# The Thematic and Stylistic Differences found in Walt Disney and Ozamu Tezuka

*A Comparative Study of Snow White and Astro Boy*

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**Ritgerð til BA / MA-prófs í Japönsku Máli og Menningu**

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# Abstract

This thesis will be a comparative study on animators Walt Disney and Osamu Tezuka with a focus on Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937) and Astro Boy (1963) respectively.  The focus will be on the difference in story themes and style as well as analyzing the different ideologies those two held in regards to animation. This will be achieved through examining and analyzing not only the history of both men but also the early history of animation in Japan and USA respectively. Finally, a comparison of those two works will be done in order to show how the cultural differences affected the creation of those products.

# Chapter Outline

# Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

 I remember as a child reading the adventures of Donald Duck multiple times a day. I would collect them and place these soft-cover magazines in a folder that I would store on a shelve close to my bed within hand's reach. The Disney films were no different, being stored on the shelve above the magazines. As I entered my teens my parents cancelled my subscription to these magazines (a decision I supported out of embarressment) but I would continue to read those stories at home when given the chance. All of my friends were the same, I do not remember a single child who did not read those stories. It wasn't until the Disneys spell on me washed away as a teen when I realized that Walt Disney wasn't the only cartoon company out there. In the far away land of Japan, there were seemingly an endless supply of interesting and often weird animations that caught my attention. However, trying to explain these interesting stories to my friends, I was only met with scepticism and criticism yet the same people had fond memories of Disneys animated products and would on occasion watch it. This striked me as odd. After speaking more with them, I started to realize that the reason for this reaction could possibly be found in the perception we had on Japanese animation.

## 1.2 Thesis Outline

This BA thesis will look at the stylistic and thematic differences between animated cartoons created and originating from USA to those of Japan. Furthermore, this thesis will examine and seek to provide insight into the differences in perception of animated cartoons found in each nation. The reason for which these two countries were chosen, USA and Japan, is due to the long history both countries possess in regards of animated cartoons. However in order to clarify the research I will place special focus on the animators Walt Disney, from the United States and Osamu Tezuka from Japan. In addition, this thesis will place a focus on animation via the form of films and television shows. Hopefully this will result in a more in-depth analyzes as opposed to analyzing the entirety of the animation product of the two nations. However, I will first provide a study on the history of animated cartoons in

USA and Japan in order to provide the ground work and insight into the state of each of these well respected animation industries. I will attempt to analyze and provide suggestions as to why and how "anime" became seperated from American animated cartoons and how different cultural sensibilities are a primary reason for the different direction these animation industries went.

## 2. Definitions and Perceptions

It is important to note some significant linguistical and cultural aspects that need to be addressed before continuing. If not addressed properly, the usage and meaning of some words will not make much sense in the following thesis. It is the Japanese writing system that needs to be mentioned. More specifically the fact that the Japanese written language consists of 3 different types of writing which are the following: the first method are symbols imported from China known as kanji, the second is the Japanese alphabet known as hiragana and lastly, there is katakana which is used solely for words that have been imported from foreign nations other than China. Within Japanese society, there is a tendancy to import a lot of foreign words into their language, and while the pronounciation might be similar, the length might be shortened[1]or the meaning might change.[2] Of importance for this thesis is the word "animation" which was shortened into the word "anime" and as the exportation of Japanese animation to USA started to escalate in the 1970-1980's "anime" as a term came into existance. "Anime" would come to characterize Japanese animated cartoons in the USA to such a degree that Japanese animated cartoons would become catagorized separately from cartoons made by the USA.

Doing an online search from Merriam-Webster anime is defined as: "a style of animation originating in Japan that is characterized by stark colorful graphics depicting vibrant characters in action-filled plots often with fantastic or futuristic themes" ("Anime", n.d[3]). Likewise, Dictionary.com states that: "[anime is] a Japanese style of motion-picture animation, characterized by highly stylized, colorful art, futuristic settings, violence, and sexuality" ("Anime", n.d[4]). Summarizing the

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1  Supermarket would be translated into "スーパ"(Su-pa).
2  The meaning of Idol (Idoru in Japanese) is usually utilized for famous, young, cute actors/singers (often female).
3  http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anime
4  http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/anime?s=t

definitions when a general online search for anime is conducted is the following: "Highly stylized, vibrant characters, violence and sexuality, fantastic or futuristic themes". This gives a very specific picture that in some ways is correct. There are two reasons for this. One is the success of modern works such as Evangelion or Cowboy Bebop, both being stylish and thematically complex stories that have crafted this kind of image for Japanese animation. As evident in the story of Evangelion, an psychologically complex story that deals with the struggle of special teenagers who can synchronize (psychologically connect with and control) big robots in a war against an alien race called the Angels. The story contains various Biblical, historical and psychological symbolism (Crandol, 2002). Biblical symbolism such as the names of "Angels" (i.e Lilith which was the first wife of Adam and later a demon that seduces men according to Jewish tradition[5]) and religious imagery via crosses, historical in the idea that the "Angels" are an allegory to the American invasion of Japan during WWII and psychological symbolism achieved mainly through the synchronization to the robot since the pilots are capable of feeling whatever damage sustained to the robot. The other reason is the cultural differences often found in storytelling which will be further examined in Ch.5 of this thesis. However, if we turn our attention to literary definitions we find that the definitions are different.

According to the book "Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle" written by Japanese literature teacher and anime and manga critic from Tuft University, Susan J.Napier (2005) states that:

> To define anime simply as "Japanese cartoons" gives no sense of depth and variety that make up the medium .... Essentially, anime works include everything that Western audiences are accustomed to seeing in live-action films —romance, comedy, tragedy, adventure, even psychological probing of a kind seldom attempted in recent mass-culture Western film or television. (p.24-5).

In essence, it is not as alien as online descriptions claim but rather the stories found in anime might be as diverse as those stories found in real-action American films and this touches upon one of the ideological differences in the creation of animation in Japan and USA, the difference being what is chosen to be shown in animated cartoons in each nation. This will be further analyzed in ch.5, Thematic and Stylistic

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5  http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Issues/Magic_and_the_Supernatural/Practices_and_Beliefs/Supernatural_Beings/Lilith.shtml

differences. Furthermore, doing a general online search for the definition for animated cartoon reveals that, unlike the term "anime" whose meaning is synonymous with animated cartoons created in Japan, there does not seem to be any such connection or concise term between animated cartoons and the United States. As per the definition on Merriam-Webster: "a motion picture that is made from a series of drawings...that stimulate movement by slight progressive changes in each frame" (Animated cartoon, n.d[6]). Essentially, this means that Japanese created animation has been separated from animation in general and more importantly, has been defined from a stylistic and story thematic perspective rather then the difference in animation styles from a cultural perspective. This brings up the question why has this turned out this way? In order to answer this, it is important to study the development of Japanese and American animation and how the cultural idea or perception of animation by the general public diverged down two different paths.

## 3. History of Anime in Japan

*3.1 Early Years*

The following two chapters will focus on early difficulties of the animation industry in Japan and how the Japanese government ultimately saved the industry by seizing of the animation industry in order to create propaganda during WWII. The earliest known pieces of Japanese animation are two works, the former titled Namakura Katana and the latter titled Imokawa Mukuzo Genkanban no Maki and they are often considered to be the first animated works created professionally in Japan. The former was created by Junichi Kouchi and showed a samurai being fooled into buying a blunt sword and the latter was about a postman. Both were released in 1917 (Sieg, 2008). However, in 2005 an 3-second animated clip was discovered which is believed by scholars from Osaka University to have been created around 1907 nonetheless this hasn't been confirmed, the author is unknown and unlikely that it was shown in theatres (which was the custom for animated or non-animated products at the time) (Clements, McCarthy, 2006). During the advent of animation in Japan, Shimokawa Oten, Junichi Kouhi and Kitayama Seitaro have been titled the pioneers of Japanese animation (or the First Generation of Japanese Animators) due to them being the first

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6  http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/animated%20cartoon

people in Japan who made animation their profession. Unfortunately, most of their work was either lost or destroyed for reasons including the destruction of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 as well as theatres often selling/destroying the animation reels after the showing due to animation being considered a lowly-form of entertainment (Litten, 2013). Of great importance to the Japanese animation industry was Seitaro Kitayama, whose animation company, that would create over 20 animation works between the years 1917 - 1923, trained animators that would later constitute the second Generation of Japanese animators. It was in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake that Kitayama animation studio was closed down which created an influx of many talented and experienced animators into the animation industry with the hope of continuing working on animation (Patten, 2004).

*3.2 Pre War – War Period*

It was in the aftermath of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake where animation as an industry started to take form. This was due to the influx of experienced and talented animators coming from devastated companies that had declared bankruptcy. An example of this was Seitaro Kitayamas studio (he would later work at Nikkatsu Studios) (Daisuke, 2002). Of Kitayamas staff there were four people in particular, Noburo Ofuji, Sanae Yamamoto, Hakuzan Kimura and Yasuji Murata, who would go on to create their own companies, an example being the company Nippon Doga owned by Sanae Yamamoto (that would later be aquired by Toei Animations, the largest animation company in Japan at the time)(Clements, McCarthy, 2006). During the inter war period (from 1923 - 1931), Japanese animators faced many difficulties, both internal and external. The internal difficulties consisted of: advancement of animation techniques, strict deadlines, lack of budget and thus a general lack of staff. As a matter of fact, most of the animation studios at the time were small teams often located at home whose staff consisted of family members helping out with what they could. As for external difficulties, the primary problem came from the United States, specifically Disney Studios. As the years went by Disney's products started to make a profit in the US which subsequently allowed Disney to improve their animation techniques and technology, along with increased  workforce to animate. This meant higher quality products and due to the profit they had made in the States, it allowed

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Disney to export their products and show them in Japanese theatres at a reduced price. The conclusion was that Japanese animators were faced with products of better quality being shown at a cheaper price so that in order to compete they had to work even cheaper in order to have a chance of recuperating their expenses which generally resulted in animations of a lower standard due to budget restraints. (Daisuke, 2002).

In order to attain American quality in animation, the Japanese animators realized the only way to compete was to try and increase their animation budgets and team members which meant increased expenses. As a result of the higher expenses, animation companies started resorting to accepting the  patronage of companies or educational institutions that were often state-run which brought about another problem, animation being markedly used as propaganda for the Japanese government. The origins of utilizing films/animation as means of propagating propaganda in Japan stems from 1917 when a French film about a crime lord called Zigomar and his various adventures with the law (with Zigomar being victorious) had been released in Japan. It became such a success that young delinquents would create gangs named after Zigomar. Through this event, the Japanese government realized the potential influence film (and by extension animation) could have on it's citizens and started to utilize it for their own goals (Daisuke, 2002). This can be seen as early as 1917 when the Japanese government contacted the aforementioned Seitaro Kitayama and requested he made animations that encouraged savings and the same year he released two films, Chokin no Susume and Chiri mo tsumoreba yama to naru, that are possibly the first examples of animation being used as propaganda in Japan. Another example of an animator being requested to work on propaganda was Yamamoto Sanae who worked on multiple films for various ministries of the Japanese government such as Baidoku no denpa (The Spread of Syphilis in 1926) for the Ministry of Education (Daisuke, 2002). This form of relationship would continue until the Fifteen-Year war with China began when the Japanese government took over the animation industry in order to bolster up the propaganda for the war effort. For the animation industry, this had its advantages and disadvantages. The advantages being that this enormously increased their budgets and secured their job safety which had been lacking in the years before, allowing them to expand their staff into professional levels similar to those seen in the States as well as increasing the quality of their animation. The

disadvantages were that the animators lost creative control over their products and were subjugated to increasing censorship. Here are some examples of elements that were not allowed to be shown in films (and by extension animation) at the time:

> Films undermining public peace, manners or morals, or health … Films were not to express any criticism of the political system, including any form of antimilitarist sentiment, and could not refer to class conflict or other group conflict (including gang war), threaten the belief in the Japanese people as a nation, "damage good will in foreign affairs," or show how to conceal a crime … Under the mores category, cruelty and ugliness (including bloody battle scenes and physical deformity) were banned, as were sex-related scenes depicting extramarital sex, "kissing, dancing, embracing, nudity, flirting, sexual innuendo, pleasure-seeking" and "others". (Daisuke 2002, 74-5).

The final part in the quote is of importance, simply written as "others", gave the Japanese government complete control over the entire entertainment sector. Nonetheless, despite these disadvantages the Japanese government goal was for the animation industry to be able to function without the aid of the government and to that effect, the Ministry of Education would promote watching educational animation films over real-action films for years. It can be argued this sudden support was to direct the public view towards the propaganda-filled animation but this gave the struggling Japanese animators an ever growing market that was backed by the government. This provided the animators with ever-increasing funds to try and rival Western animation, in particular Disney Studios.

It was as early as 1933 when Chikara to Onna no Yo no Naka was released that signalled the beginning of the Japanese animation upheaval by the Japanese government. Written and directed by Kenzo Masaoka, it was the first spoken animated short featuring a story about a man who begins an affair with a typist. Two years later, in 1935 the first cel-animated[7] short film was released. To put this in context, the technique for cel-animation was patented in the United States in 1915 and had been in use by Disney since around 1924-25 which shows how far behind the Japanese animation industry was. Later in 1941, the first animation that utilized a multiplane camera technique was released under the name of Ari-chan. A "multiplane" camera allowed the animators to create a soft focus to the film. A soft focus's objective was to create multiple different levels of light that in turn would create a soft look to the film. In essence, they would draw backgrounds and

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7   http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cel

foregrounds on separate pieces of paper (or cels) who would then be rolled under the camera in order to create animation. In addition, these backgrounds and foregrounds were often drawn with different levels of light creating better, more complex lighting as well as giving the illusion of depth (Fowler, 2012). As the war continued the Japanese government requested more propaganda to be created and an example of that was the animated film, Momotaro no Umiwashi released in 1943. It was ordered by the Japanese Navy and shows a human boy and animals launching an airplane attack on the equivalent of Pearl Harbour, using real footage from the attack. Running at 37 minutes, there are speculations that Momotaro no Umiwashi was the first animated feature film produced in Japan but its sequel (released in 1945) currently holds that honour. The sequel, titled Momotaro: Umi no Shinpei, was released in 1945 and is considered to be the first animated feature-film from Japan. With a staff of fifty people and a budget of ¥270.000 it was the largest productions of its time (Daisuke, 2002). This gradual progression of the animation industry is best seen in the structure of its animation teams. As mentioned on p.8, the animation teams were originally small groups of dedicated people with the support of their families and often operating from their homes. However in order to increase proficiency the Japanese government restructured and merged most of these small teams into bigger companies which was easier to control and command. This propaganda relationship between the animation industry and the government would continue even beyond the end of WWII, or when the United States would enforce their own censorship over the Japanese media. In comparison to the censorship being enforced by the Japanese, the United States would block anything that portrayed the Allied Forces in a negative light and even the word "censor" was prohibited effectively removing all mentions of censorship instead of merely not writing the offensive word (Rosenfield, 2002, p.86).

After Japan had lost the war and the occupation of Japan began, the destruction resulting from the war and the subsequent rebuilding of the nation resulted in the downsizing of the animation industry. It was during this time period when manga (comics) started to flourish again (being relatively cheap) and a man would emerge  that would influence and affect the animation industry for decades to come. His name was Osamu Tezuka and the next section will analyze his history, influences

he derived from Disney's animated works as well as the influence he came to have on the development of the anime industry in Japan.

### 3.3 Post-War Period (Osamu Tezuka)

The effect and influence of Osamu Tezuka on the Japanese animation industry is only rivalled by the success of Walt Disney himself that will be further examined in ch.4.2. Called the Godfather of Anime and Walt Disney of Japan by fans, he is credited with creating the actual framework for Japanese animation television shows by his work on the anime series Astro Boy in 1963 (Schodt, 2007).

Osamu Tezuka was born in 1928 and raised by a strict but supportive parents in Takarazuka City in Hyogo Prefecture. He started drawing at an early age and constantly drew whenever the opportunity presented itself, such as in school. It was in 1944, when at the age of 16, he got drafted into the military working at a factory to support the war effort and a year later witnessed the fire-bombing of Osaka in 1945 which would greatly influence the depiction of war and humanity in his future works (Tanaka, 2010). Trying to follow into his father footsteps, the same year he graduated from his high school and was accepted into Faculty of Medicine at Osaka University. Despite the increase in workload with studying, he continued drawing and started released manga as early as 1946. He continued to draw manga whilst studying and in cooperation with the then accomplished manga artist Shichima Sakai, created a manga series called New Treasure Island (1947) which would become his first success, selling around 400.000 copies (Macwilliams, 2008: p.67). This eventually caught the attention of the sizable Toei Animation who then purchased the manga series so as to be animated with Osamu Tezuka serving as a consultant, amongst his first experiences of animation. The following year the anime was released and shortly afterwards Osamu Tezuka decided to create his own animation company with the goal of producing experimental animation. However, in order to financially support his company, he and his staff decided to start production on animating Astro Boy. At the time, animated works were usually short-to-full length feature films shown in theatres as per pre-war animated works and despite the introduction of television to Japan around 1950, animated works had never been created specifically for television. Looking at this, Mushi Productions soon went into production on a weekly-animated

television show and were amongst the first ones in Japan to do so. At the time, Mushi Productions only consisted of six people and in order to create the amount of animation required for a 25 minute show, they decided to utilize specific cost-cutting short-cuts such as limited animation (animating only as necessary per episode) and pushing the staff as much as humanly possible (Schodt, 2007). Alternative focus in Mushi Productions was concentrating on writing compelling, complex stories as Tezuka realized that a good story could save the animation but not vice versa, as well as to build up an animation database in which they could store older animations were they required again (Baker, 2012). The first episode was released in 1963 and was a success in Japan, pulling in 27.4% viewership (Schodt, 2007). This lead it to be picked up by NBC Enterprises and shown in the United States in 1964,  the first anime to be shown in the USA, where it was also a huge success. As the popularity of Astro Boy started to grow due to it's new-found success in the United States, Tezuka became ecstatic by the knowledge that American children knew and liked his work despite the higher-quality products of Disney being released in the United States (Power, 2009). Indeed, Osamu Tezuka himself was a huge fan of Walt Disney and his products and this can be seen in his decision to create characters with big eyes in order to better express the characters feeling and in modern times, big eyes have become synonymous with anime works (Kelts, 2006). Osamu Tezuka was without a doubt a man that lived for his work as evident in the sheer volume of work he created throughout his career. He drew around 150.000 pages of manga, produced animated television series, feature films and experimental shorts, wrote essays on various topics of interest (such as cartoons, films, music), got a Ph.D in medicine and wrote children's books and novellas (Power, 2009). Another example of his extreme dedication to his work was when Mushi Productions began animating Astro Boy as per an interview done by Schodt (2007) with Yuzako Sakamoto, an former employee working with Tezuka at the time. He reflects: "...*being amazed by the fact that Tezuka never seemed to sleep (p.68).* Indeed, the animation of Astro Boy wasn't the sole project he had, for he still had to draw the serialized manga series that were on-going.

What made Astro Boy special beyond the cost-cutting techniques was the complexity and quality of the storytelling and considering it was intended for children is even more impressive. Summarizing the story from the award winning author and

translator for manga Frederick L Schodt: Astro Boy follows a child robot who fights injustice, crime and alien invasions. This child robot was created by a grieving, mad scientist who had lost his son only for the professor to sell Astro Boy to an circus after realizing he doesn't grow. While there he is forced to fight other robots until he get's adopted by a kind Professor who utilizes Astro Boy extraordinary talents to protect and serve justice(Schodt, 2007). As Astro Boy episodes were stand-alone episodes it allowed Tezuka to write about a variety of themes and ideas, one frequently used was the idea of discrimination (in this case to the robots) as previously mentioned about Astro being forced to fight other robots. Fundamentally, Astro Boy, being a robot and wishing to become human, was ultimately teaching about discrimination and about humanity in its stories in a science fiction setting. Creator Osamu Tezuka would continue to work as much as he could all the way until his death on the 9th of February, 1989 at the age of 60.

What Osamu Tezuka did for the animation industry in Japan was both a blessing and a curse. An example of the positives were that Osamu Tezukas products were quite popular, him being an acclaimed manga artist prior to going into animation, which allowed him the success that paved the way for other anime/manga products as well as inspired people to go into animation. In addition, he is credited for laying the framework for the anime industry in Japan with his work on Astro Boy and more specifically, the structure and techniques being utilized in that production such as various cost-cutting techniques including limited animation, still shots and focus on quality storytelling over good animation. However, the negatives can be linked to his cost-cutting methods of Astro Boy. Since Astro Boy became a huge success and animated with a low budget, it created a business standard that lead to low production quality (Schodt, 2007). Subsequent animators were forced to compete with a lower budget which meant longer work days in order to keep the quality of their products high enough for competition. While Osamu Tezuka had a great impact on the animation industry, he wasn't the only one who made significant improvements to animation in Post-War Japan. Another example would be Toei Animation. Formed in 1948 with staff who had worked in animation during the war the company provided some new breakthroughs for the Japanese animation industry. It was in 1958 when Toei Animations released Hakujaden (The Tale of the White Serpent) which was the

first color animated feature film in Japan, with its influences clearly from Disneys products, with musical numbers, protagonists in love and cute animal sidekicks (Clements & McCarthy, 2006). Other contributions to the animation industry by Toei Animation were mainly twofold. First, was to place an emphasis on the animators own creation during the development process and the other was the idea of "money shots" animation. "Money shots animation" was a development method in which important scenes get a bigger percentage of the budget in order to maximize their impact while the majority of animation is produced with limited animation. This is meant to cut development costs while increasing the animation quality of specific scenes (Wilson, 2010). This technique would become an industry mainstay for smaller companies. The animation industry would continue to grow until the 1970s when the industry went into increased competition with foreign films and real-action television shows which led to the downsizing of the animation industry. This downsizing resulted in an injection of new blood into the animation industry via new companies the result of which meant more complex and diverse storytelling. It was also in the 70's when complex character driven space operas started to appear via a work called Space Cruiser Yamamoto and later in the giant robot (mecha) genre primarily with the work titled Gundam. An example of a major story theme in Gundam is the effect of warfare on civilian populations (Poitras, 2001). Having briefly examined the animation industry in Japan and Osamu Tezukas work, the gradual progression of complexity shown in the animated works in the 70's as well as the increased depiction of violence, that is to say character deaths, can be credited to Osamu Tezuka.  It were the complex subject matters of Astro Boy as well as his fearlessness in drawing comics, depicting violence in a realistic manner and Tezukas willingness to draw the flaws of the human body, for example with characters vomiting or spewing mucus that set a groundwork for increased complexity as animation continued to grow (Kelts, 2009). While anime tries to appeal to both children and adults as evident in Astro Boy, as we will delve further into the next chapter the American animations appeal to children will be examined. In order to answer this, the next section will explore the history of animation in the United States and introduce Walt Disney and his breakthroughs during his career in order to set the stage for the differences in the stylistic and thematic chapter.

## 4. History of Animation in the United States

4.1 Early Years

Perhaps the very first animation film to have been released in the United States was as early as the year 1900 when a film by the name of The Enchanted Drawing by James Stuart Blackton was released (Library of Congress, n.d). It depicted Blackton drawing a face on a blackboard as well as cigars and a bottle of wine which he then proceeds to „remove" from the blackboard to which the face reacted either positively or negatively. He achieved this simply by not recording when he made changes to the face and/or having someone give him an bottle of wine then erasing his drawings. He achieved this via stop-motion which is the process of moving an object in increments while filming a frame per increment. Then in 1906, Blackton released another film Humorous Phases of Funny Faces utilizing the same technique which again portrays faces and the gradual changes they make and it's here where it starts to resemble traditional animation. However, it wasn't until a man by the name of Winsor McCay released Gertie the Dinosaur in 1914 and by doing so pioneered the American animation industry (Callahan, 1988). While one could look at Blackton as the father of animation in the United States, it is ultimately Winsor McCay that pioneered the animation industry and the reason for this would lies in the animation methods and story-telling. While J.Stuart Blackton utilized the technique of stop-motion in order animate his work, Winsor McCay used much more modern techniques, the likes of which would not been seen again until the 1930's by no other than Walt Disney himself. In particular, McCay pioneered two techniques that now are referred to key-framing and inbetween (Brandie, 2011).  Key-framing refers the artist choosing which animation pose the character will do in the beginning and the end of the frame while in-between refers to the drawings "in-between" those two previously decided upon animation poses. This allows the artist to choose the "beginning" and the "end" of the frame and draw the rest in between which allows the artist a greater control over the quality and more importantly, the consistancy of  the animation. When not used, the final animation felt "watery" since the lines changed from one frame to the next.

While McCay's animation techniques would have a lasting effect on the animation industry in the decades to come he never managed to achieve the kind of fame or recognition he deserved. In fact, after McCay's death in 1934 his son, Robert

Winsor McCay tried to continue the legacy of his father. While he ultimately failed there exists a story where he was invited by Walt Disney on a guided tour of the newly created Disneyland in 1955 where Walt appeared to have said that everything Robert Winsor McCay had seen during the tour should have been his fathers. (Collier, 2011). Beyond the technical influences Winsor McCay had on the animation industry he also proved that animation could be profitable and while Winsor McCay wouldn't become the same household name as Walt Disney his influences could be felt for decades within the animation industry and beyond that, serve as an inspiration for various up and coming animators, in particular Walt Disney himself. The next section will focus on Walt Disney and his extreme desire to be the leading figure in American animation regardless of the cost to his company/or employees.

*4.2 Walt Disney*

This chapter will examine Walt Disney and his impact on animation (in the form of development of new animation techniques) and how his success with lovable characters and fairytale stories have influenced American animation. However, through this success Walt Disney rewrote the meaning of fairy tales to better suit his agenda for family-friendly products, establishing himself as a modern pioneer of fairy tales. The following section will explore how Walt Disney and his techniques rose to fame. Similarly to Osamu Tezuka in Japan, it is impossible to discuss animation in America without talking about Walt Disney.

Walt Disney was born in 1901 in Chicago but moved around before settling as a teenager in Marceline, Missouri (Krasniewicz,2010). The time he spent in Marceline would later become an influence as the image of "traditional American town" in his animation works. During WWI, with Walt Disney at 16 years old, was when he decided to try and join the military. He was denied access but instead managed to go over to Europe via the Red Cross as an ambulance driver (Alef, 2009). He would help create propaganda via editorials and promotional material as well as create posters for the Red Cross. It was after the war when Walt Disney made his first venture into the animation industry in Kansas City. It was a short endeavour during which Walt Disney was in charge of the accounting but due to the lack of knowledge in handling money resulted in bankruptcy. Walt decided to learn from his mistakes,

asked his brother to move with him to Hollywood in order to create another animation company (his brother handling the accounting instead of Walt Disney). So in 1923, when the brothers (with the financial support of Disney's family) founded Disney Brothers Studio the focus of which was "for the purpose of producing a new and novel series of cartoons" (Alef, 2009). The very first of those animations were 54 animated works about a little girl called Alice (in Wonderland) and her adventures. After that came Oswald the Lucky Rabbit which would prove to become a jumping ground, a means to strengthen and expand Disney Brothers Studio but due to licensing problems they weren't able to hold the rights. Having lost a valuable asset, Walt was forced to create something new. This new creation would become the beginning of the legacy, a character by the name of Mortimer Mouse, whose name would be changed into Mickey Mouse (Krasniewicz, 2010).

It was in 1928 when the brothers deputed the first animated sound cartoon featuring Mickey Mouse in the film Steamboat Willie who became a cultural sensation so much so that "between 1928 and 1932 a million kids joined the first Mickey Mouse Club" (Alef, 2009). The expansion of Disney Brothers Studio was astounding. By 1935, the company had grown from two brothers and a few people operating from a garage into a 500+ employees company who were leading innovators in animation and were the first ones worldwide to employ music and sounds and colour in their works (Alef, 2009). While the quality of the animations Disney studios produced were unquestionable, it was not solely that reason which allowed for such a success. It was rather the undying desire and almost recklessness of Walt Disney himself to explore and experiment with new ideas and technologies that pushed Disney Studios into greatness. However, not everything was great and good. It was the beginning of the Second World War, which had completely paralyzed European markets that had a devastating effect on the company, which would push Walt to start releasing his work in Latin America. Prior to the war beginning, Disney Studios had become riddled with debt which challenged the morale of the company until it reached a breaking point in 1940 when the employees went on a strike against Walt. Citing unfairly long work hours and lack of payment for overtime as reasons to strike against Walt proved a shock to him. The strike was settled  the same year but this downspiral would continue in 1942 when US forces

requested that  Disney provide pro-USA propaganda since the United States were gearing up to go to war against Germany and later Japan. Similar to the animation companies in Japan during the WWII, this proved to be a double edged sword. On one hand, this rescued Disney Studios who were on the verge of bankruptcy and engaging with the United States Government would bring money into the company but the downside was it stifled their creativity. During the war, Disney Studios would create pro-USA propaganda such as films teaching citizens to pay their taxes to help with the war effort and a a particular film (named Victory Through Air Power) which was extremely similar to Momotaro no Umiwashi in the sense it focused on the airplane being a superior weapon (in this case, over ships)  and lastly, instructional videos for soldiers on learning how to utilize their weapons (Krasniewicz, 2010). Perhaps the most famous one is an episode where Donald Duck wakes up in what seems to be Nazi Germany and is forced to work in a ammunition factory with impossibly long work-hours (48 hours a day) with virtually no breaks only for him to end up crazed due to overwork. The ending then depicts Donald Duck waking up in the USA, hugging a miniature Statue of Liberty and proclaiming that he's so glad to be a citizen of the United States (Scribbles, 2011).

It wasn't until the end of WWII in 1945 when Disney Studios regained it's creative independence and continued creating its original ideas. Disney Studios continued its productions and the first product was released in 1946 under the name Song of the South, an film that had real-life and animated sequences in it that would become controversial due to it's depiction of submissive black people in the late nineteenth century. According to the researcher Jason Sperb (2012): *"Song of the South depicts plantation life in the late nineteenth century - a time marked by unimaginable cruelty-as a white musical utopia"* (p.1). Despite the controversy, Disney started putting an increased focus on live-action films culminating in the release of Treasure Island in the 1950 in the hopes of expanding Disney Studios influence. The culmination of this change of direction for Disney resulted in the great success of Mary Poppins in 1964, merely two years before the death of Walt Disney. Walt Disney died on the 15th of December 1966. In the decades after Walt's death, Disney Studios influence and strength would grow larger and larger and now in 2013 it's counted amongst the top 3 largest media conglomerates in the world (Milord,

2013). The reason for focusing so much on Disney animations is that they were the pioneers of most of the technical advances made in the USA for the better part of the century. As seen in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in 1937 which was not only the first full feature-film of traditional animated work in history but was leagues ahead of it's contemporaries not solely in the length of it but also the techniques being used. During the production of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Disney would hire actual actors to act out the sequences, record it and then the animators would draw it up, a practice called rotoscoping. Another element was the invention of "multiplane" camera which as mentioned before allows the animators to create a soft focus to the film (Fowler, 2012).

Having analyzed the progression of the animation industry of each nation along with the history of Walt Disney and Osamu Tezuka brings forth the following question. Despite the overall similar progression of both industries and a similar dedication to animation and story-telling shown by both Walt and Osamu, there is little doubt that Walt Disney has managed to become a household name on a worldwide scale while Osamu Tezuka hasn't. How did it turn out like that? Likewise, the animation industries of USA and Japan have diverged significantly in modern times with Japan having anime as one of it's chief cultural exports (Leonard, 2003). Meanwhile, American animation who placed a big emphasis on feature-film animated cartoons as TV animation, has now been reduced to childrens shows. What is the reason for this difference despite the similar evolution of animation industries? While there might be many reasons, ranging from cultural reasons to financial reasons, the more likely reasons can be found in the prevailing stylistic and story differences found in each industry and the reception of it's viewers. The next chapter will analyze the stylistic and the story differences most commonly found in each animation industry and how these differences affect the reception amongst the viewers of each nation.

## 5. Stylistic Differences in Japan and USA

*5.1 History*

In the case of Japan, it's vital to briefly analyze the artistic sense of Japanese art throughout history in order to reach an understanding of the modern Japanese style. After doing so, this thesis will provide an analysis of anime works Astro Boy (1963) in order to emphasize the stylistic and story/thematic differences in comparison to the USA.

Japan has had a long history of art. Ranging from the outlandish design of figurines and pots uncovered from the Jomon period (the hunter-gatherer period in Japanese history, (from 10.000 to 300 B.C), the poetry of the nobility during the Heian period (AD 794 – 1185), to the Choju giga (the Scrolls of Frolicking Animals drawn in the 12th century showing animals performing human activities such as archery theorized to be a social critique on the nobility), Japanese people have always had an interest in outlandish imagination and story-telling. This can be seen in the worlds first fictional novel[8] (The Genji Monogatari, written in the Heian Period) as well as the Scrolls of Frolicking Animals[9] which according to the anime research author Robin E. Brenner is the precursor to sequential art (Brenner, 2007). Sequential art is a term that describes the idea of expressing stories or characters through pictures in a sequential manner (McCloud, 1993). Beyond these works, there is also the influence of the Japanese artist Hokusai Katsushika (1760-1849) (Frédéric, 2002) who painted various pictures and wood cut-outs throughout his life. Of significant importance was a woodblock work (woodblock work refers to carving an image into the surface of wood) depicting a woman engaging in intercourse with an octopus (Brena, 2009).

Analyzing the stylistic difference between Japan and USA, these aforementioned examples become an important factors since they provide an window into Japanese mentality in relation to stories as well as Japanese people's willingness to explore the fantastical. Moreover, an example of the fantastical can be seen in the works Astro Boy. The greatest difference between the United States art and Japanese

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8   Genji Monogatari tells the story of a womanizing noble and his daily life while explaining the customs and habits of the nobles during the Heian Period.

9   While the scrolls are considered to be a social citique, their method of expressing said critique is highly reminiscent of modern day comics. A comic one reads from left to right with no text or narrative forcing the reader to focus on the drawings.

art was the ideology behind it. When the United States were more influenced by the European masters such as Michael Angelo and Raphael, trying to achieve perfection through technique where as Japanese artists showed more interest in the feeling behind it (Dow, 1893). Moreover, the teaching of values to children is also of importance. According to Tony R. Sanchez, an Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education at Purdue University, teaching about heroes in an honest manner (the flaws and the qualities) it "...will encourage emulation of particular virtues or desirable traits of character" (Sanchez, 1998). As a consequence, the storytelling starts to reflect this especially in stories intended for children as can be seen in the products of Disney Studios. This will be further examined in ch.5.3.

*5.2 Astro Boy*

Despite being released in the early days of animated television shows, analyzing the art style of Astro Boy shows some aspects quite uncommon in comparison to modern stories. An example of this would be the design of Astro Boy himself. While his design seems plain-looking considering that  his outfit only consists of black shorts and knee-high socks/shoes, it is more the insides of Astro Boy where it grows into the fantastical. Since he is a robot, he is equipped with various equipment such as a machine gun in his bottom, jets in his arms and legs and a nuclear-powered reactor core in his chest in order to power everything up. In the 60's in Japan there had been stories dealing with robots but Astro Boy was the first to blur the line between robots and humans. As previously mentioned, Astro Boy follows a child robot who after being built fights injustice, crime and the occasional alien invasions (Clements & McCarthy, 2003). Despite Astro Boy fighting for justice he would achieve victory through the death of his enemies so often that when the show was sold to NBC to be broadcasted in the United States, American censors found themselves forced to alter the dialogue and occasionally the story-lines in order for the show to be family-friendly. There was also the problem of different cultural sensibilities. According to Fred Ladd (2009), the person responsible for the adaptation of Astro Boy to American shores, specific things had to be "Americanized" to better suit American sensibilities. An example of this would be in Episode 1 where the son of a scientist dies in a car accident due to reckless driving. Fred Ladd believed that American audiences

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wouldn't be sympathetic to a reckless driver so he decided to blame a mechanical glitch in the highway for causing the car accident depicting the son as a victim rather than a reckless driver to better suit American sensibilities (p.14). As shown in the previous example, the depiction of death and violence proved to be difficult problem for American tastes, the reason being the different cultural ideologies. In Japan, the idea of portraying violence and/or death to the protagonists is not uncommon since death is considered to be a part of life and shouldn't be ignored. However, in the United States this is reversed, with violence and death often happening to the antagonists rather then the protagonists since the protagonists are the "good guys" (Pan, 2010). In other words, the protagonists are good and the antagonists are evil and as such, no harm should come to the protagonists seems to be the prevailing ideology in American stories. When NBC bought the rights to Astro Boy, it was a big moment for Osamu Tezuka, representing a breakthrough for Japanese animated cartoons, in particular because the image of Japan wasn't good in the USA since they had been the enemy in WWII. This can be shown in the mentality of the executives of NBC at the time who according to Ladd (2009) said the following:

> We [meaning NBC Enterprises] don't plan to advertise the fact that the series is being animated in Japan. We're not going to deny it, if anybody asks, but we're not going to publicize it, either. First of all, there are probably some buyers at stations out there who still haven't gotten over the fact that Japan was our enemy in World War Two. Second, if a buyer hears that the show is of Japanese origin, he's going to think it must be cheap ... shoddy ... and, even if he likes it, he's going to try to get it for two dollars an episode (p.21)

Despite NBC's attention to try and hide the fact Astro Boy was animated in Japan it's immense popularity would soon divert attention to the fact it was Japanese, the result of which weren't nearly as negative as the NBC had thought. The popularity of Astro Boy in the United States was immense, breaking viewer records with the ratings going as far as 60%. Indeed, in 1964 NBC requested an additional 52 episodes from Mushi Productions in order to capitalize on this success.

The level of popularity would continue until 1966 when NBC decided to cancel the series due to viewer ratings having dropped and the dark, depressing storylines. However unfortunate the cancellation was, it showcases Osamu Tezukas boldness in writing and developing stories that would tackle themes despite being intended for children.  An example of this would be the frequent allusion to

discrimination (against the robots), depiction of violence and the lack of happy endings.

From a story and thematic perspective, Astro Boys first episode deals with the death of a child, the father's subsequent downfall into insanity, the creation and selling of another child (robot) to a circus (where he is forced to fight other robots) and while the simplistic animation betrays the severity of this drama to some extent there is no doubt the story themes are quite dark and complex.

Since the stories in Astro Boys episodes were chiefly self-contained stories, it allowed Osamu Tezuka to write a plethora of stories many of which feature different themes. An example (frequently touched upon throughout his work) was the stupidity of war and how science can lead to destruction and discrimination were frequently used in Astro Boy (Schodt, 2007).

For an animated series intended for children, it is uncommon to see such complex, adult themes being written into the story. According to an interview done by Roland Kelts (2006) of Yoshihiro Shimizu (a long-time co-worker of Osamu Tezuka) the reason is the following:

> When we shifted from from manga to anime, his focus on story was critical. We didn't have enough money to compete with American studios. So our character's mouths don't move as much, and the backgrounds don't change as often. But the stories are really good. The depth of character, the variety of subject matter. And we don't need to have happy endings (p.43-4).

This was due to Osamu Tezuka's bold writing style, never hesitating from showing violence or tackling difficult subject matters regardless of the audience. The sad irony of Osamu Tezukas expansion to the United States was that NBC, while trying to hide the fact the series was made in Japan, decided not to use his name on the advertisement material for Astro Boy resulting in the series becoming classic but the creator being essentially unknown (Schodt, 2007 p.88). According to the Fred Ladd (2009), the aforementioned localizer of Astro Boy to the United States the animation footage that came from Ozamu Tezuka "consisted of meager 4.000 animation cels spread out over a half an hour (a cel is a transparent sheet on which the animation is drawn) whereas Disneys 7-minute short works consisted of 6.500 animation cels" (p.23). This meant that the quantity of animation was significantly lower in comparison to Disney Studios products. This was the result of various cost-cutting

techniques done by Mushi Productions such as freeze frames (limited animation) or camera techniques in order to fake animation (zooming in or out). As such that the budget for Astro Boy was around 3.000 dollars for each episode and with a total of 193 episodes totalling at around 579.000 dollars over the course of three years. Osamu Tezukas approach to this low-cost animation has been referred to as Tezuka's Curse since it forced other animation companies to sell their products as cheap (or cheaper) in order to compete which meant that the animators wages and work conditions were really poor (Kelts, 2006). According to University of Tokyo teacher Kelts (2006): *"Essentially, Tezuka was dumping, selling his episodes for cheap to keep others out"* (p.47).

## *5.3 Snow White*

The following chapter will examine Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs due to it being the first animated feature film ever released and the importance it had on animation style as well as it's implications on the story and it's themes. The reception of the Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in modern times is also important for it shows the subtle rewriting of history and the change of meaning of the word "fairy tale" by Walt Disney.

First it is important to briefly analyze the history of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Originally it was European folklore and while there were considerable variations on the story dependent on when and where it had been collected, the most commonly referred to version was the one collected by the brothers Grimm, incidentally also the one used by Walt Disney.  It told the story of a young girl who loses her mother, becomes hated by her stepmother to the point of her stepmother trying to kill her. Snow White then gets rescued by dwarfs and ultimately becomes poisoned by an apple by the stepmother and falls into deep-sleep. Snow White gets encased into a coffin by the dwarfs and is found by an Prince who takes her away. While travelling, the bite of the poisoned apple gets unlodged from her throat so that she wakes up. She travels with the Prince and gets married. The story ends with Snow White being married to the Prince and the stepmother getting killed (Grimm, Grimm, Jüttner, 2011). While the Disney version largely follows the same story, there are some significant differences in the portrayal of it.  An example of this is how the

stepmother dies. In the Grimm version, the dwarfs force the stepmother to wear burning hot iron shoes and dance until she dies where as in the Disney version, the dwarfs corner the stepmother on a cliff and (due to her own failure of moving a boulder) falls to her death. This is reminiscent of the Americanization of Astro Boy where the responsibility of death is shifted to something neutral in order better suit American taste. Another difference between these these two versions is when Snow White starts to interact with the dwarfs. In the Disney version, Snow White finds a small cottage and after being found there by the dwarfs is welcomed to their home. She cooks and cleans while they work in the mines (and this is shown with songs and dances). In the Grimm version, she cooks and cleans for their services to protect her.

Finally, after eating the poisoned apple there are more differences. The Grimm version shows a Prince who stumbles upon the glass coffin and falls in love with Snow White but in the Disney version she had already met the Prince and he had already fallen in love with her which resulted in him searching for her to begin with. When the Prince finds her, she's already been placed into the glass coffin and upon kissing her the spell is broken. Likewise, the introduction of the Prince in the beginning of Disney's version is important because it purifies the Prince. In the Grimm version, he is a man who stumbles upon a corpse and falls in love with its beauty but as mentioned before, he had met her and searches for her out of love. As Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is a fairytale, the animation portrays this in a brightly coloured, almost magical way with cute animals who respond to singing to a goofy-but-friendly looking dwarfs who assist and help Snow White in whatever ways they can. Snow White herself is animated with fluidity unseen at the time whose beauty is emphasized with her singing skills and interactions with the aforementioned cute animals who all flock to her. In addition, her kind heart sways everyone to her side.  In stark contrast is the evil stepmother who conspires to kill Snow White out of envy of her beauty. When analyzing the scenes with the evil stepmother the colours are significantly more darker and her tone of voice (and dialogue) is likewise more rougher in comparison to Snow White. Additionally, the environments that feature the evil stepmother are often closed off spaces (i.e a dungeon) with limited lighting to enforce the image that she is evil. (Sharpsteen, Hand, Morey, Pearce, Jackson, Disney, 1937). The atmosphere of these sequences (both for Snow White and the evil

stepmother) were achieved through a considerably higher budget in comparison to Astro Boy. A budget that was initially projected at around 500.000 dollars only for it to grow significantly into 1.6 million dollars by the end of the three year long production (Finler, 2003). As a consequence of a bigger budget and the constant reinforcement of who is good or evil through the animation style, the story became easy to understand that suited better the family-friendly approach Disney was aiming for. However, it was the reception of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs that would change the American public's opinion and image of fairy tales. According to fairytale researcher Jack Zipes (1995) it was as if Walt Disney had "placed a spell on fairy tales" the meaning of which is the following:

> If children or adults think of the great classical fairy tales today, be it Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, or Cinderella, they will think Walt Disney. Their first and perhaps lasting impressions of these tales and others will have emanated from a Disney film, book, or artifact. ....Disney managed to gain a cultural stranglehold on the fairy tale...(p.21).

This "stranglehold" on the fairy tale refers to the shifting of public perception of fairy tales. What had once been viewed as pieces of folklore from different cultures had now been credited to Walt Disney. Furthermore, analyzing the collection of fairy tales that the Grimm brothers collected and published, many of the stories depict frequent acts of violence (as previously mentioned with the method of which Snow Whites stepmother is killed) and/or horror moments for instance in both versions of Snow White, the evil stepmother wants Snow White killed and the heart to be brought to her (in some versions, her liver and lungs) but in the Grimm version she has it cooked and eats it.

By taking these unfamiliar stories and presenting them in a family friendly manner, depicted in a colourful setting with clearly defined protagonists/antagonists (with plenty of singing and dancing) Walt Disney managed to "place a spell" on American audiences that still lasts today.

## 6. Conclusions

Having examined Snow White and Astro Boy, the difference in cultural sensibilities in the form of what can be catagorized as childrens entertainment can be seen to vary greatly between cultures. If Snow White is considered to be a film that caters to the creation of positive emotions in the viewer then Astro Boy appeals to the intellect of tackling complex themes. Moreover, this progression into complex stories continued in Japan which resulted in the difference being even greater from a story perspective. With this in mind, the appreciation of Japanese animated cartoons might be dependent on the preconceived perception of the individuals willingness to explore the unknown not only in story and themes but also artistic style. This though is dependent on the individual but perhaps with an open mind this might change and in doing so opening up new possibilities of enjoying varied entertainment.

Moreover, it's this exploration of the unknown that should be encouraged as opposed to (in the case of animation) defined separately due to cultural differences or (in the case of my friends) viewers being ridiculed due to the speakers lack of willingness into exploring the unknown. In addition, the increased interactions between citizens of different cultures as well as the increasing globalization of media products such as animation, the opportunity to further evolve animation from a stylistic and story thematic point of view in order to reach even more people has never been greater. As can be seen in my friends, who after having listened to my stories decided to explore and watch Japanese animated shows, now owning and storing their purchased products on their shelves. The question then becomes, if a single individual's opinion on animation can influence the buying patterns of his friends, what could two entire industries be capable of doing if the interconnectedness continues?

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