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Pictures with Words: An Analysis of Textual Functioning in Comics Narratives

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I hereby certify that the present thesis is based on my own research work. I further declare that all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.
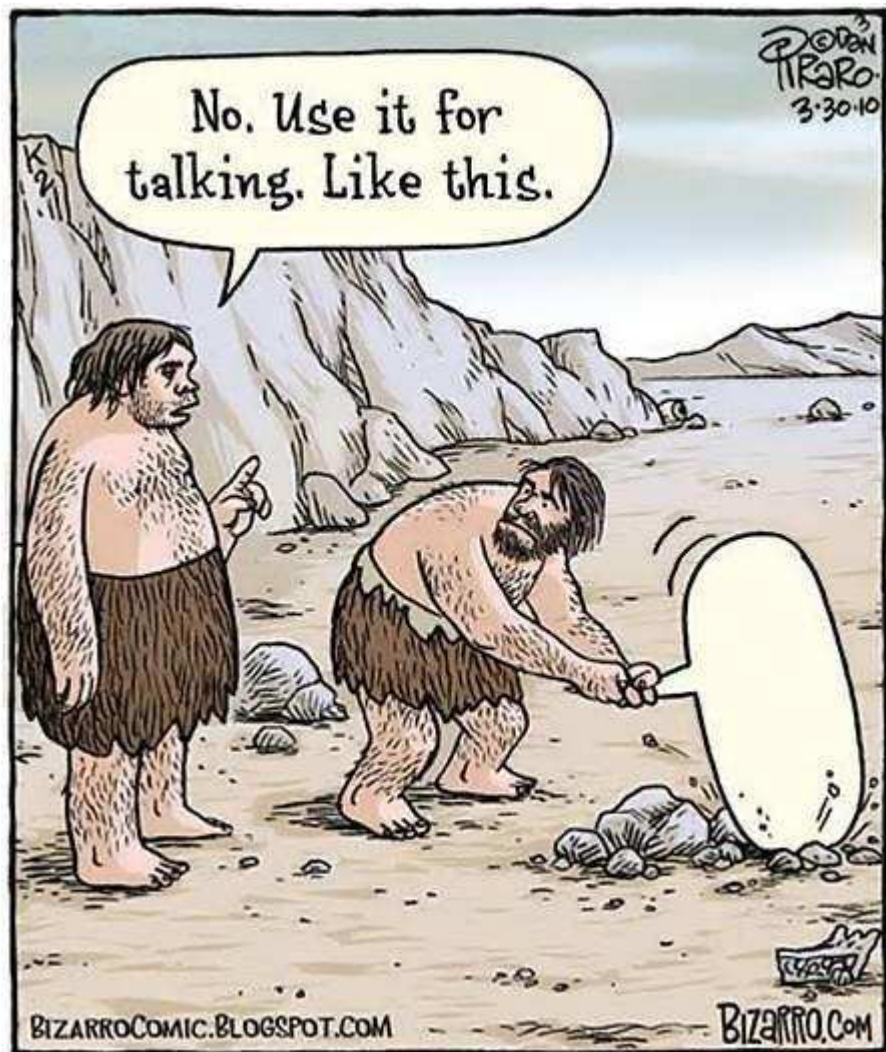

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Fig.1: proper use of speech balloons (Piraro, online)

Abstract

The thesis deals with an exploration of the most effective method for distinction of textual functions in comics and its application into practice. On the basis of a comparative analysis of four different classifications in the first analytical part of the thesis, it was revealed that the most effective method for distinction of text in comics is the classification by Scott McCloud, which differentiates the functions of text in comics on the basis of the ratio, in which combination of textual and pictorial information within one panel distributes the message to the reader.

The practical functioning of McCloud´s classification is further examined in the second analytical part of the thesis, in which it is used for the analysis of textual functioning in comics from three different cultural environments; the Japanese region, the Anglo-American region and the Franco-Belgian region. The data gathered for this analysis demonstrated the hypothesis that the use of textual functions in comics varies on the basis of the cultural region, in which the comic book originated. On the basis of the data gathered by this analysis, McCloud´s classification has been evaluated as an effective tool for classification of text in comics, as well as being commented on by further observations.

Key words

Comic Book Medium, Classification of Textual Functions, Comics Narrative, Cultural Specificity, Textual Functioning in Comics, Methods of Textual Classification,

Anotácia

Táto práca sa zaoberá hľadaním najefektívnejšej metódy na rozlišovanie textových funkcií v komikse a jej následnou aplikáciou do praxe. Komparatívnou analýzou štyroch rôznych klasifikácií v prvej analytickej časti práce bolo zistené, že najefektívnejšou metódou pre tento účel je klasifikácia podľa Scotta McClouda, ktorá rozlišuje funkcie textu v komikse na základe pomeru, v ktorom sa textové a obrazové informácie v rámci jedného panelu spolupodieľajú na sprostredkovaní správy čitateľovi.

Praktické využitie McCloudovej klasifikácie textu je následne skúmané v druhej analytickej časti práce, kde je použitá na analýzu fungovania textu v komiksoch pochádzajúcich z troch rôznych kultúrnych regiónov, konkrétne z Anglo-americkej, franko-belgickej a japonskej oblasti. Na základe dát vyskúmaných touto analýzou bola potvrdená hypotéza, že používanie textových funkcií v komikse sa rôzni v závislosti na kultúrnej oblasti, z ktorej komiks pochádza. Na základe dát vyskúmaných touto analýzou bola McCloudova klasifikácia vyhodnotená ako efektívny nástroj pre klasifikáciu textu v komikse a zároveň bola doplnená o pozorovania nadobudnuté počas analýzy.

Kľúčové slová

Komiksové Médium, Klasifikácia Textových Funkcií, Komiksový Naratív, Kultúrna Špecifickosť, Textové Funkcie v Komikse, Metódy Klasifikácie Textu

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that, comic books have appeared in our culture in their present form for almost two centuries, research on them has only begun to receive the genuine attention of academics over the past couple of decades. In his essay *Comics as Culture*, Thomas M. Inge explains this latent academic interest in comics through the considerable suspicion with which comic books are frequently regarded in society.[1] Apart from the fact that, comic books still receive only marginal academic attention in comparison with studies of other media, Berninger et al. also emphasize that most of the theoretical research in comic book studies is aimed primarily at pictorial aspects of this medium.[2] In the light of this reality, it is not particularly surprising that functioning of textual information in comics has not been mapped out and examined in greater detail up until the present. However, there could be found various methods of classifications of text functioning in comics; their effectivity remains questionable, as they has never been mutually compared and evaluated.

Therefore, the main goal of this thesis is to examine various available methods for classification of text[3] in comics as well as to compare and evaluate their usability in practice. Apart from this primary goal, the thesis would also like to apply the most effective of the analyzed classifications to comics from the three different cultural environments[4] and thus demonstrate the hypothesis, that textual functioning in comics varies on the basis of the geographical region, in which the comic books originate.

This analysis of textual functioning in comics should proceed in greater detail in the following four chapters. The first chapter will provide a concise overview of the various criteria for definition of comics, on the basis of which the position of text in comics should be explored. In the beginning of the second chapter, terminology in connection

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1 Inge, Thomas M. *Comics as Culture.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990, 9.

2 Berninger, Mark, Jochen Ecke and Gideon Haberkorn. *Comics as a Nexus of Cultures.* North Carolina: McFarland & Co, 2010, 11.

3 In the thesis, "text" is understood on the basis of the definition by Merriam-Webster Dictionary as the original words and form of a written or printed work. (Merriam-Webster 2013).

4 On the basis of the region of origin, comics from various cultural environments are often divided into; Anglo-American, Franco-Belgian and Japanese Manga comics.

with textual spaces in comics will be briefly presented and explained in order to provide the reader with better orientation in the phenomena presented further in the thesis. The second chapter will proceed with the analysis of the four different alternatives to classification of textual information in comics, which will be compared and evaluated on the basis of their effectivity. The categorization, which will be evaluated as the most effective, will be further used in chapter three for an examination of the variability of textual use in comics from different cultural environments. Apart from the examination and comparison of text functioning in comics from various cultural environments, chapter three will also examine and evaluate the practical usability of the categorization selected for the analysis. The outcome of the entire analysis will be concluded and evaluated in the subsequent chapter.

1.1. Delimitation of the medium

Before the analysis of functions of written language in comics in greater detail it is important to set the criteria for definition of comics as well as to delimit the role that written text plays in comic book medium. The following section reveals and compares the most developed perspectives on the basis of which various criteria for delimitation of comics could be established.

1.2. Pictures in deliberate sequences

In 1993, Scott McCloud published his pioneering work *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* one of the first thorough analysis of the comic book medium. Apart from the analysis of the attributes specific for the medium, McCloud also tried to come up with an adequate definition of comics. In the formulation of his definition, McCloud has followed the tradition of his predecessor, Will Eisner, whose work *Comics as a Sequential Art*[5] dealt with comics a decade earlier, but without attempts to formulate any sort of specifying definition. On the basis of this work, McCloud has chosen the primary

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5 Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art.* Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985. (further mentioned as Eisner Sequential)

criterion for "comicsness" to be the factor of sequentiality which he has defined as, juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.*6* One of the main reasons for McCloud's choice of this factor was to distinguish comic books from the cartoons that in comparison with comics depict ideas within the space of the single frame. In addition to his definition, McCloud argues that cartoons cannot be perceived as comics, because of the simple reason that there's no such thing as a sequence of one! Such single panels might be classified as "comic art" only in the sense that they derive part of their visual vocabulary from comics. (McCloud Understanding, 21)

Apart from the primary criterion of sequentiality of pictorial images, McCloud's definition also mentions the term "other images," which seems to be very broad at first sight. Even though *Understanding Comics* as a pioneering work on comic book theory suffers from several imprecise observations, the broadness of the term "other images" within the above-mentioned definition does not rank among them. McCloud advocates his choice of this flexible term with the argument that comics may contain also other images than pictures (such as words or other symbolic systems), but the incorporation of the explicit term "words" would make his definition "too restrictive." An extremly similar definition to the one coined by McCloud could be found also in Czech academic environment, presented in *Encyklopédia literárních žánrů*[7] as the following, Komiks [...] Intersemioticky narativni žanr, ličici udalost či přiběh prostřednictvim serie kreseb zpravidla doplněnych textem.[8] Even at present, the incorporation of words within the primary criteria of comicsness is still an unresolved question among the comic book theorists. In contrast to McCloud's delimitation of the medium based on the sole criterion of sequentiality, there could be found also theories that emphasize the co-presence of words and pictures as similarly important factor.

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6 McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art.* New York: Paradox, 1993, 34. (further mentioned as McCloud Understanding)

7 Mocná, Dagmar, and Josef Peterka. *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů.* Praha – Litomyšl: Paseka, 2004. (further mentioned as Mocná and Peterka Encyklopedie)

8 Comics - Intersemiotic narrative genre, which presents the story or events through the series of pictures, which is usually accompanied with the text. (Mocná and Peterka Encyklopedie, 316) (own translation)

1.3. Pictures with Words?

One of these perspectives is presented in Mario Saraceni's work *The Language of Comics*, where this standpoint is supported by the following argumentation, Although the use of both words and pictures together, as such, is not a unique characteristic of comics, the way in which linguistic and pictorial elements interact with each other certainly is. The arrangement into sequences of panels is the other fundamental characteristic of comics. This is what makes comics different from cartoons, which are composed of one panel only.[9] Perspective set by these criteria restricts definition of comics even more than McCloud's as it does not exclude only cartoons, but wordless comics as well.

However, the above-mentioned delimitators draw a precise border between comics and cartoons; this must not always be the case. On the other hand, there could be found also perspectives that emphasize only the incorporation of verbal content as a sole criterion important for delimitation of the medium. For example, Robert C. Harvey in his essay "How Comics Came to Be: Through the Juncture of Word and Image from Magazine Gag Cartoons to Newspaper Strips, Tools for Critical Appreciation plus Rare Seldom Witnessed Historical Facts" attempts to oppose McCloud's definition in the following manner:

> To McCloud, "sequence" is at the heart of the functioning of the comics; to me, "blending" verbal and visual content is. [...] I realize that the gag cartoon falls outside McCloud's definition because it is not a sequence of pictures. In fact, gag cartoon fall outside most definitions of comics. But not mine. In my view, comics consist of pictorial narratives or expositions in which words (often lettered into the picture area within speech balloons) usually contribute to the meaning of the pictures (i.e., a "strip" of pictures); …[10]

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9 Saraceni, Mario. *The Language of Comics.* London: Routledge, 2003. (further mentioned as Saraceni Language)

10 Harvey, Robert C. "How Comics Came to Be: Through the Juncture of Word and Image from Magazine Gag Cartoons to Newspaper Strips, Tools for Critical Appreciation plus Rare Seldom Witnessed Historical Facts." In *A Comic Studies Reader*, ed. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2009, 26.

Unfortunately, Harvey himself is aware of the problematic character of his definition, which he openly admits at the end of his argumentation: My definition is not a leak-proof formulation. It conveniently excludes some non-comics artifacts that McCloud's includes (a rebus, for instance); but it probably permits the inclusion of other non-comics. (Harvey How comics, 27)

Harvey's attribute of verbal-visual blending without the primary criterion of sequentiality is simply insufficient for delimitation of the comic book medium, because it is common for numerous other media. Apart from the cartoons it incorporates also other cultural products that are not comics in the sense as the majority of comic book theoretists understands it (such as billboards, magazine commercials, posters, signed photographs, road signs, etc.). From the perspective of Harvey's criterion, one's understanding of comics would be broadened and blurred to such an extent that it would not be possible to recognize signed photograph or poster from a comic book anymore.

1.4. $E = mc^2$ or Relativity in the Theory of Comics

In comparison with the three above-mentioned approaches which sought a definition of comics in outlining functional internal criteria specific for the medium there could be found also theoretists, which perceive comic book as a complex phenomenon that could not be precisely delimited. One of these approaches can be found in Thiery Groensteen's essay *The Impossible Definition.*" In this essay, Groensteen presents and deconstructs the most common criteria on the basis of which comic book theoretists usually advocate the unique character of the medium. According to his argumentation there is no point in delimitation of the medium by seeking some sort of "essence of comics," because such an attempt always faces the problem, which he describes as the following, The difficulty of producing a valid definition of comics, a definition that permits discrimination in that which is not but which excludes none of its historical manifestations, including its marginal or experimental visionaries …[11]

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11 Groensteen, Thierry. "The Impossible Definition." In *A Comic Studies Reader*, ed. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2009, 125. (further mentioned as Groensteen Impossible)

Using a demonstrative deconstruction of the most common criteria on the basis of which comicsness is usually defined today (image/text blend, sequentiality …e.g.), Groensteen shows that attempts for specificity usually end up with a definition that is too restrictive. In addition to this argument, Groensteen also argues that seeking of the delimitation by broadening up of the criteria faces a similar obstacle.

As an illustration, he offers the problem pinpointed by Roger Odin in connection with seeking of a specific delimitation for a film. Based on Odin's example, when one tries to coin a definition of a film by taking into account all of its historical manifestations (such as animated films or silent cinema) one ends up with a sort of the definition that tells us nothing about its object. (Groensteen Impossible, 126) On the basis of this analogy, Groensteen comes up with the following conclusion: So great is the diversity of what has been claimed as comics, or what is claimed today under diverse latitudes, that it has become almost impossible to retain any definitive criteria that are universally held to be true. (Groensteen Impossible, 128)

Such an intense relativization will at first sight seem to erase any hope for finding a successful solution for the delimitation of comicsness. Interestingly enough, Groensteen himself further in his essay mentions and advocates a criterion through which the comic book medium can be relatively successfully captured. It is so-called "Iconic Solidarity," which Groensteen describes as the following:

> [O]ne cannot conceptualize comics without verifying the general rule, that of iconic solidarity. The necessary, if not sufficient, condition required to speak of comics is that the images will be multiple and correlated in some fashion. [...] Iconic solidarity is only the necessary condition so that visual messages can, in first approximation, be assimilated within a comic. As a physical object, every comics can be described as a collection of separate icons and interdependent images. (Groensteen Impossible, 129)

Although, Groensteen avoids the formulation of any specific definition, his broad requirement of Iconic Solidarity in the end embraces comics altogether with some other forms of visual media (such as frescoes, ancient Egyptian books of the dead, storyboard for films, the Bayeux Tapestry, medieval paintings, etc.). He advocates this choice by the argument that it is the only encompassing criterion on the basis of which all the historical manifestations of the comics medium could be included.

Groensteen's extensive criterion of Iconic Solidarity also strongly contrasts when compared to McCloud's definition, which understands sequentiality as comic specific attribute. On the other hand, both delimitators would agree upon the exclusion of cartoons as well as of the written language from their delimitations of comics, but each of them does so in his own manner. Where McCloud uses his tricky and ambivalent formulation of pictures and other images,[12] Groensteen rather clearly avoids any restrictions of the medium by stating that, comics are not based on any particular usage of written language and therefore there is no place to define them in terms of diction or stylistics. (Groensteen Impossible, 129)

The other contrasting aspects between Groensteen's Iconic Solidarity and McCloud's delimitation could be found in the mere functioning of the compared criteria. While McCloud's sequentiality describes direct connectedness of a panel with the two neighboring juxtaposed panels, Groensteen's concept of Iconic Solidarity captures possibility of inter-dependence between any of the two or more panels presented within one concrete comic. In practice, the principle of Iconic Solidarity can be manifested most easily by an analogy with the film medium, in concrete to the way how elliptical character of the repeated scenes operates. For instance, when some environment, character or artefact is introduced to the viewer in one scene, viewer is able to associate it with all the details in its further appearances within the medium without any explanations or references to its previous appearances.

Another alternative to the theoretical approach that does not seek the precise delimitation of comics on the basis of its functional attributes is offered by Niel Cohen in his essay "*Un-defining Comics*," where he strictly rejects possibility for any sort of demarcation of "comicsness" on the basis of its internal structures. According to Cohen's delimitation, comic book medium should not be perceived through its structural attributes, which are in most cases disproved as unsatisfactory, but rather on the basis of socio-cultural criteria that are very often marginalized and overlooked (such as: industry that produces comics; the community that embraces them; the content which they represent or the avenues in which they appear.). For an illustration of these criteria in practice he offers the following example:

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12 (McCloud Understanding, 34)

> [I]llustrated children's books are not comics quite simply because their definition finds no adherence with the non-structural conception of comics. Both genres occupy realms of cultural categorization, be it of readership, publishing, or content, though they share common elements of structure – text, images, and narrative. This is why categorizing Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's The Day I Swapped my Dad for Two Goldfish creates difficulty. Though it is presented in the social category of a children's book, the authors are members of the social culture of comics, and the structure within it (VL) is most commonly associated with comics. In this light, categorically, comics can only be understood as sociological, literary, and cultural artifacts, independent from the internal structures comprising them.[13]

However, Cohen's argumentation concerning the delimitation of the comics on the basis of socio-cultural criteria seems sound enough; it still mentions "elements of structure" or "structural conceptions" of the comics, by which this medium is commonly recognized. For this reason, Cohen's delimitation cannot successfully alter present understanding of comics, because as could be observed on multiplicity of the above-mentioned perspectives, the most common trend of human thinking about delimitation of comics is realized through the seeking of criteria for describing of its internal structures. To put it simply, comic book medium is primarily perceived and categorized on the basis of its structural attributes rather than on the ambivalent criteria of socio-cultural context in which it appears.

In terms of the functioning of text within comics, Cohn's essay comes up with another controversial theory. He presents the presence of the written language within the medium as non-obligatory element on one hand, but on the other he does not really distinguish between verbal and visual form of language. In contrast with McCloud and Groensteen, that understands written text and pictures as two distinct forms of language functioning on completely different principles, Cohen arguments that these two components of comic book medium are in fact two modalities of one language. According to him, relationships among pictures in comics are based on the similar functioning as relationships within sentences of written text. In each of these modalities, visual and aural, Cohen identifies the same basic structures of syntax and semantics, from which he concludes that they cannot be two different languages.

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13 Cohn, Neil. "Un-Defining Comics." *International Journal of Comic Art*. October 2005, np.

However, controversial conclusions pinpointed in Cohen's essay would certainly deserve much more attention and deeper insight, but their further analysis would not develop our research of the exact delimitation of the role of written text within comic book medium any further. For this reason, Cohen's approach is not analyzed here in greater detail, but only shortly presented as an exemplary illustration of radical delimitations, that could also be found in the large spectrum of theoretical approaches to comic book. Although, this chapter does not contain the list of all the comic book theoretists that tried to pinpoint some sort of definition of the medium, its purpose was still reached. The reader was acquainted with the overview of the most significant theoretical trends of comic book delimitation as well as with relatively problematic position of the written language within these delimitations. For the better insight into present trends and problems connected with delimitation of comic book medium it should be recommended to see the work "Co je to Komiks?" by Ondrej Blaha.[14]

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14   Bláha, Ondřej. "Co je to Komiks?" Bc. Thesis, Masarykova Univerzita, 2006.

2. DISTINCTION OF TEXT IN COMICS

However, the outcome of the previous chapter has revealed the presence of textual information within comics as an optional element, the purpose of this chapter is to present and exemplify contemporary theoretical approaches that focus on functioning of comic books with textual contents. The presentation of individual approaches is preceded by the brief explanation of basic terminology in connection with textual spaces that should help the reader to get better orientation in the presented phenomena.

2.1. Textual Spaces in Comics

Throughout the century and a half of its existence, modern comics have developed several methods for usage and placement of text within the medium. Despite the fact that their formal and functional development is still not finished, most of these verbal textual spaces gradually developed special conventions of usage as well as terminology through which they are recognized. In the following section, basic textual spaces are briefly presented and explained to the reader for better orientation within the problems introduced in the thesis.

2.1.1. Panel and gutter

The panel is the primary building block of meaning in the comic book medium. John A. Walsh characterizes the panel in his thesis "*Comic Book Markup Language*" in the following manner: The panel — encapsulating the constituent parts of image, text, and sound effects — (…) is the smallest unit in which the complex interaction of text and picture operates, and one notices quickly that the "text" in comic art takes form according to an elaborate series of conventions.[15]

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15 Walsh, John A. "Comic Book Markup Language: An Introduction and Rationale." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 6.1 (2012). 22 November 2012, 16. (further mentioned as Walsh Markup)

The most important of these conventions, that must be explained in the first place, concerns the time flow within the comic's panels containing text that operates on completely different basis in comparison with the other visual media. Description of this phenomenon could be also found in the above-mentioned essay of Mario Saraceni *The Language of Comics*, where it is explained as the following:

> [C]omics' panels [that] contain pieces of dialogue (…) are longer than the duration of a camera shot (i.e. a fraction of a second). For this reason they are perceived as different from photographs, *16*(…) The reader of comics considers the panel as a portion – which can be of various lengths – of the narrative, where something actually takes place and takes time. (Saraceni Language, 7)

Another important convention that should be briefly mentioned in connection with comic's panels concerns the illusion of their interconnectedness. However, panels in comics have a "temporal" dimension it does not mean that together they co-create fluent narrative continuum. At this point, McCloud's criterion of juxtaposed pictures in deliberate sequences should be reminded to clarify that panels in comics capture only incomplete set of the most important moments from the presented narrative, which relies on the reader's ability to reconstruct the whole story. Brief conclusion of this phenomenon could also be found in the above mentioned Walsh's essay, as the following: Panels, especially in print comic books, are not presented as a continuous, unbroken stream of narrative units, nor are they randomly laid out in sequence across a series of pages. (Walsh Markup, 20)

The next navigational tool of comics is the space that separates each panel from the others, which is commonly referred to as the gutter. According to Saraceni's *The Language of Comics*, the gutter is very important space since it contains all that happens between the panels. For better understanding of the gutter, Saraceni provides the following analogy: the gutter is similar to the space that divides one sentence from the next: there is always a certain amount of information that is missing from the narrative and the readers have to provide it for themselves. (Saraceni Language, 9) Apart from this dimension, Saraceni also explains why the formal variations in the gutter do not

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16 Saraceni further mentions that time duration within panels could be also indicated by other means, such as largeness or width of the panel, but as these phenomena do not directly concern the functioning of text in comics, so they are not further examined here. (Saraceni Language, 7)

affect the content of the message mediated within the panels. The actual width of the gutter is not very important; what counts is the division itself between the panels. Some authors of the comics, (…), prefer to draw panels adjacent to one another, with no blank space between them; but this is only a stylistic choice, as the separation remains there, as does the concept of the gutter. (Saraceni Language, 9)

2.1.2. Balloon

However, the balloon is the most prominent space for occurrence of the textual information within the comic book; its functioning is not as simple as might seem on the first sight. For the basic illustration of its functioning Saraceni's simplified definition may be presented, [b]alloons are used to report speech or thought, and that is why the terms speech balloon and thought balloon are used. (Saraceni Language, 9)

Although Saraceni's definition captures the most important functions of the balloons, it is still not enough encompassing. For the comparison of greater academic precision, it should be presented along with the delimitation found in essay *Balloonics* in the following formulation: [t]he balloon appears to be a visual variety of the conduit metaphor: it is a 'bag' of words (or other signals) with a more or less specific meaning that is transmitted from a source to a destination.[17]

On the basis of the comparison of the extended criteria contained in the second definition with the Saraceni's initial delimitation, it may be illustrated that comic balloons must not contain only verbal information, nor they must be "uttered" by living entity. Notice of these facts is crucial before the further explanation of the comic balloonic phenomena.

In a first place it should be clarified where exactly balloons takes place in relation to panels and how the pieces of information contained within them are usually parsed. According to Groensteen's explanation, balloon should be primarily understood as a subset of the panel that originates within the panel and thus cannot exist without it. In most cases, the reader is supposed to understand content contained within the balloon as a sound produced by some sort of entity and, as Greonsteen further emphasizes, each

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17 Forceville, Charles, Tony Veale and Kurt Feyaerts. "Balloonics: The visuals of balloons in comics."
   Out of the Gutter 10 October 2010. (further mentioned as Forceville et. al. Visuals)

sound inevitably needs source. Source of the depicted balloon must not be always explicitly visible within the panel, but that does not mean that it does not exist, as example in figure no.1 illustrates. On the basis of this argumentation, Groensteen concludes that presence of the balloon always implicates presence of the panel. (Groensteen Impossible, 88)

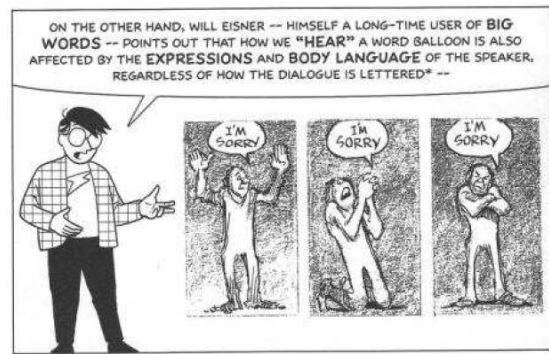Fig.1: invisible source (Mazzucchelli, 38)   Fig.2: body language (McCloud 2006, 144)

In addition to Groensteen's characterization of panel McCloud mentions that, balloons don't exist in the same plane of reality as (…) pictures, (but) they are, floating about like physical objects. (McCloud 2006, 142) For this reason, readers perceive the pieces of textual information contained within the speech balloons as a words uttered by characters in a situations depicted within a panel. In connection with these situations Walsh notes that, characters cannot see speech balloons, but they can hear the words in them, and presumably each character is aware of the contents of his or her own thought balloons. (Walsh Markup, 25-26)

The tail is another important element of the balloon, as it usually indicates the character who is speaking or thinking. Saraceni describes conventions for the use of tail as the following:

> [N]ormally the tail looks like a small pointed projection, but it can sometimes be a simple line. An important variation is when the tail is formed of a series of small bubbles, which indicate that the balloon is a thought balloon. The function of the tail is equivalent to that of clauses like 'he said' or 'Ann thought' in reported speech or thought. (Saraceni Language, 9)

It should be noted, that reader's understanding of the balloon's content is not affected only by the quality of the tail, but also by the other factors, such as colour or shape of balloons and words. According to Will Eisner, the way how we "hear" a word balloon is also affected by the expressions and body language of the speaker. (Eisner Sequential, 41). In *Making Comics*, McCloud proves this statement by providing the three different illustrations with the identical speech balloon, as exemplified in figure no. 2. Signalization of the character's emotinal states may be manifested also by the alternations in balloon's shape. Walsh explains the details in connection with this phenomenon as the following:

> Arguably, the most salient balloon variable is its form. We submit that deviations in balloon form within a single work are, in most cases, significant. Deviant balloon-forms usually convey information about the emotions and states of mind of the persons to which they are tailed. Only occasionally are there variations in balloon form for purely practical purposes, such as leaving room for important visual features such as a character's head. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 03)

The next important attribute of the balloon, that may have an influence on the way how its content is understood by the reader is its colour. According to Groensteen, identity of speaking characters in comic books is often differentiated by the use of specific colours of their balloons or by the different colouring of the words contained within their balloons. (Groensteen Impossible, 98)

Another factor that should be observed in connection with speech balloons concerns the way in which its border lines are depicted. Quality of the speech balloon bordering line may be in many cases the only signal for a reader to distingush a human source of the speech from non-human entities. According to Walsh such a signalization is connected usually with speech originating in the mechanical device. In many comics' narratives, distinctly styled "audio" balloons may be found emanating from radios, televisions, telephones, walkie-talkies, hi-fi speakers, and other devices. These "audio" balloons are usually represented by jagged pointy borders, perhaps suggestive of the electricity that powers the audio source. (Walsh Markup, 23)

Until this moment, attention was mostly aimed at the attributes of speech balloons, but as was hinted above comic book medium may contain also a different kind of balloon – thought ballons. In the essay "Balloonics", functioning of thought balloons is explained through their comparison with the speech balloons as the following:

While the source of balloonic information typically emanates from a human being or anthropomorphized entity, the destination of information is twofold. In most cases information is provided for the benefit of fellow–characters, but it is always provided for the benefit of the reader, who has privileged access to balloonic information that may not be available to other characters in the story world. Thought balloons are a good example because they are often the equivalent of interior monologue, conveying information that a character may suppress, or depicting dreams and hallucinations. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 12-15)

Apart from the factors such as shape, colour, border lines, location, size and the orientation of the tails, information contained within the balloons may also be altered by the use of atypical or exotic fonts for letters, words or by the extensive use of punctuation marks. However, most of these factors could be influential in terms of the overall understanding of the text contained within balloons, their further analysis could not be provided here, because of the limited space of the thesis. For detailed examination of these factors, essay "Balloonics" by Forceville et al. may be strongly recommended.

2.1.3. Caption

Another space used for presentation of textual information in comics is caption. In contrast with speech and thought ballons, caption usually signals the voice of the narrator. The next criteria for differentiation of captions from balloons could be found in Forceville's essay "Balloonics" as the following, captions are formally distinguished from balloons by occurring, usually in boxes, at the top or bottom of panels, and by having no tails or thought bubbles, the latter being a logical consequence of the fact that they communicate information from an agency outside the story world. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 17) Clear differentiation of captions from balloons by the above-mentioned set of various formal criteria is an essential aspect for fluent functioning of comic book narrative, because it ensures transparent recognition of dialogues from the voice of the narrator. In terms of functioning, comic book caption is often defined on the basis of comparison with other visual media. For example, Saraceni explains functioning of caption through the resemblance to the film medium. Normally the text contained in the caption represents the narrator's voice, very similar to the background voice that is sometimes heard in films. Its function is to add information to the dialogues contained in the rest of the panel. (Saraceni Language, 18)

2.1.4. *Non-verbal text in comics*

The last type of text that could be found in comics is non-verbal text. In comparison with the previous types of textual information, which in most cases appear in a certain kind of bordered spaces, non-verbal text usually does not appear within any special bordered zone. However, non-verbal texts may occasionally occur in zones, which resemble to balloons, but their functioning is completely different from those of word balloons. For this reason, Forceville et al. labels non-verbal texts with the term paraballoonic phenomena and divides them into three categories: onomatopoeia; tails designating sound effects and diegetic verbal inscriptions. (Forceville et al. Visuals, 18)

Onomatopoeia in comics is defined by Forceville as non-verbal sounds, which could be depicted inside of special type of balloons, with or without tales, or as a physical aspect of the scene. However, onomatopoeia appearing as a physical aspect of the scene does not occur inside of any specific type of balloon, Forceville explains that they still appear within a special kind of border that lends them a quasi-balloonic status. For an illustration of this border-effect, Forceville offers examples such as placing of the onomatopoeia within the middle of an explosive cloud, or by surrounding it by wavy sound lines. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 19)

Tails designating sound effects are another device for depiction of non-vebal comic's sounds. Forceville defines them as devices used to indicate loud impact, puffing sounds or other varieties of friction, such as slammed doors or source of the smoke. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 20)

Diegetic verbal inscriptions are the last type of non-verbal comic's text, which Forceville defines simply as text incorporated into the visuals. (Forceville et. al. Visuals, 20) Further criteria for definition of this device could be found in Walsh, which explains diegetic texts as part of the narrative's fictional universe, which can be seen and read by the narrative's characters, such as street signs, store front signage, billboards, newspaper headlines or articles. (Walsh Markup, 25)

2.2. How to Differentiate Text in Comics?

This section provides the comparative analysis of various approaches to classification of text in comics, on the basis of which functioning of textual information in comics could be captured and differentiated. Apart from the analysis of individual

functions, each of these classifications is further evaluated on the basis of its effectivity and usability in practice. On the basis of these evaluations, the most effective of the analyzed categorizations of text functioning would be selected and applied into practice in the second part of the analysis.

2.2.1. *Functions of text in comics according to McCloud*

In *Making Comics*, McCloud recognizes seven distinct categories of interaction among text and pictures in comics. Distinction of McCloud's categories is based on the ratio in which the combination of textual and pictorial elements distributes the message to reader. The first of these categories is word-specific combination, which distributes all of the information to the reader via textual elements, while the accompanying pictorial elements serve only as an illustration. This type of combination is exemplified in figure no.3. According to McCloud, this combination could be very useful for rapid progression in the narrative, because of its ability to compress relatively large amounts of time and information into a few words.[18]

Fig.3: word-specific combination (Wenzel, 21)

Apart from this advantage McCloud also mentions another effective attribute of word-specific combination, which is the narrative dominance of textual elements that enables pictures to illustrate any of the aspects mentioned in the accompanying text. (McCloud Making, 132)

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18 McCloud, Scott. *Making Comics.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006, 131. (further mentioned as McCloud Making)

The second category of textual functioning in comic presented by McCloud is picture-specific combination, in which pictorial elements distribute all of the information to the reader, while the accompanying textual elements serve only as a soundtrack. Similarly to the use of pictures in the previous combination, presence of the words within the picture-specific combination is not necessary for overall distribution of the mediated message, as could be illustrated on figure no. 4.

Fig.4: picture-specific combination (Pederosa, 98)

On the other hand, complete absence of words within the panels with picture-specific combinations often tends to look static and plain to the reader. For this reason, McCloud emphasizes that the addition of text in this type of combination fulfills the function of enriching "the silent" picture and creates an illusion of a familiar landscape in the mind of the reader, This dimension of picture-specific combination could be illustrated on the example from *Three Shadows* in figure no. 5. (McCloud Making, 134)

Fig.5: picture-specific combination (Pederosa, 159)

The third category of textual functioning mentioned in McCloud is duo-specific combination, in which textual elements distribute the same piece of information as pictorial elements, as illustrated on examples in figure no. 6 and no. 7. However, this double distribution of the same piece of information might seem unnecessary for the use in practice, McCloud notes that there are at least two situations, in which doubling effect of this combination is not redundant. (McCloud Making, 135)

Fig.6: duo-specific comb. (Thompson, 456)   Fig.7: duo-specific comb. (Mazzuchelli, 76)

Apart from the amplifying and emphasizing funcitons, which could be observed on the examples in figure no.6 and figure no.7, McCloud also presents duo-specific combination as a succesful way for evoking of a children's book tone or feeling of antique storytelling traditions, which are both demonstrated in figure no. 8. (McCloud Making, 135)

Fig.8: duo-specific combination (McCloud, 135)

Intersecting combination is another McCloud's category of text functioning in comics, which is illustrated in figure no. 9. In case of this combination, textual and pictorial elements partially overlap in presenting the same piece of information, but at a same time each of these components also distributes some additional detail or perspective to the scene. (McCloud Making, 136)
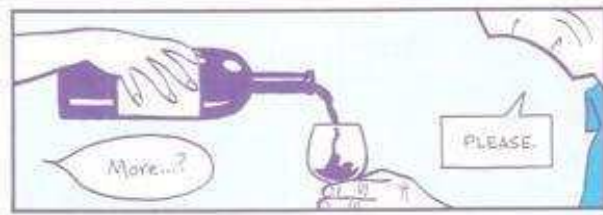
fig.9: intersecting combination (Mazzucchelli, 86)

In the interdependent combinations, the next category mentioned by McCloud, textual and pictorial information co-create a message, which none of these components can distribute alone. However, this type of combination does not appear in comics very often, McCloud notes that its presence in comics usually achieves memorable effects. The functioning of these memorable effects could is further explained by McCloud through the fact that reader's attention has to carefully examine the textual as well as pictorial information within the panel in order to achieve successful parsing of the overall message, as illustrated on figure no. 10. (McCloud Making, 136)

Fig.10: interdependent combinations (McCloud, 137)

The next category of functional co-operation among text and pictures in comics is mentioned in McCloud under the label of parallel combinations. In comparison with the previously mentioned categories, in case of parallel combinations text and pictures within a single panel does not interact mutually by any means, as illustrated on the upper panel of figure no. 11.
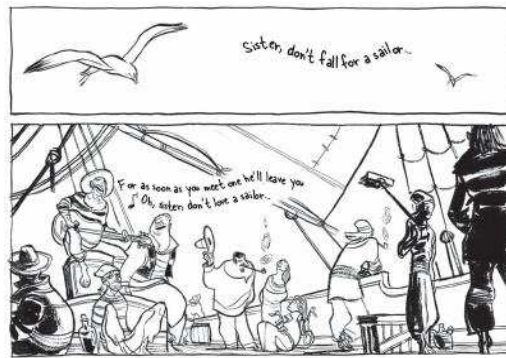
Fig.11: parallel combination (Pederosa, 119)

However, the interaction of text and pictures does not occur within the panel with the use of parallel combination, each of the mutually non-cooperative elements is usually still relevant for the further development of the narrative. According to McCloud, this phenomenon is usually revealed only after detailed examination of the panels in the surrounding of the panel using parallel combination. (McCloud Making, 138)

Manifestation of this phenomenon could be observed on the example from Three Shadows in figure no. 11, where the text in the upper panel seemingly does not have any logical connection to the depicted situation. As the text is not placed inside of the balloon of any type, the reader may have tendency to decipher the whole panel as unusual type of large caption, in which sea birds serve as some kind of illustration to the sentence contained within. The connection among the sentence and the birds is revealed only after the examination of the following panel, in which it is explored that the birds are in fact flying over the ship with singing sailors.

Montage is the last category of textual functioning in comics mentioned in McCloud's distinction. According to McCloud, Montage lends the words some of the pictorial qualities which provide them greater freedom and smoother interaction with the surrounding pictorial environment in comparison with the above-mentioned combinations. For an illustration of this category, McCloud further mentions the title pages of the works by Will Eisner, which he considers to be the best examples of montage. (McCloud Making, 139) Demonstration of Eisner's title pages is provided in figure no. 12 and no. 13.
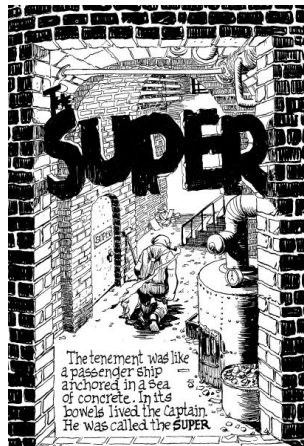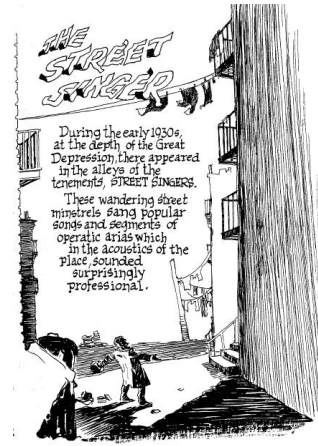
Fig.12: montage (Eisner, 107)   Fig.13: montage (Eisner, 78)

According to McCloud, innovative applications of montage could be found usually in alternative comics, where some of the modern illustrators try to extend possibilities of comics' textual devices with a dimension of strong pictorial sensibility. These innovations in use of the montage can be found in connection with each of the verbal spaces (for verbal spaces, see the section 2.1.). (McCloud Making, 139)

Demonstrations of experimental manipulations with montage in various textual spaces could be found also in *The Blankets*, comics of Craig Thompson, exemplified in figures no. 14 and no. 15. On the upper panel of figure no. 14, text of the narrative contained in the captions partially overshadows the speech balloon of the driving character, which should signal to the reader that the words of the driver did not penetrated into the speaker's thoughts in the time of the narration. Similar situation use of montage could be observed in the lower panel of the same example, where the speech of a driver is also depicted in the background of the car as a signal of their unimportance for the depicted narrative moment.

Fig.14: montage (Thompson, 178)   Fig.15: montage (Thompson, 122)

Another example of montage in *The Blankets* can be presented on figure no.15, where the speech ballons without tails, produced by people outside of the panel, intermingle with the sounds in the characters' surrounding. On the basis of these examples, it might seem that use of montage is a phenomenon, which could be commonly found in comics, but contrary is the case. Despite the fact that montage offers a wide possibilities of use, comic book creators rarely exploit its potential and for this reason McCloud calls it an unexplored territory of comics. (McCloud Making, 139)

2.2.2. *Functions of text in comics according to Derik A. Badman*

Another categorization of co-operation among text and pictures in comics could be found in essay "Panels & Pictures: Text in Comics"[19] by Derick A. Badman. The functions of textual information within comics are differentiated by Badman on the basis of type of sensual experience or narrative perspective through which they clarify details of circumstances depicted in the panels to the reader.

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19 Badman, Derik A. "Panels & Pictures: Text in Comics." *ComixTALK* 15 April 2008. 26 September 2012. (further mentioned as Badman Panels)
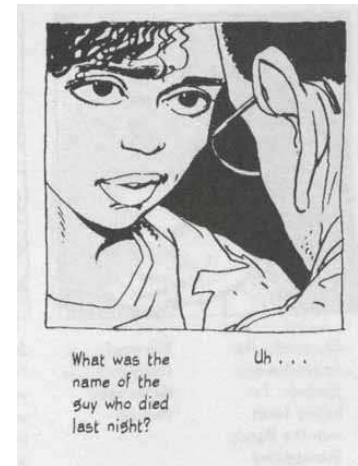
Fig.16: speech with and without balloon (Thompson, 13) Fig.17: outside of a panel (Baker, 27)

Text as representation of characters' speech is the first category of textual functioning in comics described in Badman, which he further classifies into three sub-categories on the basis of its depiction and location. In the two of these sub-categories, character's speech is located within the panel, with or without the use of the word balloons, as illustrated on panels in figure no. 16. In case of the third type of speech depiction, which is described in Badman as extremely rare phenomenon, speech of the characters is located outside of the panel without the presence of the balloon, as illustrated in figure no. 17. (Badman Panels, 2)

In addition to these three distinctions, Badman also mentions that various manipulations with the special fonts of the text as well as with the shape of the balloon are often used to signal the loudness of speech or as an identification marker of the speaking character. (Badman Panels, 2) Demonstration of these phenomena is provided in figure no. 18 and figure no. 19. In the upper panel of figure no. 18, interrupted line is used to signal the whispering, while in the lower panel intensified letters in the ending of the sentence should be interpreted as a very loud intensity of speech. On the other hand, in figure no. 19 alternations in text font, shaping and coloring of the balloons are used as specific identification markers of the speaking characters.

Fig.18: whisper and shout (Thompson, 82)   Fig.19: speech (Geiman, 15)

Another category of text functioning in comics mentioned by Badman is interior monologue, which usually appears in cloud-like thought ballons with a series of circles linking text to the character in the same manner as the tail does in speech balloons. According to Badman, linking with the character is very important function for both of these balloon types, because it signals that thought or speech of the characters originates within the panel, as illustrated on figure no. 20. On the other hand, Badman notes that the series of circles in thought balloons does not possess the other function of the tail in speech balloons, which could leave the panel in which they originate, as demonstrated on figure no. 21. (Badman Panels, 4)

Fig.20: thought balloon (Thompson, 485)   Fig.21: balloon leaving a panel (Thompson, 259)

Text as narration is the next Badman's category of text functioning in comics, which is predominantly used for signalization of the narrator's voice. According to Badman, text as narration is usually found within the captions, but it could be distributed also by the thought or speech balloons. The main difference in the use of these devices is in the fact that captions distribute the narration from the outside of the panel, while thought and speech balloons must be thought and spoken by the depicted characters. According to Badman, narration placed in caption usually provides the panel with the information from different temporal or spacial dimension, as was illustrated above in figure no. 3. in section 2.1.1. On the other hand, Badman also mentions that narration must not be always placed within the caption or balloons, but it could be also present within the panel without any specific framing. In such a case, framing of the panel undertakes the role of a caption, as illustrated in figure no. 22. (Badman Panels, 5)

Fig.22: caption without framing (Mazzucchelli, 140)

Another category of text functioning in comics mentioned in Badman is text as part of an image, which operates on the similar principle as diegetic verbal inscriptions described by Forceville and Walsh in section 2.1.4. In comparison with captions or thought balloons, text as a part of an image is visible also for the characters in the story. Similarly to the word balloons, which also could be perceived by the characters present in the panel, characters may also variously interact with the presence of this text type within an image.

Fig.23: character interacts with the depicted text (Mazzucchelli, 146)

Apart from its visual perception, Badman mentions that text as part of the image may be also read by characters as a narration as well as created by them, as illustrated in figure no. 23. (Badman Panels, 5)

The next category of textual functioning in comic books mentoned by Badman is text as sound effect, which serves as a representation of non-speech sounds. Apart from the sound effects of onomatopoeic nature, which operate on the same principle as onomatopoeias described in section 2.1.4., Badman mentions also the second type of sound effects, in which text is used to describe or label a sound rather than to recreate it. (Badman Panels, 6) A comparative illustration of these two types of non-speech sounds is provided in the examples from figures no. 24. to figure no. 26, where figure no. 24 demonstrates the sound effect of onomatopoeic nature, while the examples in figure no. 25 and figure no. 26 illustrate the second type of sound effects.

Fig.24: onomatopoeia (Pederosa, 20)   Fig.25: sound effect (Mazzucchelli, 320)

Text as smell is another Badman's category of comics textual functioning for mediation of sensual experience, which is used for description and depiction of smells. In contrast with the frequent use of the above-mentioned sound effects, Badman notes that occurence of the textual „smell effects" within comics is an extremly rare phenomenon. For an illustration of this rarity, it should be mentioned that apart from the Badman's demonstration, presented in figure no. 27, no other example was found within the comics samples examined for the purposes of this thesis.

Fig.26: sound effect (Thompson, 340)

Fig.27: smell effect (Larson, 104)

Text as descriptive label for an image in a panel is another Badman's category of textual functioning in comics, which is used for clarifying or specifying of the ambivalent circumstances in the panels. According to Badman, this function is very useful for the reader in case of complex or ambiguos depictions, where it serves as a guidance or help in interpretation, as illustrated on examles from *The Blankets* in figures no. 28 and no. 29. (Badman Panels, 7)

Fig.28: text as label (Thompson, 10)

Fig.29: text as label (Thompson, 453)

The next function mentoned by Badman is text as modifier, in which text serves as an additional description to the image. In contrast with the previous function, text as modifier does not use any type of arrows or labels, but it is incorporated directly into the picture within the panel, as ilustrated on example in figures no. 30. According to Badman, words in this function are neither sounds nor narration nor part of the represented scene (…) but a textual adjective added to the visual image. While the panel would be identifiable without these words, they add atmosphere to the scene. (Badman Panels, 8)
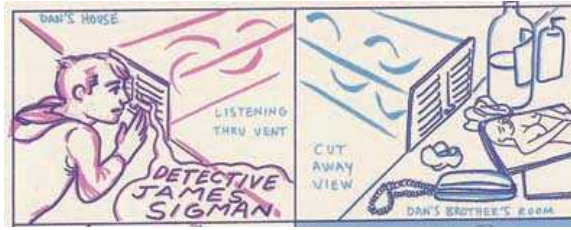
Fig.30: text as modifier (Santoro, 65)

Another category of text functioning in comics, described by Badman, is text in large blocks, which is in practice fullfils the function of narrative caption, but in form it resembles rather to the literary prose or to media of daily press type, where pictorial areas are strictly separated from the text blocks. According to Badman, this type of text is not used very often, because it usually provides the reader with a large amounts of textual information at the expense of absence of the pictorial information typical for the comic book medium. For the same reason, Badman also emphasizes that many authors tend to classify this use of text as non-comics. (Badman Panels, 9) Occurence of text blocks could be often found in *Watchmen*, comics by Alan Moore, exemplified in figure no. 31.
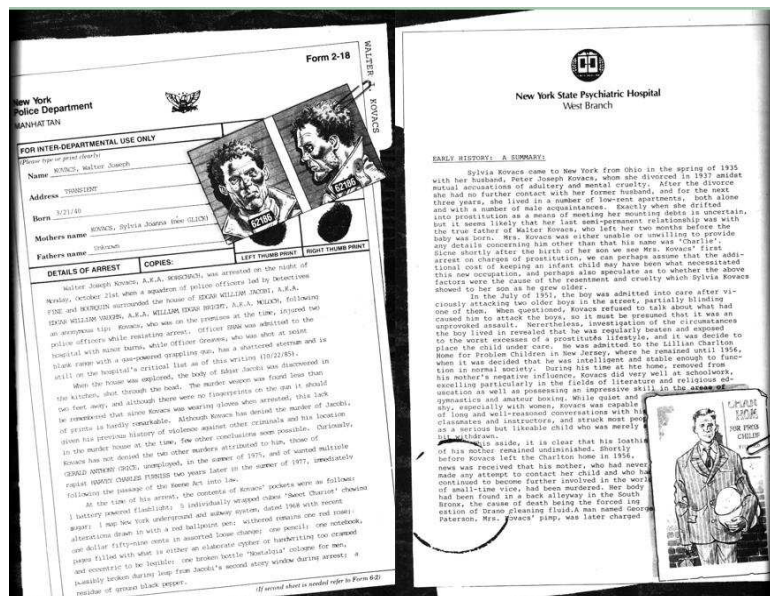

Fig. 31: text blocks (Moore, n.p.)

The last Badman's category of text functioning in comics is the use of text as part of paratextual apparatuses such as titles, credits, and end markers, which provide the reader with information about the ending of the presented story, comic book creators and production process. (Badman Panels, 11) According to Badman, back of the comic

book covers is usually dominated by textual information, which is used for the brief presentation of the comic book's content or other advertising purposes, as illustrated in figure no. 32. On the other hand, Badman mentions that title pages are usually dominated by pictorial information, which is mostly accompanyied only by the basic textual information about the creators, title and publishing details, as illustrated in figure no. 33.
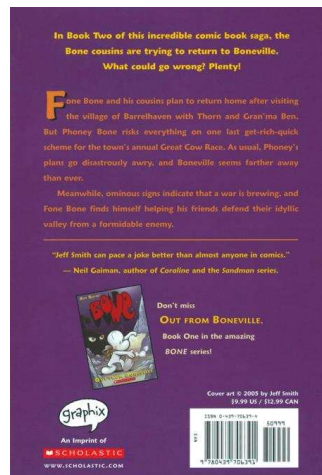
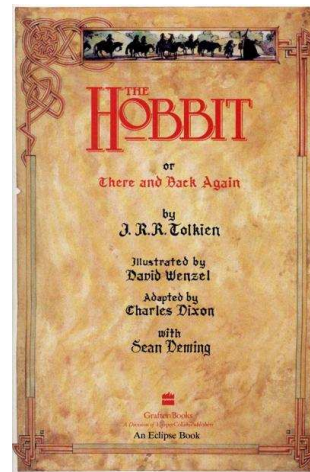

Fig. 32: back of the cover (Smith, cover)   Fig. 33: title page (Wenzel, cover)

In the overall comparison with McCloud's system, Badman's numerous categories seem to offer more specific differentiation, but after their deeper examination lack of flexibility and transparency is revealed. In several cases functioning of text is very difficult to categorize as the boundaries among some of the categories are imprecise or ambivalent. For example, the category of text as a narration, which is in most cases recognized by Badman through its placement in the caption, could be under certain circumstances found also in speech balloons, thought balloons, as a part of the image or within the category of large text blocks. In most of these cases, categorizing of text function becomes difficult to decide, because of the inconsistency of their formal and contentual level. On this example it could be illustrated that Badman's distinction has problem to differentiate transparently among formal and functional categories of textual use in comics, and thus it cannot be effective for the use in practice.

2.2.3. Text in comics through the perspective of computer

The next work that presents the distinction of text functions in comic book medium is a thesis from the field of informative technologies called Comic Book Markup Language.[20] In this article, programmator John A. Walsh attempts to create a textual program, which would enable the computer to parse comic book text in all of its forms. The program created for this purpose, which Walsh calls a markup language, is a set of machine-readable textual codes made in order to help the computer in parsing of the complex textual and visual information encoded within comic book medium. In case of the textual information, Walsh decided to help the computer with recognition of various forms in which text appears in comics by dividing the types of textual functioning only into three general categories. (Walsh Markup, 12)

The first category of text functioning mentioned in Walsh is called extra-visual phenomena, which contains all the textual elements that may share space in the panel with the drawing, but are not part of the scene. For setting of the precise criteria for this category, Walsh borrowed the term extra-visual phenomena from the article of Lawrence L. Abbot "Comic Art: Characteristics and Potentialities of a Narrative Medium," which presents narrative captions, thought and speech balloons as demonstrative representants of this category. In addition to the balloons presented in Abbot's definition, Walsh mentions also the other types of balloons (such as telephatic balloons, audio balloons, mechanic balloons, etc.) which could be usually found in comics containing supernatural or science fiction themes. (Walsh Markup, 13) However, examination of various balloon types is significant for Walsh's study, their presentation is not relevant for the objectives of this analysis and thus it could not be further analysed here.

The next category of text functioning mentioned in Walsh are diegetic texts, which were already mentioned above in connection with Badman's text as part of an image as well as in the section 2.1.4. about tools of graphic narration.

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20 *Walsh, John A. "Comic Book Markup Language: An Introduction and Rationale."* Digital Humanities Quarterly *6.1 (2012). 22 November 2012.* (further mentioned as Walsh Markup)

The third type of text functioning in comics presented by Walsh is prose content, which includes the situations in which comic book pages contain a little or none pictoral elements in the favor of traditional prose of various sorts. According to Walsh, this category includes wide variety of prose supplements to the comics narrative, such as short stories, text blocks that could be sometimes accompanied by illustrations or editorial and promotional content from publishers, editors, writers and artists. (Walsh Markup, 17) Demonstrations of prose content could be illustrated on examples presented in figure no. 31 and figure no. 32.

In comparison with the two above-mentioned distinctions, which categorized the use of text within comics on the basis of the two very different principles, Walsh's categories works on the principle similar to Badman's categorization. In both cases, functions of text in comics are differentiated on the basis of the textual space in which they occur, but in contrast with Badman, Walsh's distinction divides them into much more general categories for greater clarity. On the other hand, broadness and simplicity of Walsh's categories could be advantageous and effective for the use in field of computer programming, but definitely not in case of proportional analysis of comics from different cultural regions. While Badman's distinction suffered from ambivalence of the individual categories, Walsh's distinction has quite the opposite problem. Transparency of Walsh's distinction could be useful for quick and precise categorization on one hand, but in terms of effectivity, its broad categories would hardly help to reveal any contrasting data significant for analysis of comics from different cultural regions and thus it is inappropriate for the further use in this thesis.

2.2.4. Functions of text in comics according to Thierry Groensteen

The last distinction of textual functioning in comics could be found in the work *Stavba Komiksu* by Thierry Groensteen.[21] In a first place, it should be mentioned that Groensteen's categorization of textual functions is based on the different conception of balloon functioning then all of the above-mentioned distinctions. According to Groensteen, position of the balloon should be always analysed in relation to three

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21 Groensteen, Thierry. *Stavba Komiksu*. Brno: Host, 2005. (further mentioned as Groensteen Stavba)

different aspects: speaker; panel, which contains the balloon and surrounding balloons. The major difference between Groensteen's distinction and previously mentioned categorizations is in the third aspect, which takes into account interconnectedness of the balloons within one panel as well as balloons contained in the surrounding panels. On the basis of this perspective, balloons are perceived as continuous verbal net rather than isolated pieces of textual information. (Groensteen Stavba, 155)

It should be also noted, that Groensteen understands comics as a medium with visual dominance, in which sense is carried predominantly by pictoral elements. On the other hand, he does not underestimate the role of linguistic elements in comics, which often co-operate with the dominant pictorial elements in delivering of the overall message. Groensteen also notes that comics as a pressed medium contains textual elements, which should be primarily read, but on the other hand it is not appropriate to refer to them as the written form of language, but rather as a verbal expression in general. Groensteen explains this generalization by claiming that identity of text functioning in comics is ambivalent, because words in comics have higher resemblance to the words in film, rather than to the words contained within literary texts. For this reason, Groensteen understands most of the verbal information depicted in comics as graphical expressions of auditory experience. Groensteen's distinction recognizes seven basic categories of text functioning, which are further divided into two groups on the basis of their informative or referential functioning. In comparison with the above-mentioned authors, Groensteen's distinction is the only one, in which it is possible for one piece of textual information to fullfill two or more functions simultaneously. This is caused by the fact, that Groensteen's categories do not diferentiate the text in comics on the basis of formal attributes, but rather by its practical functioning. (Groensteen Stavba, 155)

The first category of text functioning in comics mentioned by Groensteen is dramatic function, which helps the reader to understand inner life of characters. According to Groensteen, there are several psychological aspects of characters in comic book narrative that cannot be expressed in their full complexity without the help of the linguistic elements (such as character's thoughts, feelings, motivations, beliefs, etc.). For this reason, Groensteen presents dramatic function as one of the most common functions in comics for expression of character. (Groensteen Stavba, 156) Illustration of this phenomenon is provided in figure no. 34.

Fig.34: dramatic function (Thompson, 362)

Realistic function is another category of text functioning in comics recognized by Groensteen, which is closely connected with the previous function. According to Groensteen, it should be emphasized that verbal activity of the characters is always accompanied by some kind of realistic effect, because of the fact that in real life people usually communicate together, as exemplified in figure no. 35. (Groensteen Stavba, 156)

Fig.35: realistic function (Mazzucchelli, 77)

Problem of realistic function lies in the fact, that comics narratives often depict also non-human entities, (such as: machines, animals, etc.) which are capable of uttering human words on one hand, but their inclusion into this category remains questionable, because of the ambivalence of the above-mentioned criteria. For this reason, it should be specified that human speaker would be considered as the only criterion for determining of this function for the purposes of this thesis.

Another case of verbal functioning in comics recognized by Groensteen is anchoring function, borrowed from an article "Rhétorique de l'image" of Roland Barthes, in which linguistic information helps the reader to identify and interpret the

scene depicted within the panel. This function should help the reader in identification of any phenomena, that could not be transparently recognized because of the plain or ambivalent depiction. (Barthes 1964, 44 in Groensteen Stavba, 157) Demonstrations in figure no. 36 illustrate how anchoring function may help to clarify ambivalent depiction in the panel.
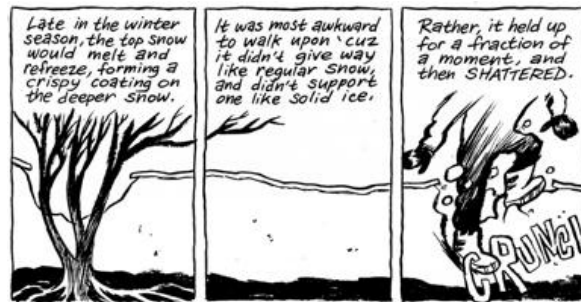

Fig.36: anchoring function (Thompson, 132)

Relé function is another Groensteen's category of verbal functioning in comicsinspired by the above-mentioned article "Rhétorique de l'image" of Roland Barthes. In case of this function, linguistic elements distrubute only part of the message, which cannot be deciphered without the co-presence of pictorial elements, and vice versa. Detailed description of this type of complementary dependence of linguistic and pictorial elements has been already presented in connection with McCloud's interdependent combination (see secton 2.2.1) and for this reason it would not be further explained and exemplified here. Groensteen's only specification to McCloud's observation of rare occurence of this phenomenon is the notion, that relé function could be found mostly in humoristic comic books or in comic strips. (Groensteen Stavba, 157)

Fig.37: stitching function realized by the caption (Mazzucchelli, 111)

The next category of text functioning in comics recognized by Groensteen is binding function, borrowed from an article "Case, planche, récit" by of Bendit Peeters, in which linguistic information bridges temporal or spatial gap between the two panels. According to original article by Bendit Peeters, this function can be executed only by narrative caption, as illustrated in figure no. 37. Similar notion has been also mentioned in Saraceni's *Language of Comics*, where he presents that caption has the function of providing information to help the reader reconstruct the flow between panels, filling the gap represented by the gutter. (Saraceni Language, 10)

In addition to these perspectives, Groensteen argues that binding function can appear also within the speech balloons, where repetition of a single word, phrase or a whole sentence could also clarify spacial or temporal gap among the two panels, and thus help the reader to get better orientation in the narrative. (Groensteen Stavba, 158) Demonstration of this use of binding function executed by speech balloons could be illustrated on sequence of three panels presented in figure no. 38, where the triple repetition of the word-sentence "Mom!" guides the reader's attention through three similar conversations in different phases of protagonist's life.

Fig.38: stitiching function realized through the balloons (Mazzucchelli, 57)

Another category of text functioning mentioned by Groensteen is rhythmic function, borrowed from the article "Pour une lecture moderne de la bande desinée" of Jan Baetens a Pascal Lefévre. In order to understand this function in its full complexity, it is necessary to explain firstly Groensteen's notion of time flow in comics, which is directly subordinated to the opposition between perception of linguistic and pictorial elements in comics. According to Groensteen, reader's perception of time flow within the comic's panels is subordinated to opposition between time-dependent reading of the linguistic information and perception of the pictorial information, which is parsed almost simultaneously. On the basis of this opposition, Groensteen claims that the

amount of balloons, as well as the amount of linguistic information contained within them, has a direct influence on the reader's perception of time flow, which he labes as rhythmic function. (Groensteen Stavba, 161) Variations in rhytmical use of text in comics are illustrated in figure no. 39 and figure no. 40, where figure no. 40 demonstrates slow rhythm of reading caused by longer speech of the character on the left, while figure no. 41 demonstrates rapid rhythm caused by a short speaking of the depicted characters.

Fig.39: slow rhythm (Mazzucchelli, 109)   Fig.40: rapid rhythm (Thompson, 245)

It should be also noted, that rhythmic function of text in comics is not realized only by speech balloons, but it is realized by any type of linguistic information within the comic's panels, which has influence on the rate of the reading. According to Groensteen, there are numerous possibilites of altering the rhythm of reading, such as splitting of the speech to several balloons; distribution of the balloons within the same or smaller amount of panels or alternation of balloons and narrative captions in the panel. (Groensteen Stavba, 161)

The last function of text recognized by Groensteen is production function, which is usually realized through narrative captions. In comparison with the rhytmical function, production function also tends to manipulate with the time of the narrative, but on the different level. While rhythmical function of text sets the pace of reading, production function helps the reader to get better orientation in temporal sequences of the narrative, as illustrated in figure no. 41 and figure no. 42. (Groensteen Stavba, 160)
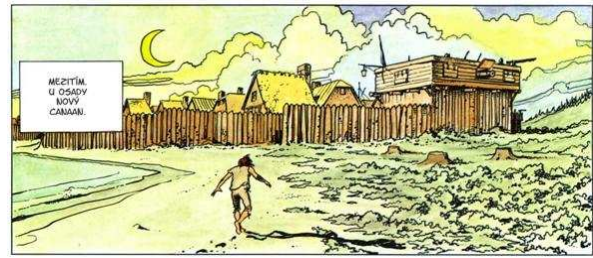
Fig.41: production function (Mazzucchelli, 111)   Fig.42: production function (Pratt, 109)

According to Groensteen, conciseness of verbal information contained within the narrative caption is one of the most effective ways for informing of the reader about the spacial and temporal changes in the narrative. For this reason, Groensteen labels production function of text as the most comfortable narrative tool for signalization of the chronology of depicted events to the reader. (Groensteen Stavba, 161)

As has been already mentioned, Groensteen's categories are also divided into two sub-groups on the basis of their informative or referential functioning. According to Groensteen, rhytmical, realistic and dramatic function should be placed into sub-category of referential functions for „the referential illusion," which they evoke in the reader. In practice, each of the referential functions creates some sort of illusion in reader's mind, such as illusion of time flow, character's verbal interaction or their psychological depth. The remaining four functions are labeled by Groensteen as informative functions, as their main function is to provide the reader with the transparent orientation within the spacial and temporal curcumstances of the narrative. (Groensteen Stavba, 161)

In comparison with the above-mentioned categorizations, Groensteen's distinction is the only one, in which it is possible for one piece of textual information to fullfill two or more functions simultaneously. This is caused by the fact, that Groensteen's categories do not diferentiate the text in comics only on the basis of the formal attributes, but also by its practical functioning. For the same reason, Groensteen's categorization could not be used for the analysis of the comics from different cultural enviroments as the ambivalence of textual information with multiple functions can hardly reveal contrastive data significant for the research.

2.2.5. *Evaluation of the analyzed classifications*

In the first analytical part of this thesis, various alternatives to the problem of capturing and differentiation of the textual information in comics were examined and compared. As a result, the analysis has revealed three different types of categorization on the basis of which text in comics could be conceptualized and differentiated.

The first type of categorization differentiates the text in comics on the basis of the textual spaces in which text in comics could be usually found (for textual spaces see section 2.1.). This principle has been recognized in the categorization of John A. Walsh as well as in the categorization of Derick A. Badman.

Badman's classification differentiates each textual space in comics as a distinct category, which is defined through the basic functioning and conventional usage. The main advantage of this detailed overview of textual spaces is the fact that it also recognizes some of the marginal textual phenomena, which are often overlooked in most of the other categorizations. On the other hand, some of the textual spaces in Badman's distinction are defined on the basis of very similar criteria, which often complicate the process of their recognition in practice. Because of this lack of transparency in differentiation of the individual functions, Badman's categorization was evaluated as non-efective distinctive system for further use in this thesis.

The second distinction, which also differentiates the text in comics on the basis of the textual spaces, is categorization of John A. Walsh. This categorization simplifies the differentiaton of the textual spaces in comics by their division into the three general categories that could be easily recoginzed also by a computer program. The main problem of this differentiation is the boradness of its categories, which could not provide enough contrastive data for differentiation of textual usage in comics from various cultural environments in the second analytical part of this thesis.

The second type of differentiation, recognized in the above-mentioned analysis, categorizes textual information in comics on the basis of referential and informative aspects, which mediate the graphic narrative to the reader. This principle has been recognized in Groensteen's categorization, which categorizes the text in comics on the basis of its functional attributes. However, Groensteen's theoretical conceptualization

presents various practical aspects of textual functioning in comics; it is not effective enough for the further use in the second analytical part of this thesis, because of the intransparent system of its categories.

The last type of differentiation, recognized in the above-mentioned analysis, categorizes the text in comics on the basis of the ratio in which the combination of textual and pictorial elements distributes the message to reader. This differentiation has been recognized in categorization of Scott McCloud, which is also evaluated as the most effective for the further use in the second analytical part of this thesis. The main advantage of McCloud's categorization is the fact that its functions do not mutually overlap and for this reason each piece of textual information in comics can be attributed only to the one of McCloud's functions. This precise delimitation is also very advantageous in terms of quick and simple identification of each category within the comic book narrative. For this reason, McCloud's categorization offers the most effective system for differentiation of text in comics, which is able to provide enough transparent data for further analysis of comic books from various cultural environments in the second analytical part of this thesis.

3. TEXT IN COMICS FROM VARIOUS CULTURAL ENVIROMENTS

In the second analytical part of the thesis, McCloud's differentiation of text in comics would be applied to various comics and examined in practice. This analysis would also like to prove the hypothesis, that use of textual functions in comics varies on the basis of the geographical region, in which the comic books orignate.

The examined comics were selected from the three different cultural environments. The first of the analysed comics is *Crying Freeman*, which was selected as a representative of Japanese Manga comics. *Blue Pills* is the second comics title, which represents the Franco-Belgian cultural environment. The third comics selected for the analysis is *Fagin the Jew*, which is the representative of Anglo-American comics.

Apart from the cultural origin, examined comics were selected also on the basis of the authenticity of their script. The reason for inclusion of this restriction into the selection of the examined comics is the fact that in case of comic book adaptations, the extent of the use of textual information as well as its formal organization could be directly influenced by use of text in the original work. However, the textual use presented in the original work must not have any significant influence on the comic book adaptation; this criterion was taken into an account to ensure that examined comics make spontaneous use of the textual information contained within them, without any adjustments caused by the adaptation of the text from original work.

3.1. Japanese Manga comics: *Crying Freeman*

Crying Freeman is a series of Japanese comic books by Kazuo Koike & Ryoichi Ikegami, which presents the story of Yó Hinomura, a Japanese potter, which accidentaly becomes an assassin for Chinese mafia clan. This series is typical representative of action manga comics, that involves a frequent use of various action scenes, in which textual information is often reduced to minimum. In contrast with Anglo-American and

european comics, Japanese Manga comics is also specific in terms of different panel composition, that develop the narrative in the reversed direction.[22]

This reversed development of narrative is also used in case of *Crying Freeman* series, which impacts the direction of reading in sequences of panels as well as the direction of reading of the textual spaces on the level of the individual panels. (for panels and textual spaces see section 2.1.). *Crying Freeman* series has been issued in the series of five volumes, which were translated into Czech by Ľudovít Plata in 2011. This translation was also used for the analysis of textual functions in comics in this diploma thesis, which has revealed that *Crying Freeman* make use of five different functions form McCloud's categorization, as illustrated on the graph and table in figure no. 43.

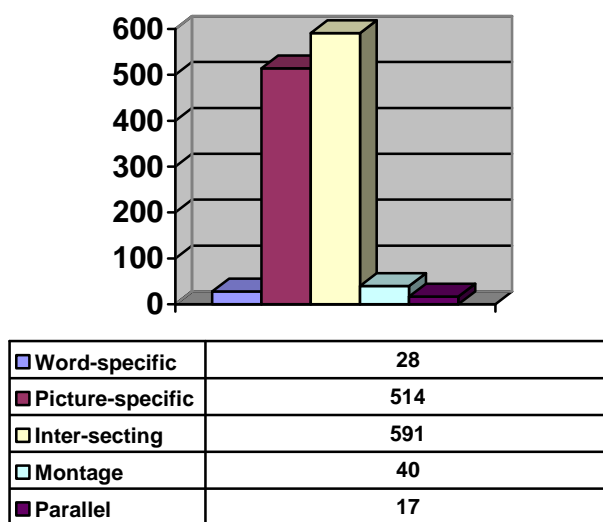| Word-specific | 28 |
Picture-specific	514
Inter-secting	591
Montage	40
Parallel	17

Fig.43: the use of McCloud's textual functions in *Crying Freeman*

On the basis of the graph and table presented in figure no. 44, it could be concluded that inter-secting combination is the most dominant function in Koike's comic. Inter-secting combination is usually graphically represented by speech balloons and thought

22 While the convention for reading of Anglo-American and Franco-Belgian comics usually develops the narrative from the left corner at the top of the page to right corner at the bottom, reading of Japanese manga comics usually starts in the upper right corner of the page and it continues to the left corner at the bottom. This composition of panels is determined by the conventional direction of writting in Japanese texts, which is read from the right side to the left side. Similarly to this compositon of panels, the textual spaces within each panel are also organized in this reversed direction.

balloons, which provide the reader with character's speech or interior monologue. The analysis of *Crying Freeman* has shown that character's speech is provided via speech balloons, but in case of interior monologues there has not been found any use of thought balloons.

This absence of thought balloons in Koike's comics is caused by the fact, that character's interior monologues are presented only via narrative captions, where they simultaneously fullfil the function of narrator's voice, as illustrated in figure no. 44 and figure no. 45. In *Crying Freeman* this use of narrative captions is much more frequent than their use for distribution of narrator's voice from the outside of the panel, which is typical for word-specific combination.

Fig.44: thoughts in caption (Koike, 04)　　Fig.45: thoughts in caption (Koike, 04)

However, narrative captions in *Crying Freeman* are predominantly used for distribution of text in inter-secting combination, there could be found also cases in which captions are used for distribution of word-specific combination. In these cases, captions contain the voice of the narrator without his presence in the panel, as illustrated on figure no. 46. In most cases, this use of caption is usually preceded by a panel in which the narration of character is firstly presented in the speech balloon, which gradually develops into the voice of the narrator presented in the caption within the following panel, as illustrated in figure no. 47.
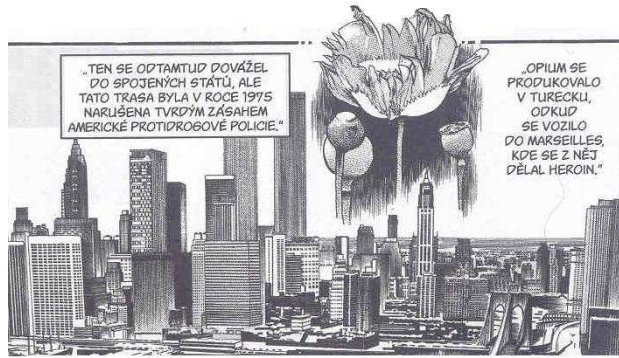
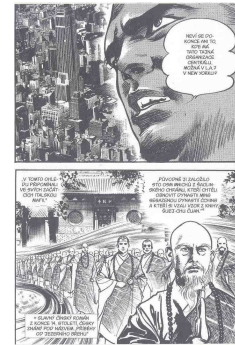Fig.46: caption in word-specific combination (Koike, 28)   Fig.47: caption (Koike, 12)

The function with the second highest use in *Crying Freeman* is picture-specific combination; in which textual information mostly serve only as some sort of soundtrack to the picture in the panel. In *Crying Freeman*, this function of text appears in two variations, which could be differentiated on the basis of the textual space in which they appear. The first type of textual sound effects does apper within the speech balloons, as illustrated in figure no. 48. This type of sound effect is used only for the depiction of non-verbal sounds produced orally by human characters, which could be rarely found in Koike's comics. On the other hand, the second type of sound effects does not appear in any specific textual space, but it is incorporated directly into the picture within the panel. This type of sound effects is the most frequent in *Crying Freeman* and it is predominantly used for depiction of non-oral sounds of human character or for the sounds produced by mechanical devices, as figure no. 49 illustrates.

Fig.48: oral human sound (Koike, 118)   Fig.49: mechanical sound (Koike, 201)

In connection with the second type of sound effects, it should be also mentioned that Koike's comics does not use picture-specific combination only for description of sounds, but in some cases also for description of circumstances or actions, which

usually does not involve the production of any sound., as figure no. 50 and figure no. 51 illustrate. In these cases, textual information provides clarification of the circumstances depicted within the panel. This use of picture-specific combination is very unique and it was not found in any of the examined comics from the other cultural environments. For this reason, it has been concluded that this use of text in comics could be evaluated as a manga-specific attribute.

Fig.50: description of action (Koike, 275)   Fig.51: Description of action (Koike, 04)

The next function of text that could be found in Koike's comics is montage, which incorporates text directly into the environment depicted in the panel. Montage appears in *Crying Freeman* mostly in the form of signs and writings on the wall, which provide the reader with spatial clarification of the scene depicted in the panel, as figure no. 52 and figure no. 53 illustrate.
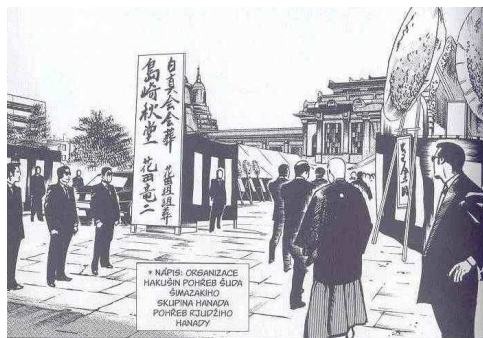

Fig.52: spatial clarification of depicted scene (Koike, 314)   Fig.53: montage (Koike, 03)

On the other hand, montage could be occasionally found in *Crying Freeman* also in form of letters or newspaper articles, which provide the reader with a lot of background information and thus create effective temporal shortcuts in the narrative, as figure no. 54 illustrates.

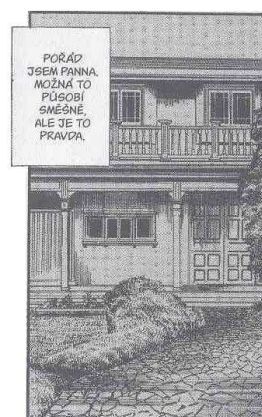Fig.54: montage as an article (Koike, 435)   Fig.55: parallel function (Koike, 03)

The least used function in *Crying Freeman* is parallel combination, in which textual and pictorial information within one panel does not mutually co-operate, as illustrated on figure no. 55. However, Koike's comics uses this function very rarely, it does help the narrative to acquire the full attention of the reader by the mismatch of pictorial and textual information.

3.2.   Franco-Belgian comics: *Blue Pills*

Blue Pills is an autobiographical comics of french illustrator, Frederik Peeters, which describes initiation and development of Peeters's relationship with HIV positive Catie and her little son. This comics has been issued in one volume, without any additional sequels, which was also translated into czech language in 2008 by Hana Zahradníčková. This translation was also used for the analysis in this diploma thesis, which has revealed that *Blue Pills* make use of five different functions form McCloud's categorization.

The function with most frequent use in Peeters's comics is inter-secting combination, which is usually graphically represented by speech balloons or thought balloons. On the basis of the graph and table presented in figure no. 56, it might be

concluded that inter-secting combination is used in *Blue Pills* almost twice as much as the sum of al the other functions. This is mostly caused by the fact that most of the narrative in Peeters's comics is presented via characters's dialogues.

◻ Word-specific	256
◼ Picture-specific	81
◻ Inter-secting	658
◻ Montage	19
◼ Parallel	7
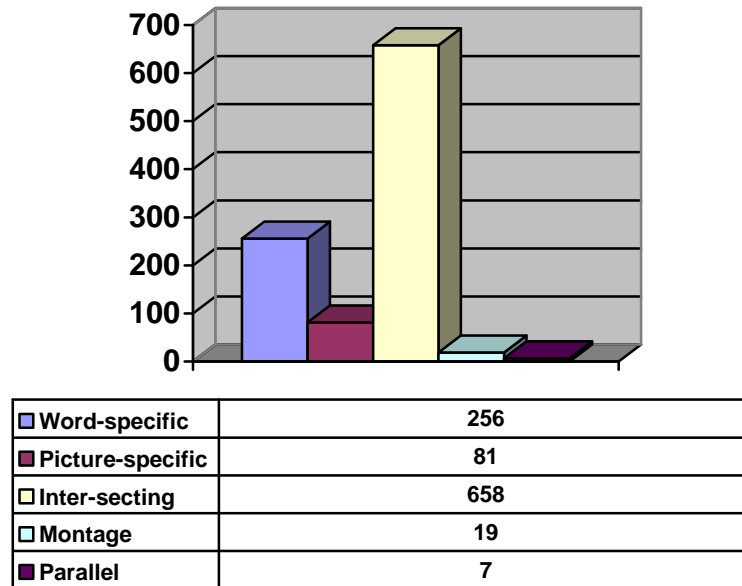
Fig.56: the use of McCloud's textual functions in *Blue Pills*

However, McCloud's inter-secting combination could be presented also via thought baloons, which usually provide the reader with character's interior monologues, this kind of narrative space was not used in case of *Blue Pills*. Instead of thought balloons, Peeters's comics presents thoughts of the characters only inside of narrative captions, where they are indirectly described in past tense by the voice of the narrator, which is typical attribute of word-specific combination.

Fig.57: thoughts in caption (Peeters, 35)

For this reason, word-specific combination is the function with the second highest occurence in *Blue Pills*. Whenever Peeters's comics has to inform the reader about the character's mental processes (such as thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings and motivations, etc.) without expressing them explicitly via speech balloons, it describes them indirectly through the voice of the narrator within the captions, as illustrated in figure no. 57. This type of thought exposition is very effective, because it allows the reader to have the insight into the mind of a character, which is currently speaking within the same panel, without deceleration of the narrative's pace (for narrative pace see section 2.2.4.)

Fig.58: rapid progress in narrative (Peeters, 22)

Apart from the indirect exposition of character's thoughts, Peeters's comics also uses narrative caption for distribution of narrator's voice, which is the primary purpose of word-specific combination. According to McCloud, the main advantage of the use of narrative captions in word-specific combination is the compression of relatively large amounts of information into a few sentences. (McCloud Making, 197) In case of *Blue Pills*, this distribution of large amounts of information via word-specific combination is also a very useful tool for rapid progression in the narrative. By the frequent use of this aspect of word-specific combination, Peeter's comics successfully creates an illusion of fluent autobiographical narrative with occasional decelerations, in which the reader could focus on the most important events from the lives of the depicted characters, as illustrated on figure no. 58.

The next function of text that could be often found in *Blue Pills* is picture-specific combination, in which textual information serve as some sort of soundtrack to the pictures. According to the graph and table presented in figure no. 56, picture-specific function is the function with the third highest use in Peeters's comics. In *Blue Pills*, this function of text could be found in three variations, which could be differentiated on the basis of the textual space in which they appear. The first type of textual sound effects does apper within the speech balloons, as illustated on figure no. 59.
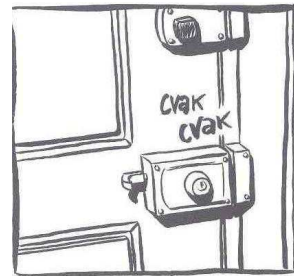
Fig.59: sound effect within speech balloon   Fig.60: sound effect within speech balloon

On the other hand, the second type of sound effects in Peeters's comics does not appear in any specific textual space, but it is incorporated directly into the picture within the panel. This type of sound effects is the most common in *Blue Pills* and it could be illustrated on figure no. 60 and figure no. 61.

Fig.61: sound without speech balloon   Fig.62: sound delimited by short lines

The last type of sound effects in *Blue Pills* appears within the space delimited by the series of short lines, as illustrated on figure no. 62. Occurence of this type of sound effects is the least common in *Blue Pills*, as it could be found only in three panels from the whole comics.

Fig.63: montage (Peeters, 124)   Fig.64: parallel function (Peeters, 2)

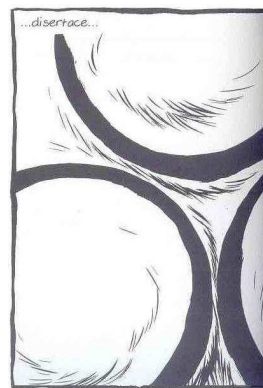The next function of text that could be found in *Blue Pills* is montage, which incorporates the text into the scene depicted in the panel. Montage appears in *Blue Pills* mostly in form of posters, covers of the magazines and other types of advertising texts, which co-create the realistic illusion of depicted environment, as illustrated on figure no. 63. Apart from the decoration of depicted environment, the use of montage does not have any significant function in the development of the narrative.

The least used function in *Blue Pills* is parallel combination, in which textual and pictorial information within one panel does not co-operate. However, Peeter's comic uses parallel function very rarely; it does help the narrative to acquire the full attention of the reader by the mismatch of pictorial and textual information. This effect of parallel function is also used in the begining of the initial chapter, where the text-containing panels present abstract depictions in combination with the words of foreign origin, which start with the letter 'd\, as illustrated in figure no. 64. The relation of these words to the narrative is not transparent until the first panel of the forth page, where it is revealed to the reader, that one of the main character's is searching for the word in the dictionary.

Parallel function in *Blue Pills* is in most cases presented inside of narrative captions, which does not clarify whether the depicted text is thought by characters or uttered by narrator. This use of narrative captions in connection with parallel function often results in an initial confusion, which forces the reader into a careful examination of the panels and greater focus on the narrative.

3.3. Anglo-American comics: *Fagin the Jew*

Fagin the Jew is one of the last works by legendary American comic book writer and illustrator Will Eisner, which presents the story of Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist from the perspective of Moses Fagin. However, Eisner's comics examines various controversial themes, such as distortion of jewish stereotypes in classical literature, in terms of the use of textual functions it is not very varied, as it uses only four out of seven McCloud's combinations. On the basis of the graph and table presented in figure no. 65, it might be concluded that Eisner's comics uses primarily inter-secting combination, which is the most common function in each of the examined comics. Inter-secting combination is predominantly graphically represented by speech balloons or thought balloons. In case of *Fagin the Jew*, this function could be found only in form of character's speech within the speech balloons.

☐ **Word-specific**	85
☐ **Picture-specific**	6
☐ **Inter-secting**	706
☐ **Montage**	19
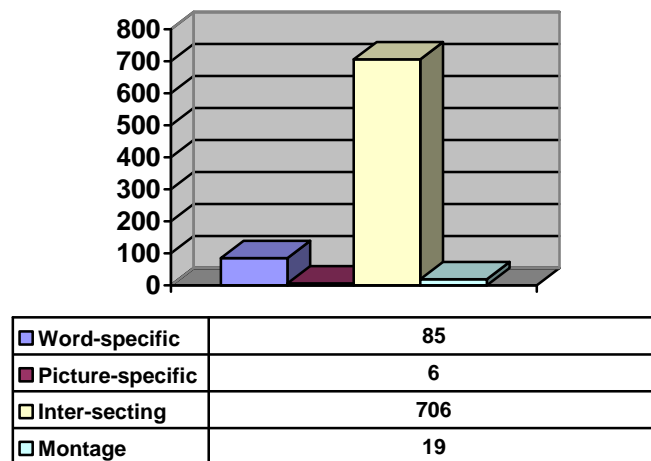
Fig.65: graph of the text functions in *Fagin the Jew*

The second most used function in *Fagin the Jew* is word-specific combination, which could be most cases found in narrative captions, but occassionally it appears also inside of the speech balloons. Most of the narrative captions in Eisner's comics are not depicted within the panel, which they accompany nor do they have any specific border lines. As figure no. 66 and figure no. 67 illustrate, text of the caption usually floats above or below of the accompanying panel and reader has to decide whether there is any connection between them or not.

That night I escaped to the port.

It was the very next week that I was herded with other convicts on a ship bound for one of England's western colonies, where convicts sentenced to transportation were to fulfill their sentences. There they were enslaved to colonists who bought their services from the Crown.

Fig.66: unattatched caption (Eisner, 42)   Fig.67: unattatched caption (Eisner, 37)

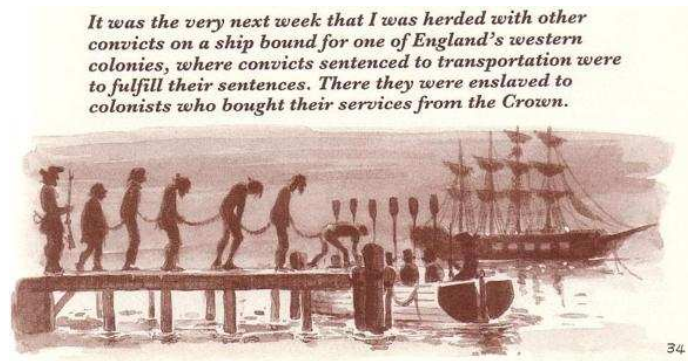However, captions in Eisner's comics are usually related to the single panel, in some cases there could be found also captions, that refer to two pictures at a same time. Demonstration of this phenomenon could be illustrated on figure no. 68, where the text in the caption describes Fagin's unsuccessful run from the police, which is graphically represented in the both of the accompanying pictures.

Oh, I ran...on tired legs...but not quick enough...

Fig. 68: two panels accompanied by one caption

It should be also mentioned, that analysis has revealed several cases, in which one piece of textual information was used in word-specific and inter-secting combination simultaneously. This dual functioning of the text appears in the panels at the end of the narrative and it could be further divided into two different categories on the basis of its initial functioning in the narrative.

The first category of dual functioning of text is the case in which textual information is primarily attributed with the function of inter-secting combination. In practice, this type of text operates on almost the same principle as the above-mentioned captions, which refer to two different panels simultaneously. The only difference

between these two phenomena is the fact, that this type of text changes its function during the progression of narrative, as illustrated on the panel in figure no. 69.

In this panel, Oliver's Wife Adele tells the story about an old man, who returned the stolen things to her mother's house shortly after they were robbed. Apart from the depiction of Oliver's wife and her speech balloon, this panel contains also small illustration of her story down at a right side of the panel. This illustration functions as some sort of sub-ordinated panel, which is also related to Adele's speech balloon, because it depicts some of the information contained within her speech balloon. During the development of the narrative, Adele in the main panel is firstly recognized as a speaker of the depicted words by a tail of the balloon, which attributes her speech with the function of inter-secting combination. On the other hand, the revelation of the relation among the piece of information from Adele's balloon and the illustration in the sub-ordinate panel causes the gradual re-evaluation of the function of words contained in the speech balloon, which is finally also attributed with the additional function of word-specific combination.

Fig.69: dual functioning (Eisner, 147)   Fig.70: dual functioning (Eisner, 144)
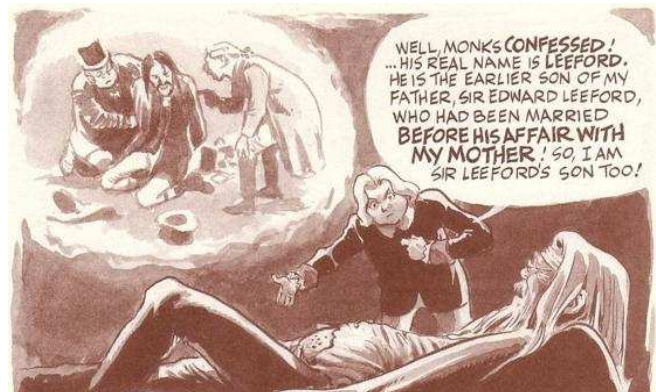
The second category of dual functioning of text is the case in which textual information is primarily attributed with the word-specific combination. In comparison with the previous type of dual functioning of text, sub-ordinated panels in this type of text are not placed below the speech balloon, but next to it, as illustrated in figure no. 70. On the basis of this different positioning, the reader has tendency to relate the sub-ordinated panel to the adjacent speech balloon and thus perceive the text contained within primarily as a voice of the narrator, typical for the word-specific combination. Only after the further examination of the rest of the panel, the reader could recognize

that the speech balloon is uttered by Oliver Twist and thus reveal the additional function of inter-secting combination.[23] This type of dual functioning of text is less common in *Fagin the Jew*, because in most of the situations narrating characters are usually depicted in between of the speech balloon and the sub-ordinated panel or they are placed in the upper left corner of the panel, what causes that reader has tendency to primarily interpret the information contained within the panel as their speech.

As has been already mentioned, this specific case of dual functioning of text could be found only in the end of the story of *Fagin the Jew*. The main reason for the appearance of this phenomenon in the final part of the narrative is the fact, that this unusual combination of two different combinations is also a very effective tool for the brief conclusion of the character's stories. This fusion of inter-secting and word-specific combination enables the compression of relatively large amounts of information from the narrative into few sentences and one accompanying panel, which are both further presented to the reader as a speech of one character. This technique provides the reader with the rapid progress in the narrative by distribution most of the information via textual devices, typical for word-specific combination, and at a same time it does not disturb the pace of the narrative, because the story is concluded by a character within the panel.

The next function of text, which could be found in Eisner's comics, is picture-specific combination, in which the textual information provides soundtrack to the pictorial information within the panel. According to the graph and table presented in figure no. 68, picture-specific combination is the function with the lowest number of occurences in the comics.

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23 The progression of narrative, mentioned in connection with both categories of dual functioning of the text in Fagin the Jew is based on the presupposition, that readers in euro-American cultural enviroment usually read comic book panels from the upper left corner to the lower right corner. (Saraceni Language, 16) This directon of reading is explicitly mentioned mainly for the contrast with manga, where the whole composition of panels directs the development of the narrative in the opposite direction. For more information about manga comics see the introductory paragraph in section 3.1.

The main reason for this rare occurence of picture-specific combination is the fact already mentioned by McCloud in the begining of the previous chapter (see section 2.1.2.), that Eisner successfully depicts emotional states of his characters through their facial expressions, body language or by the effective use of dialogues rather than by giggles, groans, hahas and other verbal depiction of intensive sounds. On the other hand, in most cases where characters face some sort of physical impact, Eisner often avoids depiction of any sounds and he rather let the pictures "speak" for themselves. However, this type of depiction does not contain any textual information, it is still important to make notice of it, because of the fact that comic books from Anglo-American cultural enviroment usually have tendency to signal this type of physical impact verbally, which makes Eisner's depiction rather atypical.

Fig.71: non-speech balloon for sound   Fig.72: non-speech balloon for sound

In most of the six examples of picture-specific combination in *Fagin the Jew*, Eisner tends to use different type of balloon for indication of the intensive sounds that are unlike the speech of the characters. Eisner usually signals this difference in the type of the sound by the pointed bordering line and reversed colouring of text and balloon, illustrated in figure no. 71, or by the placement of onomatopoeia inside of the cloud-like balloon, as illustrated in figure no. 72. On the other hand, there could be found also situations, where Eisner uses common type of speech balloon for indication of the intensive non-speach sound, such as the laughter of the boy in the upper right corner of the panel, illustrated in figure no. 73.

Fig.73: speech balloon for sound

Fig.74: montage on a shop sign

The last type of McCloud's function used in *Fagin the Jew* is montage, which depicts the textual information to the environment depicted within the panel. In case of this function, it is very interesting to find out that most of the nineteen examples of montage in Fagin the Jew could be found in some sort of shop sign, as illustrated in figure no. 74 and figure no. 75. On the other hand, the only case when montage was found in a different space than on shop sign is illustrated on figure no. 76.
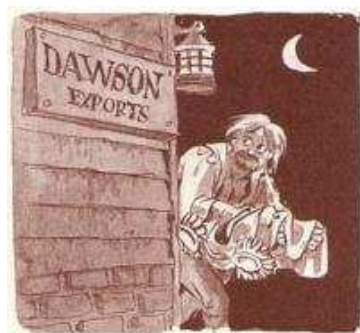
Fig.75: montage on a shop sign

Fig.76: montage on a shop sign

3.4. Textual Use in Comics from Different Cultural Enviroments

The last section analyzed the presumed variation in frequency and usage of McCloud's categories of text functioning in comics from the three different cultural environments; Japanese region, Anglo-American region and Franco-Belgian region. On the basis of the data gathered by this analysis, it could be concluded that hypothesis has been proven, as textual functioning in each of the examined comics shows different frequency and usage of McCloud´s categories.

The analysis of general textual functioning has revealed three most dominant functions, which were often found in the analyzed comics; word-specific combination, picture-specific combination and inter-secting combination. However, these three functions have been most frequent in the analysed comics; their usage in connection with each of the analysed comics was very different. For this reason, most of the cultural specifics in textual functioning of the examined comics have been revealed in connection with these three functions.

The analysis of general textual functioning has also revealed the occasional use of montage and parallel combination in the examined comics. Unfortunately, the occurrence of these functions in each of the examined comics was relatively low and for this reason there were not revealed any specific forms of usage, on the basis of which examined comics could be further differentiated.

The analysis of usage of individual textual functions in examined comics has revealed a high level of similarity among *Blue Pills* and *Fagin the Jew*, especially in terms of the most used functions and textual spaces through which these functions are presented in the panel. (for panel and textual spaces see section 2.1.) This similarity could be illustrated on word-specific combination, which is the second most used function in both of these comics. Word-specific combination usually distributes the voice of the narrator via narrative captions, which are mostly used for distribution of this funcion in both of the above-mentioned comics.

In case of *Fagin the Jew*, word-specific combination occasionaly appears also inside of the special kind of speech balloons, which change its function from word-specific to inter-secting combination, or vice versa, on the basis of its relation to two different panels. However, the data gathered by the analysis show this dual functioning of speech balloons as a phenomenon specific for Anglo-American comics, its occurrence within the comics from the other cultural regions remains questionable and for this reason it should be further examined in greater detail by analyses in the future.

In comparison with common use of word-specific combination in *Blue Pills* and *Fagin the Jew*, *Crying Freeman* does not use word-specific function very often, because of the fact that most of the narrative captions in this comic are used predominantly for the direct presentation of character's thoughts, typical for inter-secting combination. On the basis of this observation, it could be hypothesized that this phenomenon is specific

for Japanese manga comics, which should be further examined in the future by the more detailed analysis on the greater sample of comics from this cultural environment.

Another similarity between *Blue Pills* and *Fagin the Jew* could be found in picture-specific combination, in which text provides soundtrack to the dominant piece of information, which is mediated by the pictorial elements. However, the high frequency of usage of this function in *Blue Pills* is much more similar to *Crying Freeman*; in terms of functioning it is still more similar to *Fagin the Jew*. While picture-specific combination in *Fagin the Jew* and *Blue Pills* is restricted only to the description of sounds, in case of *Crying Freeman* this function is used also for clarification of the processes or circumstances that does not involve production of any sounds. This atypical functioning of picture-specific combination in *Crying Freeman* should be further examined on the wider variety of comics to reveal wheteher it should be classified as an attribute unique for Japanese Manga comics.

3.5. Summary of findings in the practical use of McCloud's classification

Apart from the examination and comparison of text functioning in comics from various cultural environments, the previous section also examined the effectivity of use of McCloud's categorization in practice. On the basis of the data gathered by the analysis, it could be concluded that inter-secting combination and word-specific combination are the most used functions in each of the examined comics.

In case of inter-secting combination, textual and pictorial elements partially overlap in presenting the same piece of information, but at a same time each of these components also distributes some additional detail or perspective to the scene. For this reason, inter-secting combination could be found predominantly within the speech balloons as a representation of character's speech or occasionally inside of the narrative captions, where it could substitute the role of thought balloons. In each of these types of usage, inter-secting combination forces the reader to focus on textual and pictorial information, which mutually co-operate in the mediation of the message in the panel. Perhaps, this balanced mediation of message through textual and pictorial information could be the main reason for the most frequent occurrence of inter-secting combination in each of the examined comics.

The next function, which was frequently used in the analysed comics, is word-specific combination, which mediates most of the message via verbal information, while pictorial information serves only as an illustration to it. According to McCloud, this function is also very useful device in terms of compression of large amounts of information into relatively short space. (McCloud Making, 131) For this reason it is also often used in each of the examined comics for creation of effective shortcuts in the narrative, which enable the reader to move rapidly throughout the narrative without the deceleration of narrative pace.

In connection with the textual spaces, word-specific function appears mostly within the narrative captions, but occasionaly it could be found also inside of the speech balloons. This usage of word-specific function has been revealed only in Fagin the Jew, in cases where functioning of textual information contained within the speech balloons changes on the basis of the simultaneous connection with two different panels. In each of these cases, function of text in the panel changes from word-specific to inter-secting combination, or vice versa.

This fusion of inter-secting and word-specific combination enables the compression of relatively large amounts of information from the narrative into few sentences, and thus it is used only for the brief conclusion of the character's stories in the final part of the narrative. However, the data gathered by the analysis has revealed only the type of fusion of word-specific and inter-secting combination; it remains questionable whether this phenomenon could appear also among the other McCloud's functions.

Another McCloud´s function, which has been often found in the examined comics, is picture-specific combination, in which pictures distribute all of the information to the reader, while the accompanying text provides only the soundtrack to the depicted action. This function has been found in the examined comics predominantly in the form of mechanical sounds or human non-oral sounds, but occassionally it was used also as a representation of oral sounds. In connection with the textual spaces, picture-specific function often does not appear within any specific textual space, but it is directly incorporated into the scene depicted within the panel.

In the cases, when picture-specific combination does appear within some sort of textual space, it could be found mostly within the ordinary speech balloons, where it usually represents non-verbal oral sounds. Apart from these appearances, picture-specific combination could be found also within the atypical speech balloons; which are

differentiated by the unusual shape, colour or lettering; where it usually represents sounds of high intensity or non-verbal oral sounds. The last type of textual space, in which picture-specific combination has been found, is the series of short lines surrounding the depicted text. This type of textual space has been found only in Blue Pills, where it was used for representation of non-verbal oral sounds of low intensity.

Apart from the cases, in which picture-specific combination provided the soundtrack for the actions that include production of sounds, the analysis has also revealed the cases, in which this function was used for clarification of the actions, which does not include production of any sounds. This use of picture-specific combination has been found only in *Crying Freeman* and its evaluation was very problematic, because of the fact that its functioning did not completely matched with any criteria of functions from McCloud classification. Firstly, each of these phenomena has been classified as a representative of duo-specific combination, in which textual and pictorial information distributes the same message to the reader. As the analysis progressed, this classification has been rejected as unsatisfactory, because the textual information in these phenomena did not distributed exactly the same message as pictorial information, but only part of it. For a solution, each of these phenomena has been classified as a representative of unusal type of picture-specific combination, in which text does not provide the soundtrack to the pictorial information, but rather some sort of clarification of the depicted circumstances. On the basis of the relatively high occurrence of this unusual type of picture-specific combination in *Crying Freeman*, it has been also concluded, that the criteria for recognition of picture-specific combination should be re-evaluated and extended by the dimension revealed by this analysis.

In case of montage and paralel combination, the analysis has revealed only few examples of use of these functions in the examined comics. The low occurrence of these functions could be partially explained by the fact that they do not significantly contribute to the development of comic book narrative. This conclusion could be justified especially in case of the parallel combination, in which textual and pictorial elements within the panel do not mutually co-operate, which often results in deceleration of narrative pace. On the other hand, the low use of montage in the analysed comics could not be explained only by its ineffectivity within the narrative. According to McCloud, the use of montage within the comic book narrative offers a greate potential for exploration, but only few comic book authors are willing to explore

it. (McCloud Making, 139) Perhaps, for this reason each of the examined comics uses montage rarely, without invention, and only as a decoration of the environment depicted environment or for clarification of the spacial circumstances in the narrative.

In case of duo-specific and inter-dependent combinations, there were not found any examples of usage in the examined comics and thus they cannot be further analysed. It should be also noted, that McCloud describes these functions as a very rare phenomena, which require specific conditions for occurrence within the comic book narrative and thus it is not surprising that none of them has been revealed in the analysed comics.

On the basis of the data gathered by the analysis, it could be concluded that McCloud´s classification is an effective method for differentiation of text functioning in comics. However, the most of the McCloud´s functions recognized in the analysis have been evaluated as an effective tool for differentiation of textual functioning in comics; the analysis has revealed that criteria for recognition of picture-specific combination in practice should be further extended. The recommended extension of criteria for picture-specific function should involve also the cases, in which textin the panel provide the clarification of the depicted action or circumstance, which does not involve production of any sounds. Apart from this adjustment of criteria for picture-specific combination, the analysis has not revealed any other imperfections in connection with functioning of McCloud´s classification, and thus it could be recommeneded for the further use in practice.

4. CONCLUSION

The main focus of the present work was to examine the functioning of textual information in the comic book medium. For this reason, it was important to firstly examine the criteria on the basis of which the comic book medium is usually defined as well as to explore the position of text among these criteria. It was consequently necessary to analyze the available methods, on the basis of which text in comics could be differentiated, and find a method which would be adequate for the purposes of this thesis. The objective of the work was thus to reveal the most adequate method for classification of textual functioning in comics and to examine its usability in practice. In order to accomplish this goal, the analysis of methods was divided into two parts.

The first analytical part of the thesis was directed to the examination of the four available classifications of text in comics, so as to get an idea of the principles, on the basis of which text in comics could be differentiated. It was demonstrated that each of the examined classifications operates on a different principle. Apart from the examination of their overall functioning, the analyzed categorizations were also mutually compared and evaluated on the basis of their usability in practice. On the basis of the data gathered by the first analytical part of the thesis it was concluded that the most effective method for differentiation of the text in comics is McCloud´s classification, which categorizes the text in comics on the basis of the ratio in which the combination of textual and pictorial elements distributes the message to the reader. The main advantage of McCloud's categorization is the fact that its functions do not mutually overlap and for this reason each piece of textual information in comics can be attributed to only the one of McCloud's functions. Therefore, McCloud's classification has been evaluated as the most transparent system for differentiation of textual information in comics.

The analysis then proceeded to an investigation of the practical usability of McCloud´s classification in practice in the second part of the analysis. Apart from the investigation of usability, this part of the thesis has also examined the variability of textual use in comics from three different cultural environments; namely Anglo-American region, Franco-Belgian region and Japanese region. It was hypothesized that the frequency and usage of McCloud's textual functions in each of the examined comics would vary in relation to the cultural environment in which the comic book originates.

Statistically, the hypothesis was supported by the results, which evidenced that usage of individual textual functions is different in each of the examined comics. On the other hand, the analysis has also revealed that in terms of general textual functioning, each of the examined comics uses predominantly three functions; namely a word-specific combination, a picture-specific combination and an inter-secting combination. However, these three functions have been most frequent in the analyzed comics; their usage in connection with each of the analyzed comics was extremely different. For this reason, most of the cultural specifics in the textual functioning of the examined comics have been revealed in connection with these three functions.

The examination of general textual functioning has also revealed the occasional use of montage and parallel combination in the analyzed comics. Unfortunately, the occurrence of these functions in each of the examined comics was relatively low and for this reason there were not revealed any contrastive data in connection with these two functions, on the basis of which examined comics could be further differentiated.

The analysis of individual textual functions in examined comics has revealed a high level of similarity among the Franco-Belgian comic *Blue Pills* and the Anglo-American comic *Fagin the Jew*, particularly in terms of the most used functions and textual spaces through which these functions are presented in the panel. Therefore, similarity of textual usage in comics from these two cultural environments should be further examined with a larger sample of comics in the future.

The analysis of individual textual functions in the examined comics has also revealed several cases of atypical use of word-specific and inter-secting combination in the Anglo-American comic, *Fagin the Jew*. In the comic, text contained in a special kind of speech balloons changes its function from word-specific to inter-secting combination, or vice versa, on the basis of the relation of one speech balloon to two different panels. However, the data gathered by the analysis show this dual functioning of speech balloons as a phenomenon specific for Anglo-American comics, its occurrence within the comics from the other cultural regions remains questionable and for this reason should be further examined in greater detail by analyses in the future.

The analysis of individual textual functions in examined comics has also revealed atypical use of narrative captions in the Japanese comic, *Crying Freeman*, where these textual spaces were used predominantly for the direct presentation of character's thoughts, typical for inter-secting combination. Apart from this phenomenon, the

examination of *Crying Freeman* has also revealed the atypical functioning of the picture-specific combination, which was used for clarification of the processes that does not involve production of any sounds. On the basis of these observations, it could be hypothesized whether these phenomena are unique for Japanese manga comics, which should be further examined in the future by the more detailed analysis on larger sample of comics from this cultural environment.

It has to be, indeed, acknowledged that the collected data are not ideal for examination of textual functioning in comics from various cultural environments. However, the analysis has investigated only one comic per each cultural environment; the results revealed by the examination are believed to have provided a valuable initial insight into the problem of textual functioning in comics from various cultural environments.

Apart from the findings in connection with examination of the textual functioning in comics from various cultural environments, the analysis has primarily examined the usability of McCloud´s classification in practice. On the basis of the data gathered by the analysis, it can be concluded that McCloud´s classification is an effective method for differentiation of textual functioning in comics. However, each of McCloud´s functions recognized by the analysis has been evaluated as effective and transparent tools for differentiation of textual functioning in comics; the analysis has revealed that criteria for recognition of picture-specific combination in practice should be further extended. The recommended extension of criteria for this function should also involve cases, in which the text in the panel provides the clarification of the depicted action, which does not involve the production of any sounds. Apart from this adjustment of criteria for picture-specific combination, the analysis has not revealed any other imperfections in connection with functioning of McCloud´s classification, and thus it could be recommended for further use in practice.

RESUMÉ

Primárnym zámerom práce bolo preskúmať fungovanie textu v komiksovom médiu. Z tohoto dôvodu bolo dôležité najprv vytýčiť kritéria, na základe ktorých je komiks zvyčajne zadefinovaný a zároveň zistiť pozíciu textu medzi týmito kritériami. Ďalším krokom bolo zmapovať dostupné metódy a vybrať z nich najvhodnejšiu, pomocou ktorej je možné rozlišovať fungovanie textu v komikse. Cieľom tejto práce bolo preto nielen nájsť najvhodnejšiu metódu klasifikácie textu v komikse, ale zároveň aj preskúmať jej efektívnosť v praxi. Z tohoto dôvodu bola analýza metód v práci rozdelená na dve časti.

V prvej analytickej časti práce boli zmapované a navzájom porovnané štyri rôzne metódy klasifikácie textu v komikse, v ktorých boli identifikované rôzne princípy pomocou ktorých môže byť text v komikse klasifikovaný. Na základe dát ziskaných touto analýzou bolo zistené, že najvhodnejšou metódou pre rozlišovanie textu v komikse je McCloudova klasifikácia, ktorá rozlišuje funkcie textu v komikse na základe pomeru, v ktorom sa textové a obrazové informácie v rámci jedného panelu spolupodieľajú na sprostredkovaní správy čitateľovi. Tento systém klasifikácie bol vyhodnotený ako najefektívnejší najmä pre vysokú mieru transparentnosti, ktorá neumožňuje textovým informáciám v komikse mať viac funkcií zároveň.

Dalším krokom bolo preskúmať praktickú využiteľnosť McCloudovej klasifikácie v druhej analytickej časti práce, kde bola táto metóda zároveň využitá aj na výskum textového fungovania v komiksoch pochádzajúcich z rôznych kultúrnych regiónov, konkrétne Anglo-Americkej oblasti, Franko-Belgickej oblasti a Japonskej oblasti. Predpokladalo sa, že frekvencia a spôsob používania jednotlivých textových funkcií v každom zo skúmaných komiksov sa budú líšiť v závislosti od kultúrneho regiónu z ktorého daný komiks pochádza.

Výsledky výskumu potvrdili, že frekvencia a spôsob používania jednotlivých textových funkcií sú v každom zo skúmaných komiksov rozdielne. Zaujímavým zistením však bolo, že skúmané komiksy využívajú najčastejšie tri funkcie; konkrétne slovne-špecifickú, obrazovo-špecifickú a presahujúcu funkciu; ktoré sú však v každom skúmanom komikse realizované odlišne. Na úrovni jednotlivých textových funkcií bolo taktiež zistených množstvo podobností medzi Franko-Belgickým komiksom *Modré Pilulky* a Anglo-Americkým komiksom *Žid Fagin* najmä v súvislosti s

najpoužívanejšími funkciami a ich realizáciou v priestoroch panelu. Z tohoto dôvodu bol tento fenomén doporučený k podrobnému preskúmaniu na väčšej vzorke komiksov z týchto kultúrnych oblasti v ďalších analýzách.

Ďalším zaujímavým zistením je atypické fungovanie textu v súvislosti so slovne-špecifickou funkciou a presahujucou funkciou v Anglo-Americkom komikse *Žid Fagin*, v ktorom textová informácia v rámci jedného rečového balóna za určitých okolností vykazovala dve vyššie uvedené funkcie súčasne. Napriek tomu, že tento jav bol zistený v komikse pochádzajúcom z Anglo-Amerického kultúrneho kontextu, jeho výskyt v komiksoch z iných kultúrnych regiónov zostáva otázny a doporučuje sa k podrobnému prieskumu v ďalších analýzách.

Analýza taktiež odhalila atypické používanie rozprávačských textových priestorov v Japonskom komikse *Plačúci Drak*, kde boli tieto priestory primárne využívané na priamu prezentáciu vnútorných monológov postáv, typickú pre presahujúcu funkciu. V súvislosti s týmto komiksom analýza taktiež odhalila atypické fungovanie obrazovo-špecifickej funkcie, ktorá bola často používaná na objasňovanie procesov pri ktorých nevznikajú žiadne zvuky. Napriek tomu, že tento jav bol zistený v komikse pochádzajúcom z Japonskeho kultúrneho kontextu, jeho výskyt v komiksoch z iných kulturnych regiónov zostáva otázny a doporučuje sa k podrobnému prieskumu v ďalších analýzách.

Okrem výskumu textového fungovania v komiksoch z rôznych kultúrnych oblastí, analýza bola primárne zameraná na výskum využiteľnosti McCloudovej klasifikacie v praxi. Na základe dát ziskaných touto analýzou bolo preukázané, že McCloudova klasifikácia je efektívnym nástrojom pre rozlišovanie textového fungovania v komikse. Napriek tomu, že všetky z McCloudových funkcií boli vyhodnotené ako efektívne a transparentné kategórie pre klasifikáciu textu v komikse, v súvislosti s obrazovo-špecifickou kombináciou bolo na základe dát ziskaných analýzou doporučené upresnenie kriterií, ktoré by malo do tejto funkcie zahrňovať aj procesy pri ktorých nevznikajú žiadne zvuky. Okrem tohoto upresnenia pre obrazovo-špecifickú kombináciu, analýza neodhalila žiadne výrazné nedostatky v súvislosti s fungovaním McCloudovej klasifikácie, a preto je možné ju doporučiť aj k ďalšiemu výskumu textových informácií v komikse.

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