain America is one of the essential stories that represent American ideals and culture in details. So we believe that superhero comic books have a significant role in reflecting the American's ideals.

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