

**PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY IN OLMOUC
FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN
STUDIES**

**DISABLED SUPERHEROES: WHAT
EFFECTS DID THE REPRESENTATION OF
THE RESILIENT AND DISABLED
SUPERHEROES HAVE ON PEOPLE
FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS AND ON
THE NORMALIZATION OF THE ISSUES
CONCERNING DISABILITY?**

BACHELOR THESIS

**BY ADÉLA URBANOVÁ
SUPERVISED BY MGR. ELIZABETH ALLYN WOOCK,
PH.D.**

**OLMOUC, CZECH REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 2021**

I, Adéla Urbanová, declare that this bachelor thesis is my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that where I have consulted and quoted from the published work of others. I have acknowledged all sources of help in bibliography.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

I would like to thank Mgr. Elizabeth Allyn Woock, Ph.D. for advising and helping me and being patient throughout the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank my sister Ing. Kamila Urbanová for being supportive shoulder and for overlooking my progress.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	4
Abstract.....	6
1. Introduction.....	7
2. Methodology	10
Disability	10
Superhero.....	10
Target community	11
Normalization	11
Ableism.....	12
3. Background: Comic Books as Literature	13
3.1 History of action comic books	13
3.2 Comic Books as Literature	16
4. Superheroes with Disabilities.....	18
4.1 Introduction to Superheroes.....	18
4.2 Bucky Barnes (The Winter Soldier)	18
4.3 Charles Xavier (Professor X)	20
4.4 Clint Barton (Hawkeye).....	21
4.5 Eddie McDonough (Hornet)	23
4.6 Jubilation “Jubilee” Lee	24
4.7 Marc Spector (Moon Knight).....	26
4.8 Matthew Murdock (Daredevil)	27
4.9 Melati Kusuma (Komodo)	28
4.10 Steven Strange (Doctor Strange).....	30
4.11 Wade Wilson (Deadpool)	31
4.12 The Verdict.....	33
5. Comic Book Vs Reality	35

5.1	Amputated limbs	35
5.2	Paraplegia.....	36
5.3	Deafness	37
5.4	Palsy	38
5.5	Dyscalculia	38
5.6	Multiple personality disorder.....	39
5.7	Blindness.....	40
5.8	Nerve damage	41
6.	Benefits of Accurate Representation in a Targeted Community.....	42
6.1	Representation	42
6.2	Normalization	43
6.3	Awareness.....	43
7.	Problems with Inaccurate Representation	45
7.1	Discrimination	45
7.2	Confusing facts	46
7.3	Wrong information source	46
8.	Conclusion.....	47
9.	Bibliography	50

Abstract

This thesis examines different representations of superheroes with disabilities in contemporary comic books. These disabilities are mainly present in characterization of these superheroes and usually play a part in their storyline in some way. This thesis aims to analyze and describe these characters specifically looking at how these disabilities affect their story and how much of an impact they serve as opposed to being only a character trait. Furthermore, this thesis also looks at how these disabilities differ from their real-life counterparts and aims to point out the differences and inaccuracies in characterization of these superheroes. Finally, the thesis considers the impact of these superheroes on readers belonging to the disabled community.

The main goal of this thesis is to look at both male and female superheroes with different disabilities and the ways their superpowers or other technological or genetic assets allow them to overcome them, including prosthetic limbs, mutations and power suits. It is important to note also the treatment of male and female superheroes with disabilities, although this thesis is not going to deeply examine the misogyny of superhero comics, it cannot be analyzed without including the context these superheroes are set in. Following this, the thesis will look into the accuracy of discrimination these superheroes face if any is mentioned. There are also popular tropes in superhero storylines which include characters healing from their disabilities, the thesis aims to describe the narrative function of these instances and determine whether they serve a representative function in their respective comic books.

The comparative aspect of the thesis comes into function when examining descriptions of real-life disabilities, for this purpose using general explanations of these disabilities and looking at the general knowledge presented in the literary descriptions of disabilities in superhero comics. As these comics are part of a fantasy category, this thesis does take into account the progress of technology and the laws of the superhero world, which tends to lean into favor for the protagonists, disregarding the laws of physics of the real world.

When considering the impact of these superhero comics, this thesis considers fan responses and fan studies describing experiences of comic book readers with disabilities and the positive and negative impacts this representation has on the community.

1. Introduction

Superheroes and disabilities are not words commonly read together in most comic books, however, while looking deeper into the history of comic book superheroes there are circumstances in which disabilities which play an integral part of the characters storyline often times go unnoticed by the reader and sometimes the following narrative.

This thesis examines the representation of disability in comic books and explain that the concept of “disability” and “superhero” are terms which can coexist, ground and humanize the characters. In a broad context I argue that comics and graphic narratives are a part of literature as they use similar story telling narratives and themes as well as structures (visual and verbal/textual components).

Specifically, this thesis analyses characters from the Marvel Comic book universe, looking at both male and female representatives of the disabled community, comparing the characterization of their superpowers and their disabilities and determining whether the narrative aims to completely overwrite the disabilities or if the superpowers work together in balance with the characterization of these superheroes. For this purpose, this thesis uses comic studies as well as fan studies, showing research into the accurate and inaccurate representation of groups of people discriminated by the society because of general assumptions regularly spread by the rest of the society. This research works to identify how increased diversity and disability representation in media affect the real-life communities and whether this representation is discriminatory in nature or if the community benefits from this exposure.

The descriptions of disabilities are considered in the context of the comic book reality, the thesis accepts the advanced technological aspects of a fantastical reality such as power suits, mechanical arms and mutations, however, for this reason the integration of these disabilities this thesis focuses narrowly only human characters, which biology is the same as real life humans. The comparison is mainly examined between the general accurate real-life knowledge of the disabilities presented in the comic books and the specific descriptions and storylines written in them. The accuracy and inaccuracy of each represented disabilities then provides context to how the readers of the disabled community reacted to these characters as well as how able-bodied readers took to the characters and to the disabilities in general.

The first chapter of this thesis (Chapter 2) Methodology, is a guideline of the methods and terms used in this research project. Several terms which will be used throughout my

work are defined in this section for clarity of the reader, familiarizing them more with the topics described by this thesis.

Chapter 3 Background: Comic Books as Literature, briefly introduces the comic book era this thesis focuses on as well as providing context and proof to comic books being granted status as academic literature. Using studies by R. Duncan and M. Smith in *The Power of Comics*¹ examining the beginning of comic book narratives and stories as a whole and explaining what went into the process of crafting comic book panels and pacing as well as the visual representation of action happening. In the book *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment* James C. Lethbridge² explains the political context and inspiration for comic book superheroes, driving in the need for political propaganda during the time of the Cold War, which with its anti-Communist themes heavily influences comic book writers and artist in characterizing the protagonists of their stories. Finally, a discussion about the targeted demographic of comic books and the shift that happened during recent years as comic book became a more mainstream media.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) Superheroes with Disabilities, consists of the characterization and description of the chosen superheroes with disabilities, describing their background and the ways they overcome the struggles of being physically or mentally impaired as well as examining the narrative functions their disabilities serve for the story and whether this narrative is handled respectfully towards the disabled community. It further argues that more superheroes or more storyline should include a respectful and meaningful representation of disabilities helping to bring to light and normalize issues people with disabilities face. These concepts are explored through in-depth examinations of different comic book superheroes with disabilities.

The following chapter (Chapter 5) Comic Book Vs Reality, directly ties into the previous chapter and analyses the description of the superheroes disabilities and compares these descriptions with accurate medical knowledge of these disabilities in real life. This chapter serves as a way to look into the accuracy and discriminatory nature of some of these descriptions as the disabled community faces a lot of misconceptions and discriminations on daily basis. Understanding that most readers do not possess the detail

¹ Duncan, Randy and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York. 2009.

² Babic, Annessa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. 2014.

knowledge of each impairment these superheroes are faced with, leaves the writers a room for inaccuracies based on their assumptions of ignorance when it comes to the readers, and also their own general assumptions about the disabilities. In many cases the disabilities are only briefly mentioned, leaving no room for error on the part of the writer or artist, however, this leaves the disabled community only partly represented. The most common solution to superheroes struggling with disabilities seems to be moving past the impaired past of the superhero, giving them the solution to their situation right from the beginning of their story with only a few mentions alluding to the impairment.

Chapter 6 Benefits of Accurate Representation in Targeted Community, details the benefits of accurate representation for the disabled community and focuses on the reaction the comic books featuring depictions of disabled superheroes among those readers. Media representation is becoming more and more important in recent years especially when it comes to marginalized groups, making it more progressive as time goes on. This influence can be beneficial in bringing attention to issues that were previously not detailed or not discussed properly in society. This section provides information about important views representation brings to the community including normalization and awareness.

The next chapter (Chapter 7) Problems with Inaccurate Representation, analyses the opposite side of the discussion from previous chapter and analyses the ways inaccurate representation harms the views society has on issues like disability, making uneducated opinions more prevalent and spreading misconceptions about important struggles the people with disabilities have to go through each day. Inaccurate representation in media has proved to be harmful and has led to many people getting discriminated against. Modern media is a powerful tool which can both give and take benefits to those in need, these negative effects are mostly due to wrong information sources being confronted in research. With this chapter this thesis aims to present comic books as a medium whose influence should not be ignored as it is becoming more and more popular among young adults and children who are influenceable and should see themselves or others who may have disabilities represented accurately. It is important to note that in recent years writers and artists are aiming create positive and inclusive role models for their readers and it is mostly thanks to the fans themselves speaking on these issues that have helped these comics evolve over time to a medium who can represent minorities to their readers all across the world and educating them on serious and important topics.

2. Methodology

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the background of the theme of this thesis, in order to best contextualize and explain the approach and the process of building the main ideas and arguments.

I became interested in the comparison of superpowers and disabilities portrayed in modern action comic books and how they affect the perception of these disabilities for both disabled and able-bodied people. I started this research by looking for examples of disabled superheroes in the Marvel comic book universe, because of this I looked for sources explaining and examining the meaning of main terms used in this thesis to explain them.

Disability

A disability is any medical physical or psychological condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do daily activities and tasks or effectively interact with the world around them (socially or materially). These conditions, or impairments, may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory, or a combination of multiple factors. These impairments causing disability may be present from birth, inherited or occur during a person's lifetime by an accident or injury. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability as: a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others³.

Superhero

A “super” or a superhuman is any person possessing incredible “super” powers not natural to ordinary humans⁴, the hero in superhero describes the personality alignment of the character, categorizing them as someone protecting others and ordinary humans and doing good deeds. A person possessing superpowers may not automatically be categorized as a hero, this characteristic is based on the character's actions and whether they are morally correct. Typical example of a superhero from Marvel Comics is the character of Steve Rogers or Captain America. Any character who fluctuates between doing “good” and “evil” acts becomes morally ambiguous and is characterized as vigilante and is

³ UN General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007

⁴ CARNEY, SEAN. *The Function of the Superhero at the Present Time*. Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies. Volume 6, Issue 1. Article 7. Pp. 103. 2005.

therefore not a superhero despite being super, an example of this is a character of Wade Wilson or Deadpool, however this character has been received very positive and done more good deeds and for this reason and for his disabilities he is included amongst the superheroes this thesis describes.

Any character with incredible unusual abilities or super abilities morally opposing the side of the superhero is considered a super villain. These characters are typical for their lack of empathy, evil doings and their cult or “minion” following as they usually let others do the work for them. These characters are very straightforward and while they may have sympathetic backstories their characterization makes them evil and cruel.

Target community

Target community – is a community specifically aimed at for the production of a product – women or people possessing the female reproductive organs being the target community of pads or tampons. For the purpose of superhero comic books, the primary target community of these corporations are able-bodied heterosexual white male individuals, this however, does not prevent others not belonging to the target community from interacting with these products, but these people become more aware of the biases presented in the product itself or the marketing of said product. For this reason, the majority of comic heroes are able-bodied heterosexual white male individuals, however, this bias has been steadily decreasing in recent years with inclusivity and progressive writing of the comic books – empowering female characters, disabled characters and even characters of color. The most controversial inclusivity remaining towards characters with other sexual orientations as this is considered too risky in the market to other countries.

Normalization

The process of normalization refers to a process that makes something more normal or regular. Most commonly it refers to: Normalization (sociology) or social normalization, the process through which ideas and behaviors that may fall outside of social norms come to be regarded as "normal". This is done by letting people be repetitively in contact with the behavior considered not normal either by including it in media more prevalently or interacting with others who do not conform to the society's idea of the norm. For this reason, the media is a powerful tool used to shape and spread ideas of morality, good and evil and also what is normal and what is not.

Inclusion of main characters and superheroes with disabilities brings to attention the view others have of these disabilities and by portraying them in a positive or “normal” light the issues of these people become part of the society’s version of normal, making them more accessible and acceptable in the eyes of others.

Ableism

Ableism is discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities and/or people who are perceived to be disabled by society. This form of targeted discrimination characterizes people who are defined by their disabilities as inferior to the non-disabled making them be seen often times as lesser than human. On this basis, people are denied rights, commodities, jobs and housing. Ableism has many forms the same way discrimination has many forms, the most common one is prejudice at school or workplace – people with disabilities being denied jobs because of their disability. However, ableism extends even to laws and benefits people with disabilities receive, this makes marriage and even working difficult for people with disabilities as they face losing the benefits, they receive for their disability should their income (from a partner or from themselves) increase over a certain number.

Other forms of ableism come in physical form – abuse, confrontation or even something as small as questioning someone’s use of cane or the wheelchair are forms of discrimination. Many people with disabilities report being assaulted the majority of these people being women and women of color.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “Discrimination on the basis of disability” includes any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of the person’s disability impairing or nullifying general activities of usual daily life on an equal basis with others and all human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁵

⁵ UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007

3. Background: Comic Books as Literature

Comic books have increasingly become a popular and entertaining form of story-telling. As the creative direction moves towards more visual approach to stories, so do comic books come forward to take their place at the front stage. While comics are a more modern invention, art and literature have always been tied closely together, therefore it is no wonder that combining them in this form to tell exciting or tragic and emotional stories have gained popularity amongst all different groups of people.

This chapter will provide a brief history and introduction to comic books as it relates to superheroes and explain how comic books are a new interpretation of literature, combining both visual and classically narrative themes and functions.

3.1 History of action comic books

Comics in the form we know them now (notebook, book, strips, magazine) are a phenomenon that originated in the 20th century. However, it is worth mentioning that the ancestors of comics and their gradual beginnings can be found in the art of ancient Egypt or in murals in caves dating from the period of 2 thousand years BC. Illuminated medieval manuscripts, a tapestry from Bayeux, pre-Columbian picture manuscripts discovered by Cortes in 1519 or Trajan's Column can also be considered the forerunners of comics. The invention of book printing in the 15th century significantly contributed to the development of the predecessors of today's comics, because of the significant development of literature in general. Book printing made literature accessible to the general population in addition to the church and the nobility.⁶

Over time, many literary genres have emerged, and since the 20th century, they include comics in the form of individual notebooks or as part of a magazine. The history of modern comics created in the 20th century is quite complicated, especially due to the various genres explored in comics. Most often we can find western, adventure or just superhero comics. Then there are comics for children, politically oriented comics, erotic comics and many other categories according to their content and theme. This thesis is aimed on superhero comics and therefore only their history and development will be presented here.

As already mentioned before, the first modern comics were created in the 20th century, first in magazines and newspapers, so-called comic strips were published. Comic strips are

⁶ McCloud, Scott (writer, penciller). *Understanding Comics – The Invisible Art*. Kitchen Sink Press for HarperPerennial, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., pp. 10-16. 1993.

short series of pictures that tells a funny story, political satire or important lesson.⁷ If the individual strips were successful, they could be published in one comprehensive edition in a collection or book. Over time, comic strips became longer and occupied the entire stand in the newspaper, and topics other than jokes and politics began to appear in them. The first adventure, superhero and western comics began to appear. Gradually, magazines focused only on comic stories were created. Mario Saraceni considers the first of these comic magazines to be *New Fun Comics* from 1935. In 1937, the magazine *Detective Comics* was founded and a year later, *Action Comics* was founded.⁸

The first masked hero, *The Phantom*, saw the light of day in 1936 in the comic strips, then his stories were published in the *Ace Comics* magazine.⁹ The first issue of one of the most famous superheroes, Superman, was published in *Action Comic* in 1938.¹⁰ Presently, Superman belongs to the corporation of DC Comics, which is currently the main rivaling comic book company to Marvel Comics whose superheroes are being discussed and examined in this thesis. Due to the great popularity of comics about Superman, the super-summary comics quickly established itself as a new kind of comic literature.

As mentioned above, comics have many genres, the development of comics from simple comic strips and early comics to various genres took place in the 50s. However, due to frequent violence and crimes, the comics were subject to censorship and proofreading and had to be approved before publication, i.e., they had to be marked as Approved by the Comics Code Authority (CCA).¹¹

In the 1950s and 1960s, Marvel Comics published the first volume of the superhero comic book *Fantastic Four* (1961), and over the years Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created many other famous comic book heroes for the Marvel studio, such as Captain America, Iron Man, Daredevil and X-Men. Another great success was achieved by Marvel when it released a superhero named Spiderman into the world in 1963. The advantage of Marvel's heroes was that in many cases people could identify with them. Marvel humanized their heroes in many ways, especially in terms of character traits and physical characteristics, for example physical or mental disabilities, such as Daredevil, who is blind, or Moon Knight, who apparently has some kind of mental illness. How these mentally or physically

⁷ *Oxford student dictionary*, Oxford University Press. pp. 155. 2010.

⁸ Saraceni, Mario. *The Language of Comics*. Routledge. pp. 2. 2003.

⁹ Roach, D., Misiroglu, G., and Sanderson, P. "Phantom." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2017.

¹⁰ Siegel, Jerry (writer), Shuster, Joe (cover artist, penciller and inker), Adler, Jack (cover artist), Sullivan, Vincent (editor). *Action Comics Vol. 1 #1*. 1938.

¹¹ WOLK, DOUGLAS. *R.I.P.: The Comics Code Authority*. 2011.

handicapped heroes were portrayed in comics and whether and how their disabilities were distorted or downplayed will be the subject of the following chapters.

As Duncan R. and M. Smith state since the first appearance of comic books the storytelling and narrative techniques have developed with regards to demand and popularity and the need for more complex and engaging stories for adults as they became more interested in consuming this medium¹². These techniques and themes will be discussed more in later chapters; however, this shows that comic books did evolve throughout time and even popular media and literary works were adapted into a more entertaining form with comic books.

With the growing popularity of comic books, the topics became more varied and more targeted at young adults and teenagers, adapting more serious and political topics as Lethbridge describes in *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment* the relationship between USA and The Soviet Union also became a source of inspiration for comic book artists.¹³ The shift from humorous and comedic comics to superhero comics came around the time of World War II., it is a direct response to war propaganda and the need of the public for heroes with powers to save them and give them hope. These new comics do not always lose their previously light-hearted moments; however, they also deal with more aggressive themes and combat driven narratives. The superhero characters give readers a chance to see themselves in dangerous situations from which they can then emerge victorious.

These new comics are showcase of anti-communist propaganda as well as antifascist movements, rallying people to the American cause, giving them new reasons to believe in freedom and liberty and to support them. This became a very popular tactic among politically fluent writers and artists as they could reach upper middle- and lower-class citizen thanks to the colorful images and powerful slogans, which they gave to the heroes to promote the ideas of American government and idealism.

R. Duncan and M. Smith describe, the story of the superhero is not what stays in the mind of the reader as much as the motivation, appearance and powers.¹⁴ The superheroes take on stereotypical traits and visually simple yet diverse and distinct costumes and visual

¹² Duncan, Randy and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York. Pp: 233. 2009.

¹³ Babic, Annessa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Pp: 114. 2014.

¹⁴ Duncan, Randy and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York. Pp: 236. 2009.

characteristics to be easily recognizable and memorable for the wider public. This helps both to keep reader's attention and engage potential readers from the very first page. Effectively making superheroes more profitable than any other character mediums, because their identity is so tied in the characterization and not the overall plot and narrative of their comics.

3.2 Comic Books as Literature

For a long time, comic books were as mentioned before a story-telling medium for children and therefore dismissed by the wider public of mostly adults and elderly for their simplistic nature catering to the younger population. However, as the topics of comic books expanded and started encompassing adult themes a shift happened and nowadays comic books tend to cater towards young adults with themes of self-realization, perseverance and also exploring the topics of depression, trauma and death.

As Annesa Babic finds, this shift in the comic books sphere did not go unnoticed and this modern medium became recognized in literary circles because of the depth and heaviness of subjects discussed. The visualization of narratives incorporating specific panels and fonts made impact on the reader's experience on a different level than just by reading simple text.¹⁵ It was this combination of art and literature, which would mark a shift in story-telling media as a whole especially becoming prominent in film making as superhero narratives became popular and among other things profitable products in the film culture. This can be seen in early interpretations of DC comics – Batman, captivating audiences with quirky yet engaging and visually engaging superhero.

Comic books captivated the market, evolving from simple comic strips included in newspapers into full comic books, which readers could and did purchase on their own. The writers saw an opportunity to expand the market, including both glamour and education veiled in exciting superhero stories, making this medium uniquely its own culture.¹⁶

The process of creating a comic book became less about short jokes strung together and more about complex story-telling structures with deep meaning sometimes hidden in plain sight, in a change of color or font. Every part of a comic book page receives as much

¹⁵ Babic, Annesa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Pp: 12. 2014.

¹⁶ Babic, Annesa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Pp: 13. 2014.

thought as a page in a book, therefore, comic books should be considered a valid form of literature.

This medium has a lot of freedom and opportunity for visual creativity, which compared to literature can be seen more in poetry than in prose.¹⁷ Many comic book authors include symbols, syntax choices and the choices of the size of each panel to create a narrative for the reader – the rhythm and pace at which the story unfolds, similar to rhythm and pace of poetry.

The road to success the comic book medium receives in today's culture was not easy and many academic studies were skeptical about allowing such juvenile and child-like picture books into the same literary standing as academic books. In the early 1950s this started to change as a push for education became primary subject in the general public. The educational potential of comic books was rising, because of their entertaining premise and uncomplicated structure which made them easy to understand and popular among the younger population. In 1956 an article called for educators to include comic books in elementary education and mental development, causing a spur of illustrated children's comic books to receive awards in the category of Children's literature. From this point on the comic book media started spreading to different categories and age groups.¹⁸

As James C. Lethbridge explains the fears of the general public made an impression on literature as whole in the 1950s, people needed a way to cope with these fears get used to them and not let them overcome their everyday life.¹⁹ This became a leading cause of superhero comics as they provided a distraction and a hope for better tomorrow in the form of both entertainment and a promise of heroes to save the day if need be. These hopeful comics translated well within the fearful masses and rapidly gained popularity – unifying young adults across the country of America.

This popularity had to be translated in academic works and the academic sphere started accepting comic books as a valid source of enlightenment and propaganda, as comic books proved to be easily capitalized on by the viewpoints of American patriotism.

¹⁷ Duncan, Randy and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York. Pp: 240. 2009.

¹⁸ Babic, Annessa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Pp: 120. 2014.

¹⁹ Babic, Annessa A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Pp: 122. 2014.

4. Superheroes with Disabilities

4.1 Introduction to Superheroes

Possibly since the beginning of time people have been fascinated by stories about people with special abilities, magical powers and the character of the “chosen one”. Superheroes take this into another level with multiple seemingly ordinary people leading secret exciting lives and hiding their unnatural superhuman abilities behind the mask of a hero or a villain. No power is left behind and sometimes the world of superheroes seems as though there are perhaps too many for those special ones to feel properly special, nonetheless, it is a widely popular genre full of spectacle action and adrenaline.

However, as much as the word superpower encompasses strength and authority over regular humans it does not exclude these superhumans from being human. Even these characters can go through struggles, losses and even disabilities. Making them engaging and grounded in the world where people look up to them and feel inspired by them, those with disabilities perhaps even more than others.

As good as this representation might be there is a very big window of error. This chapter of the thesis will look at some of these chosen ones who are considered disabled in different ways and attempt to analyze whether this representation could be harmful or positive towards the community.

4.2 Bucky Barnes (The Winter Soldier)

James Buchanan “Bucky” Barnes, known as Winter Soldier, was first introduced in comics about the hero Captain America as his plucky teen sidekick in 1941 (*Captain America Comics Vol.1 #1* (1941)). The comic book character Bucky Barnes was created by writers and artist Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. Over the years, Bucky's character has undergone many changes. Bucky Barnes was originally killed off in 1964 (*The Avengers Vol.1 #4* (1964)) and remained dead for some time before being brought back to life in the Winter Soldier storyline in 2004. In the new storyline, Bucky was no longer a boy, and his story took on a dark and tragic narrative.²⁰

²⁰ Brubaker, Ed (writer); Epting, Steve (cover artist, penciler, inker); Perkins, Mike (inker); D’Armata, Frank (colorist); Eliopoulos, Chris (letterer); Brevoort, Tom; Schmidt, Andy; Lazer, Molly; Sitterson, Aubrey (editors). *Captain America Vol. 5 #8*. Marvel Comics. 2004.

In a comics *Captain America Vol. 9 #6* (2018), one of the Captain America's friends tells the captain, “I think — I think it’s Bucky!”²¹, when he described a man with long brown hair and a bionic arm with a communist red star (Fig. 1). Bucky lost his hand when he survived a small plane explosion, suffered from amnesia after the accident and was rescued by a Russian officer, and the Russians used him as an assassin because of his amnesia and implanted bionic arm. However, Bucky began to remember over time, and the Russians placed him in a suspended animation (slowing down or stopping biological function to maintain physiological abilities).



Fig. 1: A depiction of Bucky Burns with a bionic arm in an excerpt from *Captain America Vol. 9 #6* (2018). Photo: Steve Epting/Marvel

Unfortunately, the comics do not elaborate on Bucky's experience with his injuries, but in the films from the Marvel studio that filmed his story, it was mentioned that Bucky suffers from phantom pain syndrome due to the loss of his limb.

²¹ Coates, Ta-Nehisi (writer); Ross, Alex (cover artist); Yu, Leinil Francis (penciler); Alanguilan, Gerry (inker); Gho, Sunny (colorist); Caramagna, Joe (letterer); Brevoort, Tom (editor). *Captain America Vol. 9 #6*. Marvel Comics. 2018.

4.3 Charles Xavier (Professor X)

Professor Charles Francis Xavier, otherwise known as Professor X, is a character from American comics published by Marvel Comics, created by writer Stan Lee and screenwriter/co-writer Jack Kirby. The character of Professor X first appeared in the comic book *The X-Men Vol.1 #1* (1963). In comics, the character is portrayed as the founder and sometimes leader of the X-Men. Xavier is a mutant, a subspecies of people born with superhuman abilities. His main ability is strong telepathy, so Professor X can read and control the minds of others. In the comic, Xavier is a paraplegic who uses either a classic wheelchair (Fig. 2) or a modified version of one.²²



Fig. 2: The picture shows Charles Xavier in his wheelchair in an excerpt from comics *Astonishing X-Men Vol. 4 #7* (2018). Photo: Phil Noto/Marvel.

²² SOULE, CHARLES (writer); Cheung, Jim (cover artist, penciler); Keith, Jason (cover artist); Morales, Mark; Ortego, Guillermo; Wong, Walden (inkers); Isanove, Richard; Beredo, Rain (colorists); Cowles, Clayton (letterer); Paniccia, Mark; Harrington, Christina (editors). *Astonishing X-Men Vol 4 #1*. Marvel Comics, 2018.

In the comic, the story of Xavier and his confinement in a wheelchair is much sadder and more complicated. Xavier was confined to a wheelchair at a relatively young age. Originally, Xavier lost use of his feet in a comic book called *Uncanny X-Men Vol. 1 #20* (1963)²³, published in 1966, which told a story before the founding of the X-Men. In his youth, Xavier was a gifted athlete, comparing his dancing skills to actor and dancer Gene Kelly. During his travels in the Himalayas, Xavier met an alien Lucifer, who threw a giant stone block at him and damaged his legs. Although Xavier was able to call for help, he was permanently confined to a wheelchair.

During the development of the story, Xavier was able to use his legs regularly again (e.g., *X-Men TPB: X-Cutioner's Song Vol. 1* (1994), which is a collection of previously published comics; *Uncanny X-Men Vol. 1 #167* (1963), published 1983 etc.)²⁴, but there were always other accidents causing him to lose his ability to walk once again.

All these changes must have affected Xavier's psyche, because when the feeling in his legs returned, he could not believe it, then after it happened and he believed, he lost the ability to walk soon after and this reversal of fate occurred several times in the character's story, which would presumably affected one's mental health.

4.4 Clint Barton (Hawkeye)

Clint Barton, called Hawkeye, is a character from Marvel comics and first appeared in 1964 in *Tales of Suspense Vol. 1 #57* (1964)²⁵. The author of Clint Barton is Stan Lee. Clint Barton became a prominent member of the group of superheroes called the Avengers and first appeared in the Avengers comic in 1969, but not as Hawkeye but as Goliath (*Avengers Vol. 1 #63* (1969))²⁶.

In the comic book miniseries *Hawkeye Vol. 1 #1-4* (1983)²⁷, it was mentioned that Hawkeye's eardrums were damaged by a sound explosion. Hawkeye's disability was not

²³ Thomas, Roy (writer); Roth, Werner (penciler); Ayers, Dick (inker); Simek, Art (letterer). *Uncanny X-Men #20*. Marvel Comics. 1963.

²⁴ Claremont, Chris (writer); Smith, Paul (cover artist, penciler); Wiacek, Bob (inker); Wein, Glynis; Yanchus, Andy (colorists); Orzechowski, Tom (letterer); Jones, Louise; Fingerth, Danny (editors). *Uncanny X-Men #167*. Marvel Comics. 1983.

²⁵ Lee, Stan (writer); Heck, Don (cover artist, penciler, inker); Rosen, Sam (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Tales of Suspense #57*. Marvel Comics. 1964.

²⁶ Thomas, Roy (writer); Colan, Gene (cover artist, penciler) Klein, George (inker); Simek, Artie (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Avengers Vol 1 #63*. Marvel Comics. 1969.

²⁷ Gruenwald, Mark (writer, penciler, cover artist); Breeding, Brett (cover artist, inker); Sharen, Bob (colorist); Rosen, Joe (letterer); O'Neil, Dennis (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1983.

written in detail in the comics, nor was his disability depicted, only that he wore hearing aids several times (Fig. 3). Hawkeye was not visibly impaired, and his hearing impairment did not interfere with his work with superheroes or his daily life.



Fig. 3. Hawkeye's hearing aid in an excerpt from comics *Hawkeye Vol. 4 #22* (2012).

Photo: Matt Fraction and David Aja/Marvel.

The character of Hawkeye was resurrected in the comic book series *Heroes Reborn* (1996-1997) and his hearing was fully functional. However, in his solo comics, Clint became deaf again. In comic book *Hawkeye Vol. 4 #5* (2012)²⁸, he was attacked by the villain Clown, who stabbed him in both ears with Hawkeye's arrow. The comic book authors Matt Fraction and David Aja decided to adapt the comic book to a hearing-impaired hero. In *Hawkeye Vol. 4 #19* (2012)²⁹, published 2014, we follow the story from Clint's point of view, so the bubbles are empty, or the letters are distorted and most of the dialogues take place in sign language. The story is therefore told mainly visually. The

Gruenwald, Mark (writer, penciler, cover artist); Layton, Bob (cover artist); Breeding, Brett (inker); Sharen, Bob (colorist); Rosen, Joe (letterer); O'Neil, Dennis (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #2*. Marvel Comics. 1983.

Gruenwald, Mark (writer, penciler, cover artist); Layton, Bob (cover artist); Bulanadi, Danny; Brown, Eliot (inkers); Scheele, christie (colorist); Rosen, Joe (letterer); O'Neil, Dennis (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 1983.

Gruenwald, Mark (writer, penciler, cover artist); Layton, Bob (cover artist); Bulanadi, Danny; Brown, Eliot; Akin, Ian; Garvey Brian (inkers); Sharen, bob (colorist); Rosen, Joe (letterer); O'Neil, Dennis (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #4*. Marvel Comics. 1983

²⁸ Fraction, Matt (writer); Aja, David (cover artist); Pulido, Javier (penciler, inker); Hollingsworth, Matt (colorist); Eliopoulos, Chris (letterer); Wacker, Stephen (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 4 #5*. Marvel Comics. 2012.

²⁹ Fraction, Matt (writer); Aja, David (cover artist, penciler, inker, letterer); Hollingsworth, Matt (colorist); Eliopoulos, Chris (letterer); Wacker, Stephen (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 4 #19*. Marvel Comics. 2014.

authors deliberately make it difficult to read the story using sign language without providing translation. The hero's disability became part of the comics (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Example of Hawkeye using sign language and empty speech bubbles in an excerpt from comics *Hawkeye Vol. 4 #19* (2012). Photo: Matt Fraction and David Aja/Marvel.

4.5 Eddie McDonough (Hornet)

In the Marvel Universe, four characters, two villains and two heroes are hiding under the Hornets identity of which, the first and third namesakes suffer from some form of disability. The first version of Hornet was created by Joseph Harris, Tod DeZag and Mike Wiering, and for the first time the character Hornet appeared in the comic book *Slingers Vol. 1 #0* (1998).³⁰

One of the characters hiding under the nickname Hornet was Eddie McDonough. Eddie was born with a paralyzed right hand, and during adolescence, children feared or ridiculed

³⁰ Harris, Joseph (writer); Cross, Chris (cover artist, penciler); Stull, Rob (inker); Serrano, Felix (colorist); Agraphiotis, Liz (letterer). *Slingers*. Marvel Comics. 1998.

him for his disability. Eddie became a loner. While studying at university, he joined a team of superheroes called the Slingers.

Eddie was a scientist and inventor, given Spiderman's old Hornet costume (Fig. 5), which he modified to hide his handicap, added armament to the costume, and lightened it all so that it could be worn better (*Slingers Vol. 1 #0* (1998))³¹. By becoming the new Hornet, Eddie gained confidence. In addition, the suit increased his strength, and it was not easy to tell that he had one arm atrophied.



Fig. 5: Depiction of a Hornet in his suit in an excerpt from comics *Slingers Vol. 1 #1* (1998). Photo: Adam Pollina/Marvel.

4.6 Jubilation “Jubilee” Lee

Jubilee "Jubilee" Lee is a fictional superhero from American comics published by Marvel Comics, most often in collaboration with the X-Men comics section. This character

³¹ Harris, Joseph (writer); Cross, Chris (cover artist, penciler); Stull, Rob (inker); Serrano, Felix (colorist); Agraphtotis, Liz (letterer). *Slingers*. Marvel Comics. 1998.

was created by writer Chris Claremont and artist Marc Silvestri and first appeared in *Uncanny X-Men Vol. 1 # 244* (1983)³², published in 1989.

The Jubilee is also a member of a human subspecies known as a mutant, similar to the already mentioned Charles Xavier (Professor X). Jubilee was portrayed in the comics as an orphaned "mall rat" from Beverly Hills and joined the X-Men in the 90s. Due to her age she became the youngest member of the team of X-men and often playing a sidekick role to Wolverine (Fig. 6), with whom she had a very strong bond. Her special features include the ability to generate pyrotechnic energy discharges from one's own hands.

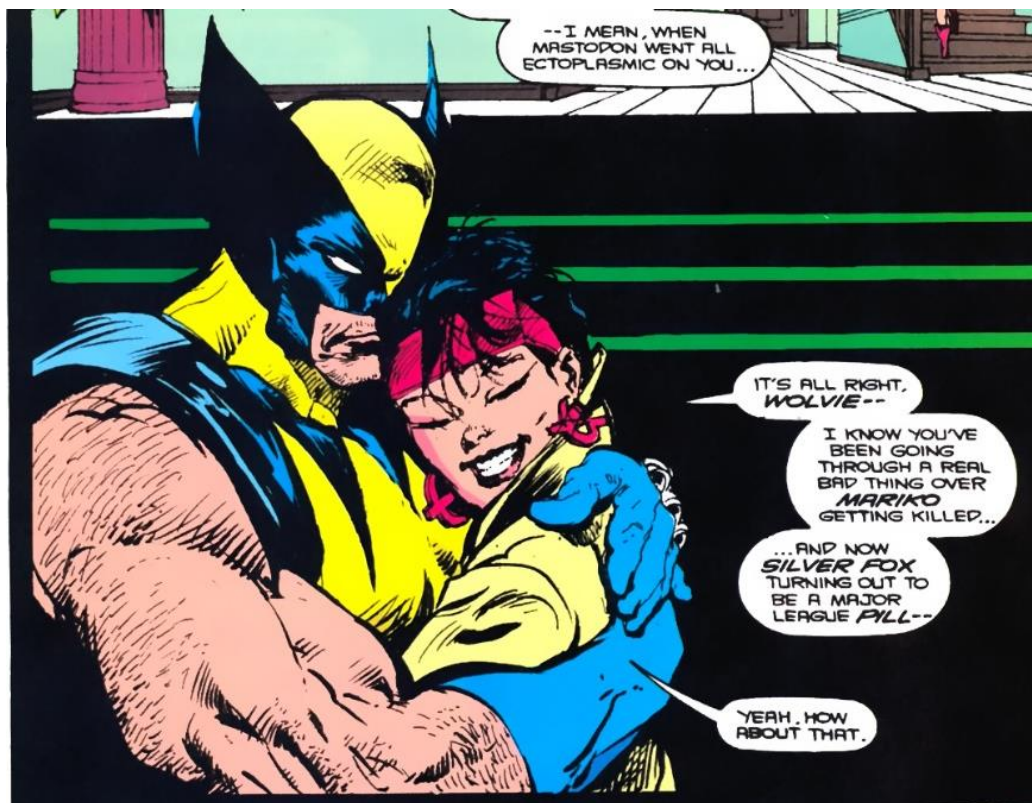


Fig. 6: Comic book illustration of Jubilee with Wolverine in an excerpt from *Wolverine Vol. 2 #62* (1992)³³. Photo: Mark Texeira/Marvel.

In school, Jubilee often faced learning difficulties and poor grades. However, she was soon diagnosed with a learning disability because she was unable to deal with numbers and counting. This disorder is called dyscalculia. Due to dyscalculia, Jubilee had a complicated

³² Claremont, Chris (writer); Silvestri, Marc (cover artist, penciler); Green, Dan (cover artist, inker); Oliver, Glynis (colorist); Orzechowski, Tom (letterer); Harras, Bob; Gruenwald, Mark (editors). *Uncanny X-Men #244*. Marvel Comics. 1989.

³³ Hama, Larry (writer); Texeira, Mark (cover artist, penciler, inker); Javins, Marie (colorist); Brosseau, Pat (letterer); Harras, Bob; Patrick, Lisa (editors). *Wolverine Vol. 2 #62*. Marvel Comics. 1992.

relationship with her parents and there were a lot of misunderstandings and tensions between them. In addition, her parents had relatively strict demands on her in terms of education and it was difficult to please them because the illness complicated her studies. For these reasons, Jubilation in her own family became a bit of an outcast and gradually stopped trying to gain their understanding.

The Jubilee is transformed into a vampire during *X-Men Vol. 3 #1: Curse of the Mutants* (2010) and remained a sporadic character on this title through Release # 27 (comics *X-Men Vol. 3 #27* (2012)), as well as a supporting character in comics *X-23 Vol. 3* from 2010 to 2011.

According to the rules of the Marvel Universe, vampires suffer from arithmomania, which is a compelling desire to count. In addition to garlic or stakes, throwing rice under one's feet is a deterrent based on folk myths told in this comic world against vampires. According to all information, the Jubilee is vulnerable to all known vampire weaknesses, so it is very likely that she could suffer from arithmomania.

4.7 Marc Spector (Moon Knight)

Moon Knight (or Marc Spector) is a fictional character from Marvel Universe comics created by writer Doug Moench and artist Don Perlin.

The character Moon Knight first appeared in a comic book *Werewolf by Night Vol. 1 #32* (1975).³⁴

The original Moon Knight was a mercenary and former CIA scarecrow who acquired his abilities from the Egyptian moon god Khonshu.

The authors of the new reboot from 2011 (*Moon Knight Vol. 6 #1-12* (2011-2012)), writer Brian Michael Bendis and artist Alex Maleey, decided to make changes to the character of the character Moon Knight to make the character more interesting. So, in addition to the bad guys, Moon Knight also started fighting his mental illness.

If we focus not on the disease that the Moon Knight suffers from, then a bite of people assume that it is schizophrenia, but a more accurate designation is a dissociative identity disorder.

³⁴ Moench, Doug (writer), Kane, Gil; Milgrom, Al (cover artists); Perlin, Don (penciler); Perlin Howie (inker); Rachelson, Phil (colorist); Holloway, Ray (letterer); Wein, Len (editor). *Werewolf by Night Vol. 1 #32*. Marvel Comics. 1975.

Moon Knight has visions of and conversations with Spider-Man, Captain America (*Moon Knight Vol. 6 #6* (2011))³⁵ and Wolverine etc. that lead to him figuring out solutions to problems long before these characters know there's anything wrong (Fig. 7).

This ability illustrates his disability as an advantage that makes him a better superhero and, in a way, reduces and alleviates the problems of people who suffer from this disease in real life.

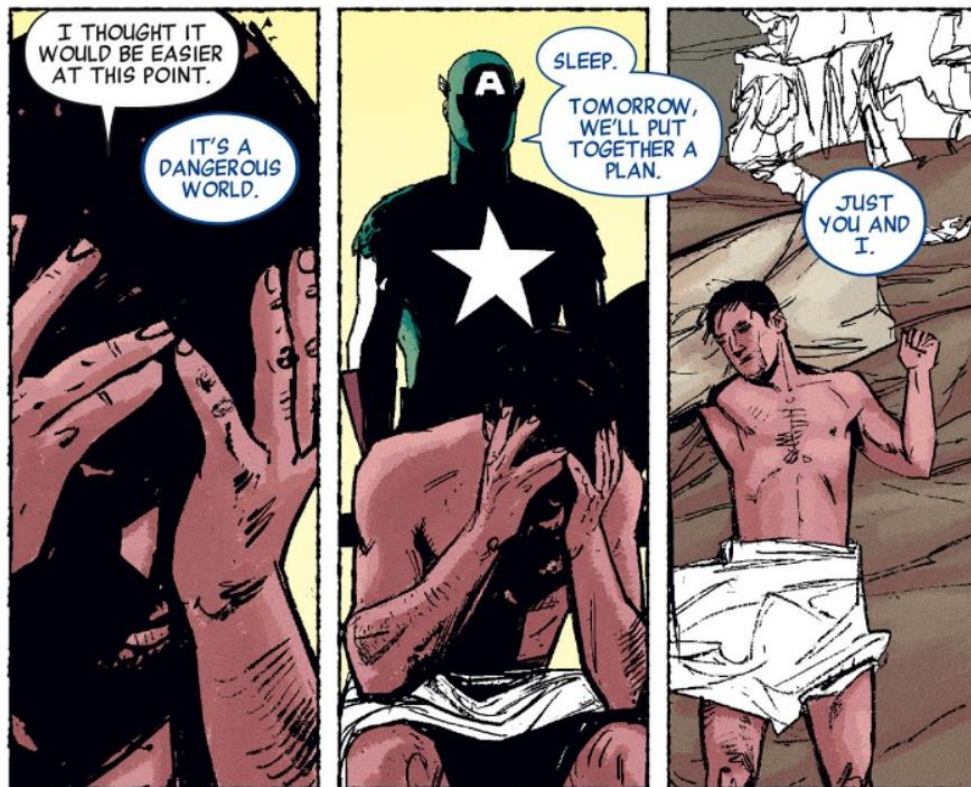


Fig. 7: An excerpt from the comic *Moon Knight Vol. 6 #6* (2011) shows Moon Knight and his personality of Captain America. Photo: Alex Maleev/Marvel.

4.8 Matthew Murdock (Daredevil)

Matthew Murdock became famous in comics from the Marvel Universe under the name Daredevil. The character of the Daredevil, Matthew Murdock, was created by writer-editor Stan Lee and artist Bill Everett, with unspecified contributions from Jack Kirby.

Daredevil introduced himself to readers for the first time in a comic book called *Daredevil Vol. 1 #1* (1964).³⁶

³⁵ Bendis, Brian Michael (writer); Maleev, Alex (cover artist, penciler, inker); Wilson Matthew (colorist); Petit, Cory (letterer); Brevoort, Tom (editor). *Moon Knight Vol. 6 #6*. Marvel Comics. 2011.

³⁶ Lee, Stan (writer); Kirby, Jack (cover artist); Everett, Bill (cover artist, penciler, inker); Ditko, Steve; Brodsky, Sol (inkers); Rosen, Sam (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Daredevil Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1964.

As a child, Matthew Murdock was blinded by radioactive material in the accident, and his special abilities stem from the accident (*Daredevil Vol. 1 #1* (1964)). Although he does not see when exposed to radioactive material, his other senses improve and sharpen to a superhuman level. It can be said that it has a radar capability similar to echolocation, in other words blindsight (*Daredevil Vol.1 # 3* (1964)) (Fig. 8).³⁷ As a result, few characters know that daredevil doesn't actually see it.

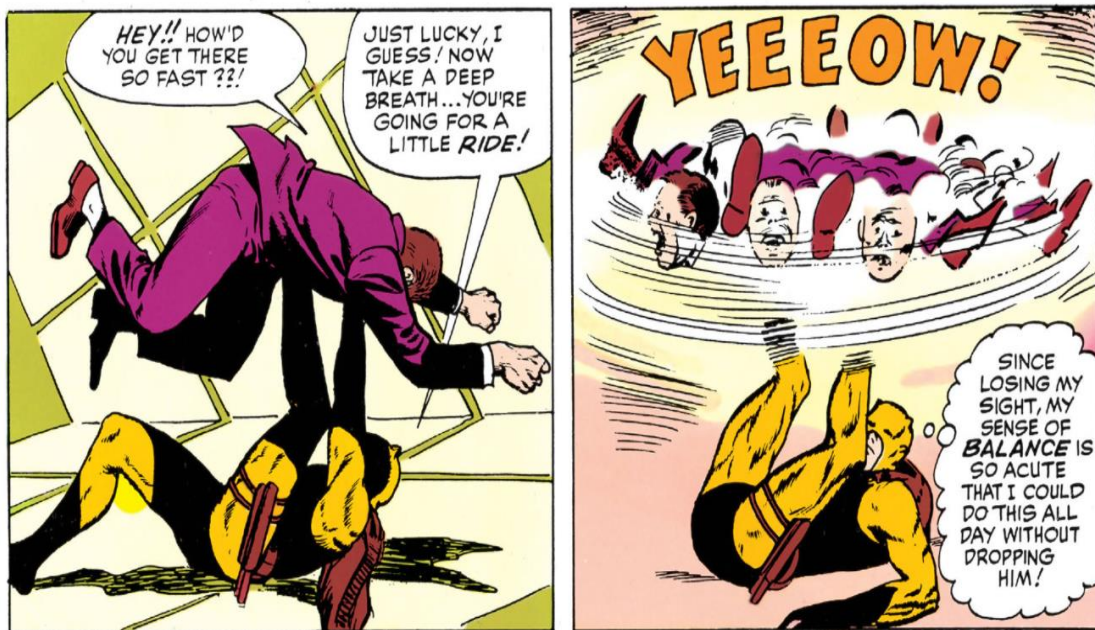


Fig. 8: An excerpt from the comic *Daredevil Vol.1 # 3* (1964) depicts a fighting blind Daredevil. Photo: Joe Orlando/Marvel

The story of Matthew Murdock shows that his disability is good for him, because thanks to his abilities he can see in a different way, thanks to sounds and echoes.

Thanks to his sharpened senses and otherwise called his inner sight, he is able to be a capable superhero and fight crime.

4.9 Melati Kusuma (Komodo)

Komodo is a character created by writer Dan Slott and artist Stefano Caselli, and first appeared in comics *Avengers: The Initiative Vol. 1 #1* (2007).

³⁷ Lee, Stan (writer); Kirby, Jack (cover artist); Colletta, Vince (cover artist, inker); Orlando, Joe (penciler); Rosen, Sam (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Daredevil Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 1964.

Melati Kusuma is a former graduate student who stole regenerative Lizard Formula from Dr Connors. Melati adjusted the stolen serum for her DNA and applied it to herself. In her human form, Melati is a woman with a double leg amputation. The application of the serum corrected Melati's legs, which were amputated, but only in the case of her transformation into a super-strong lizard beast, which has the ability to regenerate lost limbs.

For the character Melati Kusuma, it cannot be said that the treatment of the character and its development in the stories is fair or inspiring for the reader.

For example, in a comic *Avengers: The Initiative Vol. 1 #3* (2007)³⁸, Melati is threatened with depriving her abilities. Melati collapses and claims that without her abilities and therefore without her legs (Fig. 9), she is no one, which would show that people with the same disabilities are in the same situation as her and they are also useless.



Fig. 9: Illustration of Komodo distressed after Spiderman threatens her in an excerpt from *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1. #3* (2007). Photo: Stefano Caselli/Marvel.

It is not appropriate to diminish a character's character simply to its usefulness as superheroes with superpowers, when its power stems from overcoming the obstacles, it has faced and realizing that it does not need superpowers.

At one point she demonstrates the bravery to show her true form with disabilities to a character Hardball in *Avengers: The Initiative Vol. 1 #8* (2008), breaking the Initiative's secret identity rule in the process, however, he dismisses her as “just a girl!” because of her

³⁸ Slott, Dan (writer); Cheung, Jim; Dell, John; Ponsor, Justin (cover artists); Caselli, Stefano (penciler, inker); Rudoni, Daniele (colorist); Caramagna, Joe (letterer); Brevoort, Tom; Lazer, Molly (editors). *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 2007.

non-mutated but disabled form.³⁹ While CBR may question the way in which she's represented, it is good Marvel did not simply opt to "cure" her, though too many characters are re-characterized in such a way that removes their disability in order for them to be more relatable and flexible for the narrative.

4.10 Steven Strange (Doctor Strange)

Doctor Stephen Strange is a character created by Steve Ditko and Stan Lee, inspired by the radio play Chandu the Magician. The character of Doctor Strange first appeared in *Strange Tales Vol. 1 #110* (1963).

Stephen Strange was originally a very talented but egoistic surgeon. However, in a car accident (*Doctor Strange: The Oath Vol. 1 #2* (2007)), Dr Stephen Strange was injured in the hands so much that he lost his ability to operate (Fig. 10).⁴⁰



Fig. 10: Illustration of Stephen Strange after his surgery in an excerpt from *Doctor Strange: The Oath Vol. 1 #2* (2007). Photo: Marcos Martin/Marvel.

³⁹ Slott, Dan; Gage, Christos N. (writers); Caselli, Stefano (cover artist, penciler, inker); Rudoni, Daniele (colorist); Caramagna, Joe (letterer); Brevoort, Tom; Lazer, Molly (editors). *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1 #8*. Marvel Comics. 2008.

⁴⁰ Vaughan, Brian K. (writer); Martin, Marcos (cover artist, penciler, inker); Rodriguez, Javier (colorist); Schubert, Willie (letterer); Brevoort, Tom; Lazer, Molly; Stitterson, Aubrey (editors). *Doctor Strange: The Oath Vol 1 #2*. Marvel Comics. 2007.

Trying to find healing options for his hands around the world, Stephen encountered the Ancient One, the Sorcerer Supreme, and began learning to be a master of both mystical and martial arts. He acquires some mystical objects, including the powerful Eye of Agamotto and Cloak of Levitation, and takes up residence in a mansion referred to as the Sanctum Sanctorum in the New York City. Strange assumes the title of Sorcerer Supreme defends the world from mystical threats.

Considering his initial injuries, he does not appear to have a significant problem with the use of his hands, which in turn reduces his original need for treatment, as he is able to perform martial arts.

It could simply be the selfishness of the character that drives him to look for a way to get rid of his disability, but in the end, it does not seem to change his overall characterization, and instead plays simply as a means to drive the story forward.

4.11 Wade Wilson (Deadpool)

Deadpool is a fictional character who first appeared in *The New Mutants Vol. 1 #98* (1991). Initially Deadpool was depicted as a supervillain when he made his first appearance in *The New Mutants* and later in issues of *X-Force*, but later evolved into an antihero because of his popularity.

The character of Deadpool has a variety undiagnosed and undefined mental illnesses. Most assume they are either the result of his brain cancer (*Deadpool Vol. 3 #-1* (1997)⁴¹; *Deadpool Vol. 4 #11*(2009)⁴²; *Deadpool Vol. 4 #60* (2012)⁴³) or the ongoing medical torture he's received throughout the years. Very little is known about Deadpool before his diagnosis of terminal cancer but regardless of whether he was neurologically divergent before this time or not his childhood was very hard in ways that disabled children are very familiar with - Parental/caretaker abuse/abandonment, and socially "other-ring" in childhood (*Deadpool Vol. 3 #36* (2000); *X-Men Origins: Deadpool Vol. 1 #1* (2010)⁴⁴). A

⁴¹ Kelly, Joe (writer); McGuinness, Ed (cover artist, penciler) Massengill, Nathan; Lee, Norman (inkers); Lichtner, Chris (colorist); Starkings, Richard; Comicroft; Lanphear, Dave (letterers); Idelson, Matt (editor). *Deadpool Vol 3 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1997.

⁴² Way, Danie (writer); Pearson, Jason (cover artist); Medina, Paco (penciler); Vlasco, Juan (inker); Gracia, Marte (colorist); Petit, VC's Cory (letterer); Alonso, Axel; Leheup, Jody (editors). *Deadpool Vol 4 #11*. Marvel Comics. 2009.

⁴³ Way, Daniel (writer); Johnson, Dave (cover artist); Espin, Salvador (penciler, inker); Guru-Efx (colorist); Sabino, Joe (letterer); White, Jordan D. (editor). *Deadpool Vol 4 #60*. Marvel Comics. 2012.

⁴⁴ Swierczynski, Duane (writer); Brooks, Mark (cover artist); Fernández, Leandro (penciler, inker); Buccellato, Steve (colorist); Eckleberry, Jeff (letterer); Alonso, Axel (editor). *X-Men Origins: Deadpool Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 2010.

lot of fans debate that his mental disorders are most likely schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder also called DID.

Other than that, because of his traumatic past Deadpool also clearly suffers from PTSD, anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies, however because he cannot die and his injuries heal these scenes are most often played for comic relief as he comes back minutes later after shooting himself in the head (*Deadpool Corps: Rank and Foul Vol.1 #1* (2010)⁴⁵; *Thunderbolts Vol. 1 #131* (2009)⁴⁶). Though this also implies one of Deadpool's coping mechanisms is humor which makes him likeable and relatable and popular among both disabled and able-bodied fans.

The only clear physical disabilities are his deformities along with chronic pain, which formed as a result of medical experimentation after his diagnosis of cancer (*Deadpool Vol. 3 #1* (1997)⁴⁷).

It can also be said that he deals with many other things disabled people are familiar with in their day-to-day life and that is ableism from able-bodied people. Whenever he genuinely deals with ableism openly, he is seen as bitter and lazy by the audience or the onlookers of the situation. And although he tends to make friendships with the less advantaged and likewise disabled people, they tend not to want to be associated with him when in public, discriminating against him because he does not conform to the standards of society.

More often than not Deadpool gets simply disregarded as “crazy” or people try to find a “method to his madness” without looking too deep into the psyche and trauma of the character.

⁴⁵ Christiansen, Jeff and Co. *Deadpool Corps: Rank and Foul Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 2010.

⁴⁶ Diggle, Andy (writer); Matina, Francesco (cover artist); Dazo, Bong (penciler); Pimentel, Joe (inker); Martin, Frank Jr., Kosoki, Giovanni (colorists); Deschesne, Albert (letterer); Rosemann, Bill (editor). *Thunderbolts Vol 1 #131*. Marvel Comics. 2009.

⁴⁷ Kelly, Joe (writer); McGuinness, Ed (cover artist, penciler) Massengill, Nathan; Lee, Norman (inkers); Lichtner, Chris (colorist); Starkings, Richard; Comcraft; Lanphear, Dave (letterers); Idelson, Matt (editor). *Deadpool Vol 3 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1997.

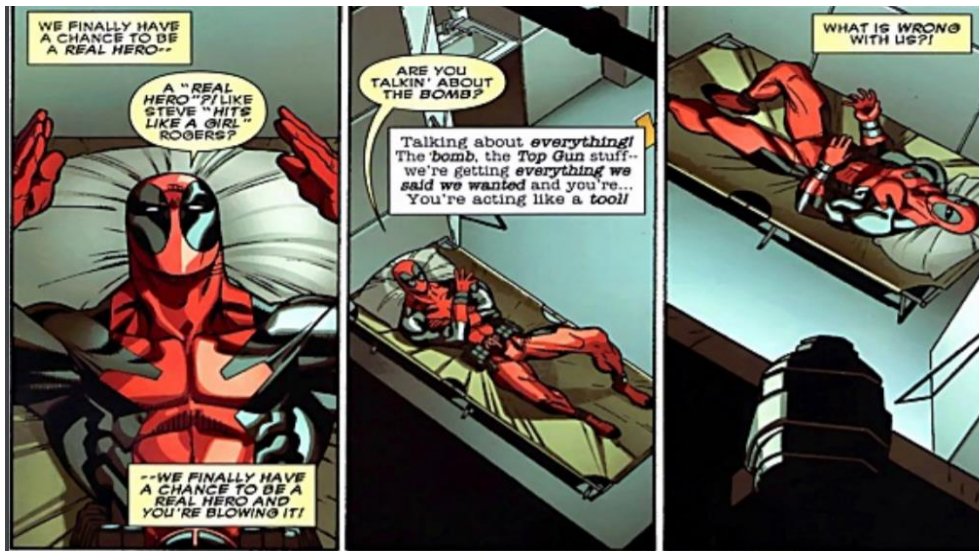


Fig. 11: Illustration of Deadpool talking to his inner voices in an excerpt from *Deadpool #28* (2008). Photo: Dave Johnson/Marvel

4.12 The Verdict

The examples in this chapter show that there is much improvement to be made in the case of accurately representing a marginalized and often discriminated community. Making the character's disability their accessory or something they feel ashamed about only perpetuates the stigma, telling others to look down upon people affected by these common characteristics. A character who feels they are nothing without the use of their legs could be compelling should their journey through the comics be about finding acceptance, however, if the character is only stationary and never changes this character trait becomes insulting to those struggling with the same acceptance (e.g., Komodo). A character with disability searching for a cure finds their superpower and their disability only proves to be a driving point to get said character from destination A to destination B without acknowledging the struggles which continue even after that point (e.g., Doctor Strange).

Another insulting example of discrimination is of course the case of Professor X where he is cured multiple times, but ultimately ending up in a wheelchair anyway. This kind of back and forth is unhealthy and generally not very imaginative when it comes to compelling storytelling. Professor X already overcame his obstacle and is an established powerful superhero even without the use of his legs, continuously baiting this character into getting his motor skills back shows no growth in his acceptance and to then take away his ability to do so once he regains function in his legs proves the entire story arc was cruel and in poor taste in representation and understanding.

These things show there is ignorance and lack of education about the disabled community, however with further research and development these issues could be easily resolved providing for better representation and inspiration for the community of people often time overlooked and discriminated by society.

5. Comic Book Vs Reality

The previous chapter described superheroes with disabilities, however as mentioned this characteristic is not always incorporated accurately and could often times be discriminatory and ignorant. This chapter will summarize some of the differences between comic book represented disabilities and their real-life counter parts.

5.1 Amputated limbs

Amputation is one of the oldest surgical procedures in the world. Amputation is the removal of the part of the body from the whole by injury or surgery, the procedure is treated as the last possible rescue of the limb or life. Impairment in the form of an amputated limb can result from many factors most commonly from an injury, however there are other cases as well as people born without their limbs entirely.

According to the WHO, rehabilitation is described as a process of activities that help patients with disabilities. The condition of these patients is limited in returning to normal life, resocialization and also in performing normal daily activities. Involving the patient in the rehabilitation process can reduce the consequences of illness or injury (WHO, 2021)⁴⁸.

In the comic book (e.g., comic book *Captain America Comics Vol.1 #1* (1941) etc.) this is the case of Bucky Barnes (The Winter Soldier), however there is not much to be said about this disability because the character is already introduced with an artificial metal arm, which functions very much like a regular human arm with the exception of its superstrength, quickness and durability. The character is not described as suffering from phantom limb pain, even though this is the most common effect described by patients with amputated limbs occurring in 80% of the cases.⁴⁹

The only time Bucky is really seen as a man with disability is when he is without his metal arm – he takes it off himself or his arm is destroyed in combat.

In the case of Melati Kusuma (e.g., comic book *Avengers: The Initiative Vol. 1 #1* (2007)⁵⁰ etc.), she is affected by having both of her legs amputated and thanks to the serum and her powers is able to grow her legs back. Her storyline focuses on her insecurity of her human form as well as her helplessness – she feels she is nothing without her superpowers

⁴⁸ World's Health Organization. 2021.

⁴⁹ FLOR HERTA. *Phantom-limb pain: characteristics, causes, and treatment*. The Lancet Neurology, Volume 1, Issue 3. Pp: 182-189. 2002.

⁵⁰ Slott, Dan (writer); Cheung, Jim; Dell, John; Ponsor, Justin (cover artists); Caselli, Stefano (penciler, inker); Rudoni, Daniele (colorist); Caramagna, Joe (letterer); Brevoort, Tom; Lazer, Molly (editors). *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 2007.

and by extension without her legs. In an of itself this premise is a very interesting one, as many people after losing their limbs could feel similarly. Projecting into a character like Melati would help them see themselves better and sympathize with their own situation, however, because Melati never expresses a desire to change her way of thinking about herself and only focuses on not losing her superpowers her story arc does not bring the catharsis the readers of the disabled community might seek.

The fact that another character dismisses her in her human form even after seeing her power in her lizard form does not translate well into a respectful representation.

5.2 Paraplegia

Paraplegia is impairment which results in loss of motor or sensory function in the lower part of the body.⁵¹ More specifically, the term paraplegia refers to partial or complete weakness of both limbs and the term quadriplegia refers to partial or complete weakness of all limbs, thus eliminating the need for the terms paraparesis and quadriparesis.⁵² It is most commonly caused by an injury to the spinal cord.

Rehabilitation of paraplegia has an increasingly important role. The primary goals of rehabilitation in paraplegic patients are the prevention of secondary complications, maximizing physical functioning, and reintegration into the community. Common complications in patients with spinal injuries include neurogenic bladder and intestines, urinary tract infections, pressure ulcers, fractures, deep vein thrombosis, spasticity, pulmonary and cardiovascular problems, depressive disorders, etc.⁵³

In the case of Charles Xavier (e.g., comic book *the X-Men Vol.1 #1* (1963) etc.) there are multiple occasions in which he loses and regains the function of his legs, which means there are multiple injuries causing his paraplegia at different points in time. This storytelling point in itself is distasteful in a sense of representation, as most people affected by this impairment never regain their motor functions, the fact that Charles does should be a point of celebration and humbleness as he now understands the struggles of these people, however, as the writers would have it this superhero never goes too far without ending up in his wheelchair once more. This could be written off as merely a stroke of cruel fate or

⁵¹ Capildeo, R. *Medical aspects of paraplegia*. In: Capildeo R., Maxwell A. (eds) *Paraplegia*. Progress in Rehabilitation. Palgrave, London. Pp: 1-2. 1984.

⁵² PIÑA-GARZA, J. E. *Chapter 12 – Paraplegia and quadriplegia*. In: *Fenichel's Clinical Pediatric Neurology (Seventh Edition)*. W.B. Saunders, Elsevier Inc., London. pp. 253-269. 2013. (a)

⁵³ Özdemir, F. *Rehabilitation for patients with paraplegia*. The Journal of Turkish Spinal Surgery. Vol. 27. Issue 3. pp.185-194. 2016.

bad luck, not acknowledging the resulting uncomfortableness to the disabled reader realizing their disability is a storytelling convenience, which is given and taken away according to the whims of the plot.

5.3 Deafness

The term hearing impairment refers to a very heterogeneous group of people, which is differentiated mainly according to the degree and type of hearing impairment. The term includes basic categories of people: deaf, hard of hearing, deaf. Each of these categories represents a diverse quality, the specific structure of which is limited by other factors, most often the quality and quantity of hearing impairment, the age at which the impairment occurred, the individual's mental disposition, the care given to him, and other associated disabilities.⁵⁴

Deafness is defined functionally as a hearing impairment that is sufficiently severe that the individual is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, even with amplification.⁵⁵ Simplified, deafness or hearing loss is a partial or total inability to hear in one or both ears. Hearing loss may be the result of a number of factors including genetics, ageing, exposure to noise, some infections, birth complications, trauma to the ear and certain medications or toxins.

In this case, Clint Barton (e.g., comic book *Tales of Suspense Vol. 1 #57* (1964)⁵⁶ etc.) partially became unable to hear after being caught in explosions, due to the excessive noise his ear drums became damaged.

In contrast to the previous superheroes with disabilities, in recent years Clint Barton's disability has been addressed and properly explained and grounded in reality by him using sign language as well as hearing aid as mentioned in his character study.

While this may alienate some able-bodied readers, who prefer more subtle nods to the disabled community or believe the world of superheroes is too advanced for hearing aids to be noticeable, it is a respectful case of representation which aims to include a marginalized group more or less accurately.

⁵⁴ Horáková, R. *Sluchové postižení: úvod do surdopedie*. Portál. Praha. pp. 160. 2012.

⁵⁵ Elzouki, Abdelaziz Y. *Textbook of Clinical Pediatrics*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. 2012.

⁵⁶ Lee, Stan (writer); Heck, Don (cover artist, penciler, inker); Rosen, Sam (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Tales of Suspense #57*. Marvel Comics. 1964.

5.4 Palsy

Palsy is a medical term which refers to various types of paralysis, often accompanied by weakness and the loss of feeling and uncontrolled body movements such as shaking. Paralysis of motor neurons is divided into peripheral and central paralysis depending on the level at which the damage occurred.^{57 58}

Little is known about the way Eddie McDonough (e.g., comic book *Slingers Vol. 1 #0* (1998)⁵⁹ etc.) is paralyzed in his hand, the readers get a few glimpses in his backstory of how he was discriminated against by his peers when he was younger. He made up for his disability with a technical suit which helped him overcome this paralysis because of its electronic help moving his hand and fingers so well it was barely an issue going forward.

This is the typical case of superheroes with disability, allowing for easier empathy and connection through his disability, yet this disability being easily overcome as to not complicate the exciting arc of the superhero. While this representation is not giving a detailed insight on life with such an impairment, it gives a nod to the community of people affected and, in many cases, brings them hope of a future where their own impairment will see a better solution.

5.5 Dyscalculia

Developmental dyscalculia is a specific learning disability affecting the acquisition of arithmetic skills in an otherwise-normal child. Although poor teaching, environmental deprivation, and low intelligence have been implicated in the etiology of developmental dyscalculia, current data indicate that this learning disability is a brain-based disorder with a familial-genetic predisposition.⁶⁰

Jubilation “Jubilee” Lee suffers from dyscalculia, however as mentioned in her character study, this fact is only briefly mentioned and is more of a fun fact than general characterization of the superhero. This further shows the treatment of disabilities as only factors which make a character’s backstory more interesting than regular without delivering on representing the life of a person struggling with this learning disability or any other disability.

⁵⁷ Vítková, M. *Somatopedické aspekty*. Brno: Paido. pp. 41-57. 2006.

⁵⁸ Opatřilová, D. *Pedagogicko psychologické poradenství a intervence v raném a předškolním věku u dětí se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita. pp. 74-79. 2006.

⁵⁹ Harris, Joseph (writer); Cross, Chris (cover artist, penciler); Stull, Rob (inker); Serrano, Felix (colorist); Agraphotis, Liz (letterer). *Slingers*. Marvel Comics. 1998.

⁶⁰ Shalev, Ruth S., Varda Gross-Tsur. *Developmental dyscalculia*. *Pediatric Neurology*. Volume 24, Issue 5. Pp: 337-342. 2001.

5.6 Multiple personality disorder

Multiple personality disorder also known as DID (dissociative identity disorder) is a very complex and still studied disability found in about 2% of the general population. It is distinguished from other mental disorders by the ongoing coexistence of relatively consistent but alternating subjectively separate identities and either recurrent episodes of memory disruption, frank amnesia, or both, and/or amnesia for a period of noncontemporary autobiographic memory.⁶¹

Today, multiple personality disorder is understood as a chronic dissociative psychopathology that most often develops in response to severe childhood abuse. A person with the biopsychological ability to separate flees into the inner world from abuse, whether real or feared. Although the disorder has its roots in childhood, most patients are not diagnosed with the condition within 20 to 50 years. Many of them have received several previous misdiagnoses of mental or physical disorders. This is a hidden disorder also due to the failure of the correct diagnosis.⁶²

There are two superheroes characterized with this disorder – Marc Spector or “Moon Knight” (e.g., comic book *Werewolf by Night Vol. 1 #32* (1975) etc.) and Wade Wilson as “Deadpool” (e.g., comic book *The New Mutants Vol. 1 #98* (1991) etc.).

It is interesting to see this disorder being portrayed in different ways as must people living with this mental illness would agree that their experiences differ based on their traumas, their alters (separate identities) and experiences of the world. This characterization is somewhat accurate, however, more explored in Moon Knight as he can see and communicate more clearly with his separate identities which take forms of other superheroes (such as Captain America).

Deadpool also lives with this disorder, probably due to his trauma either from childhood or from his torturous trauma treatments. It is more likely this disorder develops in children; however, studies have found that adult soldiers developed separate personalities after years of traumatic experiences in combat and war.⁶³

Deadpool visualizes these personalities not as people but separate voices in his head, symbolized as different colored and font speech bubbles/boxes on the pages.

⁶¹ Kluft, R.P. *Dissociative Identity Disorder*. In: Michelson L.K., Ray W.J. (eds) *Handbook of Dissociation*. Springer, Boston, MA. Pp: 337. 1996.

⁶² Braun, B. G. *Multiple Personality Disorder: An Overview*. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, Vol. 44. Pp: 971-976. 1990.

⁶³ Özdemir, Barbaros et al. *Dingl*. *European journal of Psychotraumatology* vol. 6 26657. Pp: 5. 2015.

Many people have identified with the characterization of these superheroes, which suggests their characterization is not too far from being accurate. Dissociative identity disorder is still a disability, which is falsely represented in media and highly stigmatized, however these characters provide a small insight on what a person with this disorder might be experiencing, which is good for raising awareness and spreading the message of healthier representation of these issues.

5.7 Blindness

Blindness is the most severe degree of visual impairment, characterized by an irreversible decrease in central visual acuity below 1/60 (0.02) to a complete loss of clearness. In the blind, cognitive processes (such as spatial orientation) and socialization are difficult, and problems with movement and orientation in space appear.⁶⁴

The blind use their compensatory senses, especially touch and hearing. For visually impaired people, the time when their visual defect arose is very important, in terms of preserving visual images. For this reason, visual defects can be classified according to the time of occurrence into congenital malformations, hereditary malformations and malformations acquired during life.⁶⁵

The character of Daredevil (e.g., comic book *Daredevil Vol. 1 #1* (1964)⁶⁶ etc.) is in unique circumstance with regards to his disability. Though he may be blind and cannot see colors, light or darkness or shapes with his eyes, with his superhuman senses he is able to construct an image of his surroundings, similar to a bat using echolocation.

His heightened hearing and reflexes as well as touch help him establish the visualization of the space he is navigating and as such act as his visual receptors in the place of his eyes. This characterization is false, however, in this case there are certain instances in the comics where he is unable to use his radar sense and becomes blind as a regular person would. (*Daredevil Vol 1 #174* (1981)⁶⁷ For this reason the readers again notice the disability being used only as a moment of weakness for the superhero.

⁶⁴ Hamadová, P., Květoňová, L., Nováková, Z. *Oftalmopedie: Texty k distančnímu vzdělávání*. Brno: Paido. pp. 18-26. 2007.

⁶⁵ Hamadová, P., Květoňová, L., Nováková, Z. *Oftalmopedie: Texty k distančnímu vzdělávání*. Brno: Paido. pp. 18-26. 2007.

⁶⁶ Lee, Stan (writer); Kirby, Jack (cover artist); Everett, Bill (cover artist, penciler, inker); Ditko, Steve; Brodsky, Sol (inkers); Rosen, Sam (letterer); Lee, Stan (editor). *Daredevil Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1964.

⁶⁷ Miller, Frank (writer, penciler, cover artist); Janson, Klaus (cover artists, inker, colorist); Wein, Glynis (colorist); Rosen, Joe (letterer); O'Neil, Denny; Macchio, Ralph (editors). *Daredevil Vol 1 #174*. Marvel Comics. 1981.

5.8 Nerve damage

Nerve damage is a type of injury that causes nerve damage (Vodvárka, 2005, 74-80).

Peripheral nerve injury is a serious disability that restricts the patient's normal activity, causing a malfunction in the innervation area of the affected nerve. It also significantly affects job classification; it is often the cause of work disability. In the treatment of injured peripheral nerves, the mechanism of injury plays an essential role, which significantly affects the extent of nerve injury. Open injuries usually affect the nerve in a short section, in contrast to closed injuries, where injuries of longer sections occur more often in continuity. There are also multiple injuries during one nerve. Injuries to long sections or multiple injuries have a significantly worse prognosis than injuries to shorter sections.⁶⁸

Similarly, to other superheroes and their disabilities not even nerve damage is impervious to only being a plot point driving character forward only to be mostly forgotten later on. Doctor Steven Strange (e.g., comic book *Strange Tales Vol. 1 #110* (1963) etc.) is afflicted with this disability after a car crash and in his search for “cure” he discovers the world of magic and altering reality, however, his hands never heal from the damage they have suffered, though it never appears to be an issue when Doctor Strange performs his bending reality magic using his hands.

His injury acts as both selfish reasoning for his own mistakes and a humbling reality, when he discovers his “superpowers” and true purpose.

Fortunately, this can be seen from multiple sides and as one reader might dismiss or forget about Doctor Strange’s injury, on the other hand, a person living with this disability might see Strange’s journey as enlightening and supportive as he finds another way to live his life despite his injury.

However, the vagueness surrounding the superhero’s ability to use his hands could be considered problematic and inaccurate.

⁶⁸ Kanta, M., Ehler, E., Řehák, S., Laštovička, D., Adamkov, J. *Současné možnosti chirurgické léčby poranění periferních nervů. Neurologie pro praxi.* Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 25-28. 2008.

6. Benefits of Accurate Representation in a Targeted Community

The role of media is to represent and reach out as many people as possible, for that reason promoting an accurate image and enhancing the voice of persons with disabilities in the media should also be a priority as according to the World's Health Organization currently there are approximately 1 billion persons with disabilities in the world, or 15 per cent of the global population (WHO, 2021)⁶⁹. This community, however, is only ever represented in the background of other stories or when they are in the forefront their stories show the tragedy and sorrow of their condition.

While there is nothing wrong with accurate representation of serious disabilities, there should be more opportunities for people with disabilities to see positive stories about their lives, showing them, they do not have to suffer in order to be recognized and represented.

In both developed and developing countries, persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented in society and even less in media. The rich diversity of our society should be inclusive of all its members and they should be able to see accurate portrayals of their life, struggles and victories in media the same way white able-bodied persons are.

Comic books are a beloved media among very different types of people, including the disabled community. People with impaired hearing or visual senses, which would stop them from consuming long pages of text or audio books are able to focus on simple words and colorful still images, which still convey the story effectively.

Being represented and allowed to share their stories thanks to superheroes and comic books in such a community could prepare the way to further empower persons with disabilities to better their lives and promote their inclusion in society on an equal basis with others.

6.1 Representation

It is no surprise that images and stories in the media can deeply influence public opinion and establish societal norms, there is evidence of this happening over centuries, when looking at art and reading literature. This is how society engages with the past and looks for structures and approved concepts in the past. In this time, modern media – television, graphic novels, comic books and streaming services are the fastest way to reach people over the world and persons with disabilities are seldom covered in these mediums. In the

⁶⁹ *World's Health Organization*. 2021.

off chance they are featured, they are often portrayed as negative stereotypes. It is not uncommon to see persons with disabilities treated as objects of pity, charity or medical treatment that have to overcome a tragic and disabling condition. Superhero comics are no exception as was already demonstrated. Superheroes with disabilities are presented as examples and winners who have accomplished great feats; however, this representation can be manipulative and harmful both to disabled persons and able-bodied persons not aware of these stereotypes.

The media can be a vital instrument in raising awareness, countering stigma and misinformation, the community should therefore encourage all media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with a respect for human rights. This powerful force can change societal misconceptions and present persons with disabilities as individuals that are a part of the community. By increasing the awareness and understanding of disability issues and the diversity of persons with disabilities and their situations, the media can actively contribute to an effective and successful integration of persons with disabilities in all aspects of societal life.

6.2 Normalization

Attention should be drawn to the image of disability in the media with a view to an accurate and balanced portrayal of disability as a part of everyday life. The media can play an important role in presenting disability issues in a way that could dispel negative stereotypes and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, options should be developed on how to present persons with disabilities in various media to build a peaceful and inclusive society for all.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities can work as a tool to enhance the work of the media in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as to promoting their access to education, employment, health and other areas of development on an equal basis with others.

6.3 Awareness

Public events and other international commemorations can provide excellent opportunities to raise-awareness and conduct outreach to promote the disability perspective and highlight the concerns of persons with disabilities.

Incorporating stories of people with disabilities into media in different forms helps spread the message that every person matters and is part of the society no matter what, how or how much they contribute. The more the community is aware of the issues people with disabilities face the less they are willing to overlook them as coincidences or accidents instead of deliberate attacks against people who are already inherently discriminated against by all sides of society.

7. Problems with Inaccurate Representation

Though disability issues are higher on the agenda than they have ever been, and the social model of disability is becoming widely accepted, disabled people are still affected by social barriers.

7.1 Discrimination

Social othering is a well-documented phenomenon in which anyone who does not belong or shows differences in a social group is ostracized. When talking about disability, it is hardly surprising discrimination is brought up as a serious topic of discussion. It is no secret that most of the people struggling with any level of disability are being seen as inconvenience by a lot of the society, primarily due to the fact that a lot of disabled people cannot perform in society as well as their able-bodied counterparts.⁷⁰

People become ignorant and uneducated and spread misconceptions about disabilities because voices of people within these marginalized group are not considered important and a lot of the times these people do not have the means to make their voices heard over the masses trying to drown them out.

For this reason, it is important to see people with disabilities represented in media in a positive and accurate light, educating people and spreading information helpful to those in need.

Thankfully, in this day and age more and more people are becoming educated about the issues and lives of people with disabilities, being more supportive and tolerant of them in the society. This is partly due to media pandering to minorities in order to gather popularity and empathy, which can also be seen similarly with regards to representation of the LGBTQ+ community. It is by far not perfect; however, the media and therefore even comic books hold influence over a vast population of readers and fans and accurate representation of these issues would bring positive light onto the communities who were stigmatized and overlooked.

⁷⁰ UN General Assembly. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Resolution / adopted by the General Assembly. 2007.

7.2 Confusing facts

The depictions of disability as a sin, evil and tragic have widely been disseminated throughout society by religious teachings and beliefs. This along with the historical focus on impairment and physical deformities, have contributed to the way media portray disabled people, by using harmful stereotypes or outdated research on serious topics such as disability. With little or no representation of disabled people in the media workforce, and with the tradition of the segregation of disabled people, attitudes and beliefs about disability have been left unchallenged.

The creation and perpetuation of these stigmas creates a vicious cycle where people with hidden impairments isolate themselves through not declaring their impairment. Because they do not declare or discuss their impairment, other people in society don't have an understanding of the reality of the impairment. Therefore, they lose their identity and find themselves segregated from the community.

7.3 Wrong information source

The under-representation of disabled people in the media or the misleading portrayal of disabled people has far-reaching consequences on the disability community, not least when they are portrayed as a "Superhero" or "tragic Villain".

The language surrounding disability used within mainstream media is often still negative. This is especially true regarding hidden impairments, possibly due to a lack of understanding. When dealing with mental and learning disabilities, the media often uses very strong negative language.

This can be seen in different types of media – an example of vilifying a disability is a movie *Split* (2016), where a person diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder (DID) is demonized and becomes a supervillain as a result of their disorder, spreading misconceptions about the disorder and spreading fear instead of education about the sensitive topic of mental health.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to examine different interpretations of superhero narratives containing disabilities. In this thesis I argue that comics and graphic narratives are a part of literature and are a valid part of literary media, which hold influence as well as innovative story-telling themes and narratives. It explains the similarities between comic books and literature – looking at topic, flow, rhythm, narratives and functions. The first step was to analyze and identify comic book structure and narrative themes as a credible literary source (chapter 3 – Background: Comic Books as Literature), this was achieved by studying the history of contemporary comic books, identifying common literary functions and looking at the targeted groups of

readers. This served the purpose of introducing the reader to the template of comic books this thesis was examining as well as bringing attention to the evolution of the comic book media and industry. With this as a background, the thesis goes on to narrow its focus and examine the examples of superheroes with disabilities and explains how these disabilities affected them and identified the ways the superhero was overcoming their struggles using conventional handicap aids, technology or even mutations to their advantage (Chapter 4 – Superheroes with Disabilities). It describes the characterization of different superheroes, looking specifically at their disabilities while accounting for the superhuman abilities they possess and whether they are in balance with their disabilities or whether the representation is inaccurate and discriminatory in nature. This segment used comic book examples of superheroes throughout the years as different writers interpreted the story of the superhero in different ways with the focus on the disabilities. This chapter served to analyze whether the representation of these disabilities added to the narrative or functioned merely as a fun fact about the character without the writer or artist giving more to the characterization of this disability. Given the popularity of comic books it is not surprising that many superheroes are more relatable while they overcome adversity, climbing from a difficult situation to the strong hero the readers know and love. Disabilities featured in comic books play more of a background role of making the hero more sympathetic without having to rewrite parts of the story to fit the struggles their disability inherently comes with because of their superpowers or their advanced technology.

This minimalistic approach to disabilities in comic books becomes clear in the next section (Chapter 5 – Comic Book Vs Reality) where this thesis explores the descriptions and storylines featuring disabilities and compares those described in comic books to real

life examples, examining how they differ and whether their representation in comics is accurate and beneficial to those groups affected by these disabilities and disorders. In this analysis I have found the choices made to include disabilities in superhero storylines are not representing the communities on a satisfactory or accurate level as the disabilities are often times mentioned, not handled properly or simply erased at the writer's whim (Clint Barton not needing hearing aids in a lot of storylines, Professor X being miraculously cured many times). Although this representation brings attention to the community affected by these disabilities it is a question of respect and accuracy (Chapter 6 and 7).

In recent years media plays more and more of a vital role in educating the masses about serious issues and often overlooked struggles many people are faced with in society. The popularity of comic books has also increased thanks to the movie industry adapting the stories of favorite superheroes and antiheroes. With this recent gain it became important for the writers and artists of comic books to start including more representation of marginalized groups in their comics focusing on female superheroes, superheroes of color, superheroes with disabilities or superheroes with different sexual orientations. Chapter 6 of this thesis - Benefits of Accurate Representation in a Targeted Community, explained how representation in media is very helpful in fighting discrimination and misinformation in society about the struggles of disabilities. The reader learned of normalization which helps bringing the disabled community more into light and focus.

Lastly this thesis examines the negative influence of inaccurate representation in comic books and the way it spreads misinformation and fear especially when it comes to the community of mentally disabled individuals (Chapter 7 – Problems with Inaccurate Representation). Representation of minorities in media has direct impact on the treatment of these minorities in real-life and spreading false facts even if they fit more with the narrative of the story puts pressure on the targeted groups of people with disabilities, this chapter put forth the ways this inaccurate portrayals impact the community and the reason they appear mostly because of generally accepted incorrect interpretations of disabilities or the disabilities themselves being out of proportions to their real-life counterparts.

The final aim of this thesis was to analyze and examine the representation of superheroes with disabilities in comic books with regards to the impact these portrayals have on real life communities of disabled people. My goal was to show the reader representation in media plays a role in real life treatment of disabled people and also how comic books are becoming more inclusive and open to feedback when it comes to these characters in recent years. However, I would also like the reader of this thesis to take into

consideration the market and profit of these comic books, which influences the companies making these comic books to spread certain narratives and not include certain characters, this view is becoming more outdated in recent years, but it is still present especially in the representation of the sexual orientation of superheroes, women superheroes, superheroes of color as well as disabled superheroes. The target demographic for superhero comics are predominantly white male readers and that is always going to be reflected in the product of companies like Marvel and DC Comics.

I would also like to bring attention to that the disabled community does not have the influence to protest inaccurate portrayals of its members because of the discrimination and the stigma which comes from the false information being spread. For this reason, while there are complaints about certain characterization and caricatures of these disabled people they are rarely taken into account by the authors or the community of comic book fans which is why tragic stereotypes as well as storylines of characters getting cured of their disability are still prevalent in media as a whole. For these reasons, which reflect the state and motivations of the comic book industry, it is important to support the employment of writers and creators from different backgrounds, ethnicities and communities for better accuracy and respectful representation of our society.

In the future this thesis could focus more on the discrimination especially disabled people of color or women face as even this thesis touches on these subjects – female superheroes with disabilities not having their disabilities even portrayed in their story or being mistreated by the narrative. A different point of view which still maintains the focus on disabilities represented along with superpowers would be to examine the representation of villains with disabilities and how these portrayals unintentionally demonize people within the disabled community leaving them vulnerable and targets for discrimination.

9. Bibliography

1. ALANIZ, JOSE. *Death, Disability, and the Superhero: The Silver Age and Beyond*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014.
2. BABIC, ANNESSA A. *Comics as history, comics as literature: roles of the comic book in scholarship, society, and entertainment*. Madison. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. 2014.
3. BENDIS, BRIAN MICHAEL (writer); MALEEV, ALEX (cover artist, penciler, inker); WILSON MATTHEW (colorist); PETIT, CORY (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM (editor). *Moon Knight Vol. 6 #6*. Marvel Comics. 2011.
4. BRAUN, B. G. *Multiple Personality Disorder: An Overview*. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, Vol. 44, 971-976. 1990.
5. BRUBAKER, ED (writer); EPTING, STEVE (cover artist, penciler, inker); PERKINS, MIKE (inker); D'ARMATA, FRANK (colorist); ELIOPOULOS, CHRIS (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM; SCHMIDT, ANDY; LAZER, MOLLY; SITTERSON AUBREY (editors). *Captain America Vol. 5 #8*. Marvel Comics. 2004.
6. CAPILDEO R. *Medical aspects of paraplegia*. In: Capildeo R., Maxwell A. (eds) Paraplegia. Progress in Rehabilitation. Palgrave, London. 1984. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16008-2_1
7. CAPILDEO, R. *Medical aspect of paraplegia*. In: Capildeo R., Maxwell A. (eds) Paraplegia. Progress in Rehabilitation. Palgrave, London. Pp. 1-13. Online ISBN 978-1-349-16008-2. 1984.
8. CARNEY, SEAN. *The Function of the Superhero at the Present Time*. Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies. Volume 6, Issue 1. Article 7. 2005.
9. CHRISTIANSEN, JEFF and Co. *Deadpool Corps: Rank and Foul Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 2010.
10. CHUTE, HILLARY. *Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative*. Cambridge University Press. 2008.
11. CLAREMONT, CHRIS (writer); SILVESTRI, MARC (cover artist, penciler); GREEN, DAN (cover artist, inker); OLIVER, GLYNIS (colorist); ORZECOWSKI, TOM (letterer); HARRAS, BOB; GRUENWALD, MARK (editors). *Uncanny X-Men #244*. Marvel Comics. 1989.

12. CLAREMONT, CHRIS (writer); SMITH, PAUL (cover artist, penciler); WIACEK, BOB (inker); WEIN, GLYNIS; YANCHUS, ANDY (colorists); ORZECZOWSKI, TOM (letterer); JONES, LOUISE; FINGEROTH, DANNY (editors). *Uncanny X-Men #167*. Marvel Comics. 1983.
13. COATES, TA-NEHISI (writer); ROSS, ALEX (cover artist); YU, LEINIL FRANCIS (penciler); ALANGUILAN, GERRY (inker); GHO, SUNNY (colorist); CARAMAGNA, JOE (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM (editor). *Captain America #6*. Marvel Comics. 2018.
14. DIGGLE, ANDY (writer); MATINA, FRANCESCO (cover artist); DAZO, BONG (penciler); PIMENTEL, JOE (inker); MARTIN, FRANK JR., KOSOKI, GIOVANNI (colorists); DESCHESNE, ALBERT (letterer); ROSEMANN, BILL (editor). *Thunderbolts Vol 1 #131*. Marvel Comics. 2009.
15. DUNCAN, RANDY and Matthew J. Smith. *The Power of Comics*. The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc. New York. 2009.
16. ELZOUKI, ABDELAZIZ Y. *Textbook of Clinical Pediatrics*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. 2012. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-02202-9>
17. FLOR HERTA. *Phantom-limb pain: characteristics, causes, and treatment*. The Lancet Neurology, Volume 1, Issue 3. 2002. P: 182-189.
18. FRACTION, MATT (writer); AJA, DAVID (cover artist); PULIDO, JAVIER (penciler, inker); HOLLINGSWORTH, MATT (colorist); ELIOPOULOS, CHRIS (letterer); WACKER, STEPHEN (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 4 #5*. Marvel Comics. 2012.
19. FRACTION, MATT (writer); AJA, DAVID (cover artist, penciler, inker); HOLLINGSWORTH, MATT (colorist); ELIOPOULOS, CHRIS (letterer); WACKER, STEPHEN (editor). *Hawkeye #1*. New York: Marvel Comics. 2012.
20. FRACTION, MATT (writer); AJA, DAVID (cover artist, penciler, inker, letterer); HOLLINGSWORTH, MATT (colorist); ELIOPOULOS, CHRIS (letterer); WACKER, STEPHEN (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 4 #19*. Marvel Comics. 2014.
21. GROENSTEEN, THIERRY. *Comics and narration*; translated by Ann Miller. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. 2013.
22. GRUENWALD, MARK (writer, penciler, cover artist); BREEDING, BRETT (cover artist, inker); SHAREN, BOB (colorist); ROSEN, JOE (letterer); O'NEIL, DENNIS (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1983.

23. GRUENWALD, MARK (writer, penciler, cover artist); LAYTON, BOB (cover artist); BREEDING, BRETT (inker); SHAREN, BOB (colorist); ROSEN, JOE (letterer); O'NEIL, DENNIS (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #2*. Marvel Comics. 1983.
24. GRUENWALD, MARK (writer, penciler, cover artist); LAYTON, BOB (cover artist); BULANADI, DANNY; BROWN, ELIOT (inkers); SCHEELE, CHRISTIE (colorist); ROSEN, JOE (letterer); O'NEIL, DENNIS (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 1983.
25. GRUENWALD, MARK (writer, penciler, cover artist); LAYTON, BOB (cover artist); BULANADI, DANNY; BROWN, ELIOT; AKIN, IAN; GARVEY BRIAN (inkers); SHAREN, BOB (colorist); ROSEN, JOE (letterer); O'NEIL, DENNIS (editor). *Hawkeye Vol 1 #4*. Marvel Comics. 1983.
26. HAMA, LARRY (writer); TEXEIRA, MARK (cover artist, penciler, inker); JAVINS, MARIE (colorist); BROSSEAU, PAT (letterer); HARRAS, BOB; PATRICK, LISA (editors). *Wolverine Vol. 2 #62*. Marvel Comics. 1992.
27. HAMADOVÁ, P., KVĚTOŇOVÁ, L., NOVÁKOVÁ, Z. *Oftalmopedie: Texty k distančnímu vzdělávání*. Brno: Paido. pp. 66. ISBN 9788073151. 2007.
28. HARRIS, JOSEPH (writer); CROSS, CHRIS (cover artist, penciler); STULL, ROB (inker); SERRANO, FELIX (colorist); AGRAPHIOTIS, LIZ (letterer). *Slingers*. Marvel Comics. 1998.
29. HORÁKOVÁ, R. Sluchové postižení: úvod do surdopedie. Portál. Praha. pp. 160. ISBN 978-80-262-0084-0. 2012.
30. ISAO, SHIMIZU. *Red Comic Books: The Origins of Modern Japanese Manga*. In Lent, John A. (ed.). *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press. 2001.
31. JANKOVSKÝ, J. *Vybrané kapitoly z uceleného systému rehabilitace*. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích Zdravotně sociální fakulta. pp. 103. ISBN 80-7040-826-X. 2007.
32. KANTA, M., EHLER, E., ŘEHÁK, S., LAŠTOVIČKA, D., ADAMKOV, J. *Současné možnosti chirurgické léčby poranění periferních nervů. Neurologie pro praxi*. Vol. 9, Issue 1, pp. 25-28. 2008.
33. KELLY, JOE (writer); MCGUINNESS, ED (cover artist, penciler) MASSENGILL, NATHAN; LEE, NORMAN (inkers); LICHTNER, CHRIS (colorist); STARKINGS, RICHARD; COMICRAFT; LANPHEAR DAVE (letterers); IDELSON, MATT (editor). *Deadpool Vol 3 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1997.

34. KLOCK, GEOFF. *How to Read Superhero Comics and Why*. New York: Continuum, 2002.
35. KLUFT, R.P. *Dissociative Identity Disorder*. In: Michelson L.K., Ray W.J. (eds) *Handbook of Dissociation*. Springer, Boston, MA. 1996. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-0310-5_16.
36. KOT, ALES (writer); RUDY, MARCO (cover artist, penciler). *Bucky Barnes: The Winter Soldier #2*. Marvel Comics. 2014.
37. KRIGGER, KAREN W. *Cerebral Palsy: An Overview*. University of Louisville School of Medicine, Louisville, Kentucky. 2006. 91-100.
38. LEE, STAN (writer); HECK, DON (cover artist, penciler, inker); ROSEN, SAM (letterer); LEE, STAN (editor). *Tales of Suspense #57*. Marvel Comics. 1964.
39. LEE, STAN (writer); KIRBY, JACK (cover artist); COLLETTA, VINCE (cover artist, inker); ORLANDO, JOE (penciler); ROSEN, SAM (letterer); LEE, STAN (editor). *Daredevil Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 1964.
40. LEE, STAN (writer); KIRBY, JACK (cover artist); EVERETT, BILL (cover artist, penciler, inker); DITKO, STEVE; BRODSKY, SOL (inkers); ROSEN, SAM (letterer); LEE, STAN (editor). *Daredevil Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 1964.
41. LEE, STAN (writer); KIRBY, JACK (penciler); REINMAN, PAUL (inker); ROSEN, SAM (letterer); LEE, STAN (editor). *Uncanny X-Men #1*. Marvel Comics. 1963 - 1989.
42. LOBDELL, SCOTT (writer); KUBERT, ANDY; PENNINGTON, MARK (cover artists); PETERSON, BRANDON (penciler); AUSTIN, TERRY (inker); THOMAS, MIKE (colorist); ELIOPOULOS, CHRIS (letterer); HARRAS, BOB (editor). *X-Men TPB: X-Cutioner's Song Vol 1*. Marvel Comics. 1994.
43. MCCLOUD, SCOTT (writer, penciller). *Understanding Comics – The Invisible Art*. Kitchen Sink Press for HarperPerennial, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., pp. 10-16. 1993.
44. MILLER, FRANK (writer, penciler, cover artist); JANSON, KLAUS (cover artists, inker, colorist); WEIN, GLYNIS (colorist); ROSEN, JOE (letterer); O'NEIL, DENNY; MACCHIO, RALPH (editors). *Daredevil Vol 1 #174*. Marvel Comics. 1981.
45. MOENCH, DOUG (writer), KANE, GIL; MILGROM, AL (cover artists); PERLIN, DON (penciler); PERLIN HOWIE (inker); RACHELSON, PHIL

- (colorist); HOLLOWAY, RAY (letterer); WEIN, LEN (editor). *Werewolf by Night Vol. 1 #32*. Marvel Comics. 1975.
46. MORRIS J, editor. *Encounters with strangers: feminism and disability*. London: The Women's Press Ltd.; 1996.
47. OPATŘILOVÁ, D. *Pedagogicko psychologické poradenství a intervence v raném a předškolním věku u dětí se speciálními vzdělávacími potřebami*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita. pp. 292. ISBN 80-210-3977-9. 2006.
48. *Oxford student dictionary*, Oxford University Press. pp. 155. 2010.
49. ÖZDEMİR, BARBAROS et al. *Dingl*. European journal of Psychotraumatology vol. 6 26657. 28 Apr. 2015, doi:10.3402/ejpt.v6.26657
50. ÖZDEMİR, F. *Rehabilitation for patients with paraplegia*. The Journal of Turkish Spinal Surgery. Vol. 27. Issue 3. pp.185-194. 2016.
51. PIÑA-GARZA, J. E. *Chapter 11 - Hemiplegia In: Fenichel's Clinical Pediatric Neurology (Seventh Edition)*. W.B. Saunders, Elsevier Inc., London. pp. 236-252. ISBN 978-1-4557-2376-8. 2013 (c).
52. PIÑA-GARZA, J. E. *Chapter 12 – Paraplegia and quadriplegia. In: Fenichel's Clinical Pediatric Neurology (Seventh Edition)*. W.B. Saunders, Elsevier Inc., London. pp. 253-269. ISBN 978-1-4557-2376-8. 2013 (a).
53. PIÑA-GARZA, J. E. *Chapter 13 - Monoplegia In: Fenichel's Clinical Pediatric Neurology (Seventh Edition)*. W.B. Saunders, Elsevier Inc., London. pp. 270-276. ISBN 978-1-4557-2376-8. 2013 (b).
54. PRIEST, CHRISTOPHER (writer); DIAZ, PACO (penciler); SMITH, ANDY (inker); BLANCHARD, SHANNON (colorist); STARKINGS, RICHARD; COMICRAFT (letterers); DIAZ, RUBEN (editor). *Deadpool Vol 3 #36*. Marvel Comics. 2000.
55. RATTO, C. M. (2018). *Not Superhero Accessible: The Temporal Stickiness of Disability in Superhero Comics*. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 37(2). doi:10.18061/dsq.v38i2
56. ROACH, D., MISIROGLU, G., AND SANDERSON, P. "Phantom." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, [pub. 27.01.2017]. dostupné online: [https://www.britannica.com/topic/Phantom-comic-book-character.](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Phantom-comic-book-character), [cit. 07.08.2021]

57. RUTH S. SHALEV, VARDA GROSS-TSUR. *Developmental dyscalculia*. Pediatric Neurology, Volume 24, Issue 5, 2001, Pages 337-342, ISSN 0887-8994, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0887-8994\(00\)00258-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0887-8994(00)00258-7).
58. SARACENI, MARIO. *The Language of Comics*. Routledge. pp. 2. 2003.
59. SCHODT, FREDERIK. *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press. 1996. Pages: 19-20. ISBN 978-1-880656-23-5.
60. SIEGEL, JERRY (writer), SHUSTER, JOE (cover artist, penciller and inker), ADLER, JACK (cover artist), SULLIVAN, VINCENT (editor). *Action Comics Vol. 1 #1*. 1938, dostupné online: <https://readcomiconline.li/Comic/Action-Comics-1938/Issue-1>, [cit. 07.08.2021]
61. SLOTT, DAN (writer); CHEUNG, JIM; DELL, JOHN; PONSOR, JUSTIN (cover artists); CASELLI, STEFANO (penciler, inker); RUDONI, DANIELE (colorist); CARAMAGNA, JOE (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM; LAZER, MOLLY (editors). *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1 #3*. Marvel Comics. 2007.
62. SLOTT, DAN; Gage, Christos N. (writers); CASELLI, STEFANO (cover artist, penciler, inker); RUDONI, DANIELE (colorist); CARAMAGNA, JOE (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM; LAZER, MOLLY (editors). *Avengers: The Initiative Vol 1 #8*. Marvel Comics. 2008.
63. SOULE, CHARLES (writer); CHEUNG, JIM (cover artist, penciler); KEITH, JASON (cover artist); MORALES, MARK; ORTEGO, GUILLERMO; WONG, WALDEN (inkers); ISANOVE, RICHARD; BEREDO, RAIN (colorists); COWLES, CLAYTON (letterer); PANICCIA, MARK; HARRINGTON, CHRISTINA (editors). *Astonishing X-Men Vol 4 #1*. Marvel Comics, 2018.
64. SPINALCORD.COM TEAM. *Types of Paralysis*. [online]. 2020. [cit. 2021-6-6]. Dostupné z: <https://www.spinalcord.com/types-of-paralysis>.
65. SQUIER, SUSAN. *So Long as They Grow Out of It: Comics, The Discourse of Developmental Normalcy and Disability*. 2008.
66. SWIERCZYNSKI, DUANE (writer); BROOKS, MARK (cover artist); FERNÁNDEZ, LEANDRO (penciler, inker); BUCCELLATO, STEVE (colorist); ECKLEBERRY, JEFF (letterer); ALONSO, AXEL (editor). *X-Men Origins: Deadpool Vol 1 #1*. Marvel Comics. 2010.
67. THOMAS ROY (writer); COLAN, GENE (cover artist, penciler) KLEIN, GEORGE (inker); SIMEK, ARTIE (letterer); LEE, STAN (editor). *Avengers Vol 1 #63*. Marvel Comics. 1969.

68. THOMAS, ROY (writer); ROTH, WERNER (penciler); AYERS, DICK (inker); SIMEK, ART (letterer). *Uncanny X-Men #20*. Marvel Comics. 1963.
69. THOMAS, ROY. *Stan Lee's Amazing Marvel Interview!*. Alter Ego. Raleigh. North Carolina: TwoMorrows Publishing. 2011.
70. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/45f973632.html> [accessed 7 August 2021]
71. VAUGHAN, BRIAN K (writer); MARTIN, MARCOS (cover artist, penciler, inker); RODRIGUEZ, JAVIER (colorist); SCHUBERT, WILLIE (letterer); BREVOORT, TOM; LAZER, MOLLY; STITTERSON, AUBREY (editors). *Doctor Strange: The Oath Vol 1 #2*. Marvel Comics. 2007.
72. VÍTKOVÁ, M. *Somatopedické aspekty*. Brno: Paido. pp. 304. ISBN 80-7315-134-0. 2006.
73. VODVÁŘKA, T. *Úžínové syndromy. Interní medicína pro praxi*. Vol. 7, Issue 2, pp. 74-80. 2005.
74. WAY, DANIE (writer); PEARSON, JASON (cover artist); MEDINA, PACO (penciler); VLASCO, JUAN (inker); GRACIA, MARTE (colorist); PETIT, VC'S CORY (letterer); ALONSO, AXEL; LEHEUP, JODY (editors). *Deadpool Vol 4 #11*. Marvel Comics. 2009.
75. WAY, DANIEL (writer); JOHNSON, DAVE (cover artist); BARBERI, CARLO (penciler); Velasco, Juan F. (inker); GRACIA, MARTE (colorist); CALLIGR, VIRTUAL (letterer). *Deadpool Vol 1 #28*. Marvel Comics. 2008.
76. WAY, DANIEL (writer); JOHNSON, DAVE (cover artist); ESPIN, SALVADOR (penciler, inker); GURU-EFX (colorist); SABINO, JOE (letterer); WHITE, JORDAN D. (editor). *Deadpool Vol 4 #60*. Marvel Comics. 2012.
77. WOLK, DOUGLAS. *R.I.P.: The Comics Code Authority*, dostupné online: <https://techland.time.com/2011/01/24/r-i-p-the-comics-code-authority/> [pub. 24.01.2011], [cit. 07.08.2021]

Anotation

Author: Adéla Urbanová

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of thesis: Disabled Superheroes: What effects did the representation of the resilient and disabled superheroes have on people facing similar problems and on the normalization of the issues concerning disability?

Supervisor: Mgr. Elizabeth Allyn Woock, Ph.D

Number of pages: 58

Year of presentation: 2022

Keywords: disability, discrimination, superheroes, comic books, representation, comic book literature

Abstract: This thesis examines how disabled superheroes are portrayed in contemporary comic books. It looks at the representation of these superheroes and explains what effect they have in the disabled community and how this representation affects the normalization of issues concerning disability. The thesis includes the different portrayals of disabled superheroes, analysis of a few chosen disabled superheroes, portrayal of disability as a superpower, and the role of disabled superheroes in the disabled community.

Anotace

Autor: Adéla Urbanová

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Zdravotně Postižení Superhrdinové: Jaký vliv měla reprezentace zdravotně postižených superhrdinů na lidi s podobnými problémy a jaký vliv měla na normalizaci problémů týkajících se zdravotního postižení?

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Elizabeth Allyn Woock, Ph.D

Počet stran: 58

Rok obhajoby: 2022

Klíčová slova: postižení, diskriminace, superhrdinové, komiksy, reprezentace, komiksová literatura

Abstrakt: Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na zobrazení superhrdinů s postižením v moderních komiksech. Zkoumá reprezentaci těchto superhrdinů a vysvětluje jaký efekt měla na komunitu lidí s postižením, a jak tato reprezentace ovlivňuje normalizaci problémů, které jsou spojené s těmito postiženími. Tato práce zahrnuje popis superhrdinů s postižením, analýzu těchto superhrdinů, zobrazení postižení jako "superschopnosti" a roli superhrdinů s postižením v dané komunitě lidí s postižením.