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Teaching Poetry Analysis through the Monomyth 'A Hero's Journey' in an Instructional Comic

verfasst von | submitted by

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0. Introduction

Poetry, a hero's story, and instructional comics are usually perceived as three different entities which have little in common. This master's thesis, however, not only discloses the features necessary in order to combine them in an efficient and engaging manner, but also offers an instructional comic, especially designed for this paper, based on the findings of this thesis' research. Therefore, the focus for this research is on three issues, namely poetry analysis, the Monomyth, also known as 'the Hero's Journey', and instructional comics. The aim of this thesis paper is to find an answer to the following research question:

"What features are necessary to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic which uses the Monomyth 'the Hero's Journey' as a story template to teach poetry analysis?"

For this, qualitative research on these three topics in the forms of literature review and the date-driven bottom-up approach was carried out. Based on the found patterns, an instructional comic was created in order to answer the research question. This designed instructional comic focuses on teaching poetry while incorporating the plot template 'the Monomyth'.

This research is relevant due to several reasons. Numerous arguments on why reading and teaching poetry is beneficial and should be encouraged exist. According to Jay Parini, reading poems can "ground us in spiritual and moral realities," offer us comfort and encouragement and provide us with a new approach on how to talk about our lives, express our thoughts and feelings and represent our personal experience (xiv). In addition, research on and designing of comics are important practices as comics "tell stories that could not be told in any other way" (Hill 2). Comics are no longer only read by children but also by "men and women, young and old, readers seeking entertainment and readers looking for literary enlightenment" (3). Furthermore, especially instructional comics, also known as information comics, are nowadays frequently used in teaching settings as effective tools, as they cover a variety of topics

and explain seemingly complex matters in an accessible and often entertaining manner (Jüngst 135). Combining a comic with the storytelling mode 'the Hero's Journey' is a suitable approach as both appeal to a wide range of audiences and are highly engaging. Christopher Vogler argues that all stories concerning a hero follow certain common plot structures which he summarised in twelve stages named 'the Hero's Journey' (x). 'The Hero's Journey' has been used for a large number of successful and popular movies, stories and books such as *Star Wars, The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, the Matrix, Spider Man,* and *The Lion King* (viii).

Extensive research has been done on poetry analysis, instructional comics and the Monomyth; however, no project has combined these three aspects and produced a comic accordingly. The combination is the key to a successful balance of an engaging, legend-filled, instructional comic that, at the same time, teaches in an academic yet entertaining way how to analyse poetry. It is appealing not only to academics, but also to children, young adults and general audiences who are interested in captivating stories. Thus, it is a unique project that helps develop poetry teaching, while adding vital insights to the general study of heroism and instructional comics.

The structure of this master's thesis is as follows: the first three chapters give an overview of the three topics poetry analysis, the Monomyth, and (instructional) comics. The patterns are then examined in the 'Analysis' chapter and the instructional comic based on these patterns is displayed in the 'Appendix' chapter.

There are various approaches to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey to teach poetry analysis, and this thesis paper demonstrates one of them.

1. Poetry

1.1. Poetry: A Closer Examination

As part of this thesis' aim is to discover the most crucial features required to create an instructional comic that teaches poetry analysis, this chapter will explain the following issues: Why does poetry matter, what teaching methods can be used to teach poetry analysis by means of an information comic and what are the most important elements and tools needed in order to execute a poetry analysis expertly?

1.1.1. Why Poetry Matters

Jay Parini, a poet, novelist, editor, and critic, has written an entire book on why he believes poetry matters. He argues that poetry matters to society due to its "voice of individuality" (43). The "voice" in literature is a difficult concept and a definition is repeatedly left ambiguous (45). It frequently is considered synonymous with "personality in writing", meaning the "individual voice" behind a text (47). Parini perceives poetry as something that offers a "solid form of education" and enables us to "make comparisons" and regularly directs us towards different "realities that fall into the realm of the political" (15). What is more, by reading poetry, Parini indicates, one gains understanding which is "distinct" and "useful" as it assists in "creating a language adequate to the experience" of a certain problem or situation (16). Poetry also teaches the "apprehension of time," and "our place in the universe" and shows us different possibilities for our life (9). Additionally, perhaps the most important effect of poetry is that of its offer of consolation, its ability to ground us in "spiritual and moral realities" and lessons on how to speak about our lives, as all of us face situations where consolation is needed and have the urge to share about life (9). The "voice" can also be seen as a tool to create our identities and it combines speech ("oratio") with reason ("ratio") (11).

William Wordsworth takes this approach even further and explains that we humans need an opposite to science and history and that poetry is necessary as it is a "spontaneous overflow

of powerful feelings" and supports us by aiding us in finding "tranquillity" in our busy lives (281). Andrew Hodgson concurs with Wordsworth's idea on poetry's importance by stating that poetry reading "affords pleasure and wisdom" (3). Furthermore, he explains that, in his opinion, poetry can change the world by making it a "more fulfilling place" (3). Poetry is not "easily nor immediately accessible" and, therefore, offers a "particular depth and quality" which are, according to Hodgson, "richer rewards" than immediate joys (3). These reasons clearly demonstrate why poetry matters and why poetry reading should be taught. The following subchapter elaborates on how and why poetry analysis should be taught using information comics.

1.1.2. Poetry Analysis Methods for Comics

As poetry matters, teaching how to read and analyse poetry is important. Unfortunately, the amount of literature on how to teach poetry analysis is limited and teaching poetry analysis via an information comic which uses the Hero's Journey has never been done before. Therefore, this master's thesis attempts to break new ground in creating a new approach by combining all the benefits of poetry, information comics and the Monomyth to teach primarily upper secondary students and university students how to analyse poetry successfully, engagingly, and enjoyably.

This chapter will focus on, firstly, why poetry should be taught in class and the reasons information comics and the Hero's Journey are two suitable elements for poetry teaching. Secondly, reasons why poetry analysis is often neglected in schools and how the use of an information comic might be able to change this issue will be discussed. Lastly, a brief overview of how to teach poetry in class by using the created information comic will be given.

First of all, poetry should be taught in class through an information comic because this medium elicits passion and intrinsic motivation in students. Tara Seale, an advanced placement language and composition teacher, explains that teachers should not merely focus on

proficiency while teaching students but also on eliciting passion within the students (12). She further claims that poetry is a "healthy outlet for surging emotions" and enables students to celebrate the "power of self" (13). However, poetry does not only assist students to voice their passion and emotions, but also aids them to express themselves in a creative way, according to Andrew Simmons (4). This expression leads to intrinsic motivation, which is the "desired type of motivation in students" as it induces "deep learning, better performance and well-being" in students (Deci and Ryan 235). Intrinsic motivation is stimulated through, for example, through "structured guidance," and "optimal challenges" in class (Kusurkar, Croiset, and Ten Cate 978). This is why an information comic should be used to teach poetry analysis as it offers a step-by-step structured guideline on how to read poetry as well as age-appropriate challenges. Furthermore, as the two main purposes of an information comic are to transfer knowledge and to entertain, this comic not only transfers knowledge of poetry analysis but also simultaneously stimulates intrinsic motivation in the student through the comic's entertainment factor (Caldwell 2). Similarly to the information comic, the Monomyth also provides structured guidance (and therefore intrinsic motivation) as the Monomyth consists of several different stages the hero has to undergo. Moreover, the hero faces optimal challenges to reach the next Monomyth stage just as the student does by reading the information comic on poetry analysis. Therefore, the combination of an information comic and the Monomyth activates both passion and intrinsic motivation in the student and is, consequently, significant for teaching poetry analysis in class.

There are, however, several reasons why poetry teaching in class is neglected; nevertheless, by using information comics and the Monomyth as a tool, these obstacles can be overcome. For example, one of the reasons poetry teaching is neglected is, according to Simmons, the "shift in educational standards" in which the focus shifted from creative writing, reading and expression to non-literary and informational texts (12). Nonetheless, the information comic based on the Monomyth is able to adhere to both: the creative as well as the

analytical and informational aspects. By walking the students through the steps of poetry analysis, the informational aspect is provided, while the comic and interpretation of poetry offers a creative and emotional side to teaching. Another reason, mentioned by Robert Maranto, leader of the Department of Education Reform of the University of Arkansas, for the oversight of teaching poetry is not only the shift to informational purposes but also teachers who are uneducated in terms of poetry (171). The shift begins with the education of the teachers as they are taught to primarily focus on the factual aspects of texts rather than the creative ones (171). As a result, the teachers themselves are not fully equipped to teach poetry reading and analysis and, therefore, tend to avoid it altogether (172). The information comic can assist not only the students in learning how to analysis a poem, but also aid teachers in teaching the subject matter. In addition, the Monomyth's stages can benefit both the learning and teaching elements of poetry analysis within a classroom setting by rendering a simplified and clear version of complex subject matter.

Ultimately, the most important aim of teaching poetry analysis is not primarily to understand why it should be taught or why teachers avoid teaching it but how to teach it in class effectively. Both scholars and educators share several ideas on how to teach poetry analysis; however, this chapter focuses predominantly on how to teach it by using an information comic created according to the stages of the Monomyth.

First of all, it is important that students are introduced to poems in an appropriate manner (Moore and Wright 12). With the use of the information comic based on the Monomyth, the students not only receive an excellent introduction to poems and poetry analysis, but also a tool they can always go back to and restudy again if they need to. Shelagh Moore and Kate Wright further claim that in the early stages of poetry teaching, students need to be made aware of what would make them want to read, analyse and interpret a poem to personally engage with poetry (14). The informational comic can assist them during this stage, because the main character Penny, who walks through the Monomyth stages in this comic, asks herself these questions

several times and finds answers along the way. As students usually relate to the hero of a story, they most likely will also relate to her answers and findings as well as struggles and frustrations. Furthermore, according to Moore and Wright, students usually enjoy playing with words and writing rhymes themselves (16). The comic encourages the main hero as well as the reader to understand the meaning of certain lines of a poem. It also asks the hero and the reader to create their own rhymes in order to fulfil a task during one of the Monomyth's stages. Even if the students' attempts fail in class or at home, they have the opportunity to read the main character's solution and, thus, learn from it in an entertaining way. Lastly, the informational comic on poetry analysis includes a summary of all the important tools for poetry analysis and can be used as a guidebook and reference book for further poetry analysis in class for teachers and students. The following chapter offers an overview of the main poetry analysis devices: most of these are included in the informational comic as well.

1.2. Poetry Analysis

1.2.1. Metre, Rhythm, Feet and Stanzas

Despite the many theories of what poetry is, there are certain structural elements which can be found in most poems. Four of these are: metre, rhythm, feet, and stanzas.

The metrical pattern, as stated by Rhian Williams, is the pattern created when "stresses fall into a regular arrangement in a poem" (167). It contains "stressed and unstressed syllables" and to define the metre of a poem one first needs to know about "feet" (Nünning and Nünning 58). Feet are the "smallest units of verse" and are a series of stressed and unstressed syllables (58). Therefore, to discern the type of foot, the "grouping pattern of syllables" has to be analysed (Chatman 161). For example, the sequence of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable is known as an "iamb" (e.g the words: *destroy* or *amuse*) and a sequence of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable is called a "trochee" (e.g. the words: *garden* or *highway*) (Ludwig 31). More examples of feet are the "dactyl" (stressed-unstressed-unstressed),

the "anapaest" (unstressed-unstressed-stressed), the "spondee" (stressed-stressed) and the "amphibrach" (unstressed-unstressed) (Nünning and Nünning 58). To analyse the metrical pattern of a poem, the reader has to observe the number of feet that are in a line of verse (Furniss and Bath 40). For instance, a line with four feet is a "tetrameter" and a line with six feet is known as "hexameter" (Nünning and Nünning 58). However, to discern the rhythm of a poem, one needs to know more than the type of foot and the metrical pattern.

Rhythm and stanzas also add to the structure of a poem. According to Furniss and Bath, rhythm develops "whenever there is a regular repetition of similar events which are divided from each other by recognisably different events" (38). A poem's rhythm is affected by its metre, "the length of the syllables," "the repetition of phonological and syntactic elements," and the meaning of individual words and sentences (Nünning and Nünning 59). Rhythm can also be influenced by the poem's external structure, namely its stanzaic form. Stanzas in poetry are much like paragraphs in prose and are the "basic formal units into which traditional poetry is divided" (Beach 216). Types of stanzas can be categoriesed according to their length and their rhyme scheme (216). For instance, the stanza type "couplet" is a "set of two lines, a "tercet" a "set of three lines," and a "quatrain" a "set of four lines" (Bode 55). However, to analyse not only the poem's structure but also its meaning, the speech situation, perspective and lyric persona have to be considered as well.

1.2.2. Speech Situation and the Voice

The speech situation of a poem consists of "the addresser," "addressee," "spatial situation" and "temporal situation" (Nünning and Nünning 52). The main questions to be asked regarding the speech situation are "who is speaking to whom and why?". This, according to Furniss and Bath, is the "most effective way of beginning to understand a poem" (593). To answer these questions, it might be helpful to look at the personal and possessive pronouns used in the poem

(Nünning and Nünning 53). What is more, the poem's speaker can be "explicit or implicit fictional" and the addressee is not necessarily real either (Furniss and Bath 593).

Furthermore, a clear difference exists between the real author of the poem and the speaker, often also called "the voice," or "lyric person" (Nünning and Nünning 53). The voice is the "fictionalised speaker of a poem" and does not necessarily express the emotions and thoughts of the actual poet (Beach 216). For example, the poem *Ulysses* was written by Lord Alfred Tennyson, but the voice in Tennyson's poem is that of the poem's main character, Ulysses. The reader gets to know Ulysses' thoughts and emotions which are not necessarily Tennyson's. Moreover, Wolosky emphasises that the voice (she calls it the "poetic voice") is not inevitably a "single poetic voice" but can consist of multiple voices with a variety of different perspectives (105). The poet's addressee can also be "felt as a point of view" and often adds another perspective to that of the voices (106).

1.2.3. Types of Rhymes and Rhyme Schemes

A "rhyme" is generally known as "an acoustic echo in spoken or sung language," where the "final stressed vowel sound and the sound of the final consonant or consonant group (if present) in nearby words or syllables are repeated" (Furniss and Bath 590). According to Williams, rhymes are used to delight, surprise, and engage the reader (193). These purposes are similar to the reasons educational comics are created, namely, to entertain and engage the readers (see chapter 3 for more details) (Caldwell 2). Therefore, educational comics are a format which suits the purpose of teaching poetry analysis.

Different types of rhymes, such as end-rhyme ("rhyme between stressed final vowels in lines of verse") or internal rhyme ("full rhyme between two or more words within the same line or verse"), can be found in poems (Nünning and Nünning 61). Additionally, a number of rhyme patterns may be sustained over several lines, which is then categorised as a "rhyme scheme" (Furniss and Bath194). Similar to the types of rhyme, a variety of rhyme schemes exist.

Probably the best known are: "rhyming couplets" (aa bb cc), "alternate rhyme" (abab cdcd), "embracing rhyme" (abba cddc) and "chain rhyme" (aba bcb cdc) (Nünning and Nünning 63). However, an analysis of the rhyme scheme does not only function as a mere analysis of a poem's structure but can also reveal important and interesting information regarding the interpretation of the poem, by leading the reader's attention to a crucial word of the poem's main message or by contrasting ideas, perspectives or words (Williams 210).

1.2.4. Rhetorical Figures

A rhetorical figure usually deviates from customary conventions of words or phrases and often creates a new or an additional meaning for them (Ruby and Kelly 324). Rhetorical figures are frequently used not only in poems but also in "dramatic and narrative genres", as well as in "non-fictional texts" (Nünning and Nünning 65). Furthermore, several different rhetorical figures exist, namely: "phonological figures" (operating on the sound level), "morphological figures" (operating on the word and word formation level), "syntactic figures" (operating on the syntax level), "semantic figures" (operating on the level of the meaning of words and expressions) and "pragmatic figures" (operating on the language use level) (65).

According to Furniss and Bath, rhetorical figures are linguistic devices which appear in almost all languages and can be recognised as rhetorical figures when a statement "cannot be taken literally in the context in which it is being used" (146). Williams calls rhetorical figures "word plays" and does not see them merely as linguistic devices, as do Furniss and Bath (255). He takes the idea of rhetorical figures further and claims that they "employ a flexible and imaginative approach to meanings and arrangements of words" (255). Moreover, he states that word plays are "figurative effects" used to excite and enlighten, as well as to enrich the reader (256). By words being given "strange applications" (e.g. *flying women*), thereby creating "ambiguities" in poetry, the reader is offered an "alternative, slanted perspective on the world" (256). Therefore, the use of rhetorical figures, also referred to as word plays, within a poem

will not only stimulate the reader on a linguistic level but also on an emotional and intellectual level.

<u>1.2.5. Imagery</u>

Imagery in poetry is used as a "figurative mode of expression" and "complex semantic structure" and refers to, for example, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and synaesthesia (Nünning and Nünning 68). Richard Andrews claims that a "word suggests an image" and that a "metaphorical association" within a poem can either "extend, affect or constrain" the reader's understanding of a poem (92). What is more, imagery tools contain, preserve, delimit or convey meaning and it strongly depends on social constructions and the knowledge thereof whether or not the meaning can be decoded by the reader (92). Furthermore, it is also important to understand the conventional frames of the given time in which a poem was written, in order to decipher the imagery's meaning (92). Shira Wolosky explains that the role imagery has played in poetry differs from literary period to period and the "admiration for certain kinds of imagery" depends mostly on the specific historical context (29). Despite the shifting use of different imagery types throughout time, the continuing application of imagery in poems itself has stayed untouched and remains a "fundamental unit of poetic composition" (29).

A "metaphor" refers to "word pictures" which deliver a figurative meaning (Nünning and Nünning 68). Usually, a word is removed from one original semantic field and is placed into a different semantic field (68). The original semantic field is known as the "source domain" or "donor field" and the new semantic field, in which it is placed, is known as the "target domain" or "recipient field" (69). The transference from one semantic field to another always happens on the basis of some similarity (Furniss and Bath 581). This is based on Ivor Richards' idea of a "tenor" ("the thing spoken of") and a "vehicle" (the thing it is being compared to") within a metaphor (44). The tenor and vehicle must have something in common, otherwise the meaning of the metaphor might not be conveyed successfully (45).

2. The Hero's Journey

2.1. Heroism in Stories

2.1.1. Joseph Campbell: the Monomyth

2.1.1.1. The Monomyth

While the various aspects of poetry mentioned in the previous section form part of the content of the instructional comic for this paper, the narrative approach taken is derived from the theory of the Monomyth as outlined by Joseph John Campbell. Campbell was an American author and a professor at Sarah Lawrence College in the 20th century, specialising in comparative mythology and comparative religion (Larsen and Larsen 7). With his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces,* published in 1949, he attempts to define the core of every hero story throughout "the inhabited world, in all times and every circumstance" (Campbell 1). For this, he develops a model, known as the Monomyth. The Monomyth has 17 stages which entail a set of sequence of events and characters which, according to Campbell, appear in every hero story (5).

Campbell's concept of the Monomyth and its stages are heavily influenced by the works of Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung and Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp. Freud, who carried out research in the field of folk psychology, was searching for the psychological bases of "language, myth, religion, art development and moral codes" (2). Freud claims that there is a "presence of symbolism in dreams" but also a "characteristic of unconscious ideation" in "folklore," "myths" and "legends" (Freud 350). He further explains that in dreams and folklore, humans tend to process "dangerous crises" and "self-development" in order to "carry the human spirit forward" (350). Campbell suggests that myths are also (often unconsciously) created and passed on to overcome difficult situations and tribulations, in order to grow and become more refined (Campbell 5). According to Freud, there needs to be a continuous "recurrence of birth" to ensure

"long survival" and the overcoming of obstacles (Freud 351). By "birth" he does not mean the "birth of the old thing" (meaning old habits and behaviours), but rather "of something new" (meaning newly learned behaviours and approaches to a certain problem or situation) (351). To conclude, both Freud and Campbell believe that there are certain symbols, processes and patterns within dreams, folklore and myths that assist people to manage and overcome trials and tribulations and develop into a better version of themselves.

To understand these symbols and images, Jung introduces the "archetypes". His "archetypes" represent society's "collective unconscious" (Jung 43). Freud defines the concept of unconscious as the "state of repressed and forgotten content" and views it as the "acting subject" in human lives (Freud 351). According to Jung, the folklores, dreams and myths of a group of people or a culture come from the collective unconscious (Jung 42). These folklores, dreams and myths contain reoccurring "character types," "symbols" and "relationships" (Vogler 25). Jung, therefore, states that these "archetypes" are "ancient patterns of personality that are the shared heritage of the human race" (Jung 43). He suggests that the archetypes can be found in "all times and cultures", in "dreams and personalities of individuals" and in the "mythic imagination of the entire world" (43). Campbell agrees with Jung's notion of universal patterns "built into the wiring of every human being" and states that these common patterns facilitate a "shared experience of storytelling" as they are relatable and familiar to everyone (Campbell 32). Examples of archetypes that frequently occur in stories are the hero, the mentor, the threshold guardian, the herald, the shapeshifter, the shadow, the ally, and the trickster (Vogler 28).

Furthermore, Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp, a Russian fairy-tale expert who analysed the basic structural elements of Russian folklore in the early 20th century, discovered that these universal character roles, i.e., archetypes usually perform a certain function in a story (Propp 79). For instance, the mentor represents the "hero's highest aspiration" (Vogler 44). The mentor archetype is a mirror of what a hero might become if they are determined enough (44). For

example, in the movie *Kung Fu Panda,* the character Oogway is the mentor of Po Ping, who wants to become a Kung Fu master just like Oogway himself. Oogway trains Po and shares his wisdom with him and in the end, Po succeeds in becoming a successful Kung Fu master. Another example of an archetype fulfilling a function in a story is that of the shadow. The shadow represents the "energy of the dark side or rejected aspects of something" and has the function of creating conflicts and threatening situations for the hero, as does Scar in the movie *The Lion King* (75). Scar lives as an outcast in Shadowland and kills the protagonist's father, claiming Simba's position as a king. Together with his evil companions, the hyaenas, Scar stops the hero Simba from becoming the rightful King for a long period of time.

Campbell incorporates Freud's universal patterns, as well as the archetypes of Jung and Propp and their respective functions into his 17 stages of the Monomyth. These 17 stages represent the essence of every hero's journey: the universal characters and their functions, symbols and sequence of events.

2.1.1.2. The 17 Stages

Stage 1: The Call to Adventure

The first stage is the beginning of the hero's story. According to Campbell the call to adventure can be numerous events such as a blunder, a voice that literally calls the hero to the adventure, "the awakening of the self", a rite or "moment of spiritual passage" (42).

Stage 2: Refusal of the Call

Although called to adventure, the hero first refuses to follow this invitation. Reasons for his or her unwillingness could be boredom, the concern of losing one's power, or fear of the unknown (Campbell 49).

Stage 3: Supernatural Aid

After the hero has decided to go on an adventure after all, a "protective figure" appears in order to arm him or her with useful tools for the journey (Campbell 57). A variety of protective figures exists in stories: the fairy godmother in *Cinderella,* Hagrid in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone,* Gretchen in *Faust* and Mr and Mrs Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* are simply a few of the many that could be mentioned. These characters represent the "protecting and guiding power" helping the hero to find his or her own power within to conquer obstacles successfully (59). This supernatural aid provides not only protection, but also supplies the hero with advice and equipment (59). Such equipment can be, for instance, a beautiful princess dress for Cinderella, a wand for Harry Potter or a bow and arrow for Katniss in *The Hunger Games* to help the hero through his or her quest.

Stage 4: The Crossing of the First Threshold

Accompanied by protective figure, the hero starts the adventure by coming to the "threshold guardian" at the entrance to the "zone of magnified power" (Campbell 64). The zone of magnified power is the threshold to the other world where the adventure awaits (64). Beyond this threshold lays the unknown territory, filled with anticipation and awakening danger (65). The entrance is guarded by the threshold guardian, the protector of the gate to the adventure and there is usually a task to be completed by the hero in order to be let through the threshold by the guardian (65). The adventure is always a transition from the known to the unknown and starting the adventure is risky and requires the hero's courage (66).

Stage 5: The Belly of the Whale

After the hero has crossed the threshold, he or she is "swallowed into the unknown" and sometimes appears to have died (Campbell 76). Just as Little Red Riding Hood survives being swallowed by a wolf, so does Heracles, when he jumps into the mouth of the monster to cut

through its belly, killing the monster in the process. Of course, there is also the literal version where Jonah, a man from the Bible, is swallowed by a whale and later safely exits the animal again.

However, there are also other events that can 'swallow' a hero which are of a more symbolical nature. The process of being swallowed represents an "inward" turning on the part of the hero, similar to a worshipper entering a temple to be transformed, purified, refined and/or reborn (77). In Japan, most Shinto and Buddhist temples have two guardians at the entrance of the temple, which is usually at the *torii* (Shinto shrine gateway) (Reader 19). The Buddhist guardians, the *Niō,* two muscular human-looking creatures, and the Shinto guardians, the *Komainu*, "lion-dogs", all protect the gate to the spiritual world (79). In both religions in Japan, the worshipper enters it through a gateway and is "swallowed" by the spiritual world (79). Only through purification processes (washing with water, incense sticks, financial donations and prayers) is the worshipper then renewed, restored and purified (80).

Stage 6: The Road of Trials

Once the hero steps into the unknown, several trials await him or her, typically in the form of "myth-adventure," "miraculous tests," and "ordeals" (Campbell 81). At the hero's side are the protective figure, who led the hero to the threshold, as well as the tools given by the protective figure (81). Sometimes, however, the hero is on his or her own, realising that the strength within is enough to start the journey (82). Nevertheless, in most stories, the hero receives help throughout the journey from one or more characters or some form of "supernatural power" (82). Campbell states that traits such as climbing mountains, jumping over a ditch, getting over a hedge, a rising storm, high waves, heavy rain, bites by beasts, falling off a cliff, a dark room, large knives or other weapons, chains, dungeons and prisons, a bridge, being lost, meeting mythical creatures, being chased, hiding from danger, and graves all appear frequently in hero

stories (86). By following the hero through these ordeals and barriers, the audience is giving a glimpse of the wondrous, unknown, dangerous and exotic world (90).

Stage 7: The Meeting with the Goddess

The obstacles are conquered successfully, and all barriers are overcome. The hero, as a next step and as a reward, celebrates a "mythical marriage" with the "Queen [sic] Goddess [sic]" of the world (Campbell 91). The goddess embodies "the comforting," "the nourishing," "the good mother" and at the same time "youth and beauty" (92). The hero, however, is still dominant over the queen. As Campbell puts it: "she can never be greater" than the hero and "she is reduced to inferior state" despite being a queen and a goddess (97).

Stage 8: Woman as the Temptress

Campbell claims, based on his research, that the hero in stories is always tempted by a woman (102). He is tested once again, this time by a female character, to reveal whether he is truly pure of heart (102). Women at this stage no longer represent positive traits as is the case in stage 7. They now embody "temptation" and "deceitfulness" (103). They are a threat to the hero as they become the "queen[s] of sin" (103).

Stage 9: Atonement with the Father

In most stories there is a character which represents the traits of "mercy and grace" in form of a father figure (Campbell 107). This father figure is needed in the story when the hero becomes too self-assured or overly self-confident, often overestimating him- or herself causing events to go wrong (110). However, the father figure is also regularly portrayed as the opposite of the nurturing female character of stage 7, as the "terrifying father-face" with whom the hero has to make peace, in order to receive his or her support (111).

For instance, in Disney's film of *The Little Mermaid*, Triton, the father of the mermaid Ariel, is portrayed as both terrifying and merciful: by destroying Arielle's precious collection

of human everyday items, he shows, on the one hand, the terrifying father-face. Grace and mercy, on the other hand, are expressed by his blessings for Ariel's marriage to the human Eric. Moreover, it is Triton who comes to Ariel's rescue after Ariel, assuming she is mature enough to make her own good decisions, naively signs a contract with the cunning sea witch Ursula, her overestimation of herself leading to her plan going wrong.

Stage 10: Apotheosis

The hero, having thus conquered many trials and tribulations, finally attains a "divine state" (Campbell 127). He or she becomes fearless, wise and confident, "beyond the reach of change" (128). The potential within the hero has been realised through the hero's journey and the state thereby attained can be seen as one of "enlightenment" (129). The ego has been destroyed, as such that the hero is no longer thinking exclusively of him- or herself, but of his or her own community as well (133). The hero no longer "desire[s] and fear[s]" but he or she becomes that which is "desired and feared" (138).

Stage 11: The Ultimate Boon

The ultimate boon, alias the ultimate goal, of the hero's journey has been reached often following a final, last, particularly difficult challenge or battle with a villain and is now to be celebrated (Campbell 154). The ultimate boon could take on many forms. For example, the boon could be immortality or an "uninterrupted residence" in a desired place such as "paradise" or Mount Olympus (151). It could also be an elixir or a special power or skill the hero now possesses (151). In this stage, a celebration and/or feast is commonly involved, including food, beverages and a crowd of people (152).

Stage 12: Refusal of the Return

As the name of this next stage suggests, the hero refuses to start his or her journey back home after having received the boon and having taken part in a glorious celebration in his or her honour (Campbell 167). The hero, however, is required to go back to his or her origins to share his or her obtained knowledge, skills, elixir or other achievements with the community, in order to also enable this community to be renewed (168).

Stage 13: The Magic Flight

This stage is the final stage in the other world, before the hero returns home (Campbell 170). It implicates a "lively, often comical, pursuit" and might be a difficult undertaking through obstacles, requiring evasive manoeuvres (170).

In the film *Back to the Future,* Marty has to face a number of obstacles in order to travel back to his own time without changing the future during this attempt. For example, the younger version of his mother falls in love with him rather than his father, thereby nearly erasing Marty's own existence. Furthermore, Marty has to channel lightning at exactly the right time to his time travelling machine in order to get back home, while the bully Biff gets in his way more than once.

Stage 14: Rescue from Without

To transfer from the magical world back to the ordinary world, the hero occasionally requires assistance (Campbell 178). This assistance can either be from the magical world, the ordinary world, or from a new source altogether (186).

Stage 15: The Crossing of the Return Threshold

Finally, the hero returns home safe from the enemies and obstacles of the magical world at last (Campbell 188). Crossing the threshold might involve a last fight to win or a final obstacle to

overcome (188). The ordinary world appears to be quieter and calmer than the adventurous, often times chaotic and dangerous magical world left behind (190). Most heroes struggle to readjust to this world, as they have changed significantly and their horizon has been widened (190). The hero seems to belong neither to the magical world nor the ordinary world any longer (190).

Stage 16: Master of the Two Worlds

In stage 16, the hero has mastered the skill to travel between and live in the two worlds (Campbell 196). He or she understands both of them and can act accordingly, to be successful in either world (196).

Stage 17: Freedom to Live

The last stage of Campbell's Monomyth reveals what happens after the hero's return home (Campbell 205). The main task for the hero now is to share his or her insights and newly attained skills with the community of the ordinary world (207). The hero's knowledge and abilities enable not only him- or herself to live a better life, but also the people and creatures around him or her (207).

2.1.2. Christopher Vogler: The Hero's Journey

2.1.2.1. Hero's Journey

Christopher Vogler, a former story consultant in the development departments of 20th Century Fox. Paramount, and Walt Disney, worked on *Aladdin* and *The Lion King*, and developed the stories of *101 Dalmatians, Fight Club, Courage Under Fire, Volcano* and *The Thin Red Line* (Vogler 3). He was concerned that Campbell's stages might be "woefully formulaic" for modern times (3). For this reason, he examined the Monomyth's stages and adapted them into

a dynamic and "flexible guideline" for hero stories, breaking out of the "rigid framework" that had been dominant for decades in the story writing industry (4).

In Vogler's opinion, the twelve stages he himself has developed for the "new age" include the most important elements of Campbell's 16 stages, but do not have to be "mindlessly" followed chronologically, nor do all twelve stages have to be included in a hero's story (9). These new approaches of Vogler for a hero's journey are the main differences between Campbell and Vogler's story construct. According to Vogler, the audience always looks for unexpected and surprising features and gets easily bored with predictable and overused "mechanics of storytelling" (9). Vera Tobin agrees, stating that a surprise within a plot "delights" the reader and assists with the "sense-making" of the story and results in the reader's "pleasure" (159).

The following 12 stages are Vogler's newly adapted stages which he calls The Hero's Journey. His book on this topic, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers,* explains the reasons behind changing some of Campbell's stages in detail, but these comprehensive developments would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, only the changes themselves, but not the motives for these changes will be mentioned in this thesis.

2.1.2.2. The 12 Stages

Stage 1: Ordinary World

As does Campbell, Vogler uses this stage for the beginning of the story. The hero is shown in the ordinary, mundane world in order that, in later stages, the differing nature of the Special World may effectively be demonstrated (Vogler 99). Vogler also calls this stage "fish out of water" as the hero will soon find himself out of his customary element (102). Stage 1 and stage 2 of Vogler are included in only one stage by Campbell, namely stage 1.

Stage 2: Call to Adventure

By having to solve a problem, face a challenge, or endeavour in a new adventure, the hero can no longer ignore the Special World that has opened up to them (Vogler 119). Vogler mentions that detective stories often involve this stage when the private eye takes on a new case and, as a result, usually enters a world of crime and chaos, which represents the Special World (124). This is true, for example, in the story of *Detective Conan,* who, as a young detective, is shrunk by the villain of the story, resulting in him having to solve crimes in the body (and thus in the life) of a child.

During this stage, it is also made clear by the author what the hero's goals and motives are, whether it is "to win the treasure or the lover, to get revenge or right a wrong, to achieve a dream, confront a challenge or change a life" (Vogler 125). Neither detective stories nor the goals or motives of the hero has been mentioned by Campbell for this stage, this represents an additional idea from Vogler.

Stage 3: Refusal of the Call

Whereas Campbell mentions several reasons for the hero's refusal of the call (boredom, concern of losing one's power or fear of the unknown), Vogler focuses on one alone: fear (Campbell 49; Vogler 129). Vogler states that at this stage, the hero faces his or her "greatest of all fears" (Vogler 130). The hero is now in need of an external impulse such as "a change of circumstances, a further offense against the natural order of things or the encouragement of a mentor" to cross the first threshold (134). Campbell does not imply that the hero's greatest fear is the aspect that urges the hero to enter the Special World, nor does he mention the role of the mentor at this point.

Stage 4: Meeting with the Mentor

In this stage, the mentor, also called a "Merlin-like character" by Vogler, is introduced (Vogler 139). Just like Campbell, Vogler argues that the mentor is one of the "most common themes in mythology" and symbolises the relationships between "parent and child, teacher and student, doctor and patient, god and man" (139). By mentioning these specific relationships, Vogler indicates the same idea as Campbell regarding the role of the mentor, namely as a "protective figure" like a parent is to a child or a doctor to a patient (Campbell 57). The relationship of these two identities is not that of equals, as one must be wiser and, in some way, more powerful than the other and has to teach and protect the hero, who must learn and grow in power.

However, Vogler takes the idea of the mentor figure further and explains that the mentor cannot accompany the hero throughout the whole journey, as the hero has to grow through the absence of the mentor, thereby having to make his or her own decisions (Vogler 144). Nevertheless, at some points during the hero's journey, the mentor is required to encourage the hero when discouraged, so that he or she will not abandon the mission (145). This encouragement can be observed in *The Sword in the Stone* where the wizard Merlin has to encourage the young, soon-to-be King Arthur to continue his training in order to become the King.

Stage 5: Crossing the Threshold

This stage is very similar to Campbell's stage 4. The hero has finally decided to begin the adventure and meets the "threshold guardian" who blocks the way to the Special World (Vogler 153). Whereas Campbell states that it is usually a task that is to be completed in order for the hero to pass, Vogler implies that the guardian's threat is often "an illusion" and, therefore, a test of the mind and an important part of the "training of the hero" (153). What is more, Vogler argues that in numerous hero stories, the threshold guardian seems to be an enemy first, but

later reveals themselves as a valuable alley (154). Campbell, however, does not describe the guardian as someone who could actively support or walk with the hero.

Vogler writes also about what the threshold could look like and how the landing into the Special World is perceived by the hero. According to Vogler, it can simply be the "leap of faith" that initiates the entering of a Special World, but it can also be a physical barrier between those two worlds such as "doors, gates, arches, bridges, deserts, canyons, walls, cliffs, oceans, or rivers" (154). When the hero finally arrives at the other side of the threshold, the landing is usually not a gentle one (155). The passing of the border often entails a "crash" and a "bruised hero" who might be exhausted, frustrated and disoriented at first (155). Campbell does not give any details on either the threshold's characteristics or the landing after passing it.

Stage 6: Tests, Allies, Enemies

Both Campbell and Vogler describe the Special World as a "sharp contrast" to the Ordinary World (Vogler 159). Vogler explains that the Special World has a "different feel, different rhythm, different priorities and values, and different rules" than the Ordinary World (160). While Campbell mainly describes the trials in detail in stage 6 (The Road of Trials), Vogler not only focuses on the tests, but also on allies and enemies. For him, tests are sometimes only a tool for the writer to reveal allies and enemies of the hero (161). At the beginning of the hero's journey in the Special World, it might take the hero some time to realise who can be trusted and who is unreliable (161).

It is usually at this stage that the hero finds their sidekick, who will be a loyal and often comical companion "providing comical relief as well as assistance" (Vogler 162). Including the sidekick, the hero might form a team of different characters which might include the mentor and the guardian as well (162). The skills of the different team members are vital for the mission to be accomplished, but might also be the downfall of the hero when they are blindly trusted or

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weaknesses ignored (163). Vogler writes in great detail about different team member roles but mentioning these in detail would go beyond the scope of this chapter.

Stage 7: Approach to the Inmost Cave

According to Vogler's point of view, the cave is the location in which the hero and the team will "encounter supreme wonder and terror" (169). They are about to stumble upon the central ordeal of the adventure and, therefore, they prepare themselves according to their group dynamics, which could mean that they make plans on how to tackle the last obstacle (checking weapons, drawing maps etc.) or enjoy their fellowship bonding through laughter and a feast (170). When they finally approach the "cave" (which could take almost any form), they usually do so in a bold fashion, showing little to no fear and ignoring any kind of distraction or seduction (171). Vogler mentions that it is in this phase that the hero might have the most intense "disheartening setbacks", which he calls "dramatic complications" (176). Dramatic complications might appear to be insurmountable at the time and even break the hero one last time, but they also remind the hero of his or her human nature and how far they have come (177).

Campbell's stage 6, The Road of Trials, includes Vogler's stages 6 and 7 (Vogler 179). In comparison to Vogler's idea of this stage, Campbell only describes the possible obstacles the hero could face but fails to mention how the hero and the team approach these problems; nor does he refer to the other members of the team (180). However, it is Vogler who neglects to give an account of the possible dangers that a hero and his or her group could face at this stage (181). His focus lays mostly on the time beforehand, which seems to be of no interest to Campbell as he does not once comment on the moments right before the supreme obstacle is approached. This is a great loss to the readers/audience as these are generally the instances in which they get to know the characters better and grow to love (or dislike) them even more.

Stage 8: Ordeal

The ordeal itself is the moment in which the "greatest challenge" and the "most fearsome opponent" is faced (Vogler 183). Campbell and Vogler both use the term "ordeal" for the final and greatest obstacle, and both agree that the heroes have to die in order to be reborn again (183). Vogler claims that death and rebirth are the two moments the audience enjoys the most and, thus, are great tools for a successful and engaging hero story (184). Death is not necessarily meant literally, as it could also consist of "fears, the failure of an enterprise, the end of a relationship" or "the death of an old personality" (183). To be reborn, therefore, typically involves having passed the test at hand (184). Whereas Vogler does not give more examples of death-situations, Campbell writes a whole list of possibilities (185). Furthermore, his stages seven, eight, nine and ten are clear ideas of which ordeals and deaths a hero has to face throughout the journey.

After conquering death, the hero is forever changed (Vogler 184). Vogler's idea behind this change is that no one who has met death and survived could remain untransformed. What Vogler calls change, Campbell describes as a divine state, but both mean the same: after rebirth, the hero evolves into a better and more defined being (Campbell 129). This change or divine state does not only alter the hero but is also used by the authors with the hope of reaching out to the reader/audience and adjusting their thoughts, opinions and worldview.

Stage 9: Reward (Seizing the Sword)

Similar to Campbell's stage 11, Vogler's stage nine is about the hero receiving the reward or ultimate goal after the last and most difficult ordeal has been surpassed (Vogler 205). On a similar note, both authors agree that at this point in the story, a celebration will be held (Vogler 205). The hero and his crew are exhausted from the battle and the immense struggles they have faced and they need to regain strength in order to be able to return to the Ordinary World (206). Vogler takes the description of this feast further than Campbell: rather than merely mentioning

food and the company, he outlines a "campfire scene" in which the hero and his group gather around a fire and reminisce over the recent events together (206). The atmosphere is mostly calm, mixed with some nostalgia of recent past glorious events and uncertainty concerning the journey back home (207). Sometimes, so-called "mirror moments" happen during these scenes – the hero or one of his or her group members either see themselves in a literal mirror or reflect on their own person: on how the journey has changed them, sometimes physically (scars, muscles gained etc.), sometimes mentally and emotionally (having become more confident, wiser etc.) (207). These situations are created for the reader/audience to gain some respite after having (hopefully) felt similar emotions to and suffered with, the hero during the final battle. Not only is it a chance for the hero to look back on what has happened, but also for the reader/audience.

Concerning the actual reward and, thus, reason for the hero having taken on the journey in the first place, Campbell as well as Vogler give examples on what the reward might look like. We have already heard about an "elixir," "special power," "special skill" and "paradise" from Campbell (151). Vogler mentions all these possibilities as well, but adds "gold," "jewels," "a sword," "secrets," "a ship," "self-respect" and "seizing control over his own destiny" to the list of possible rewards but, at the same time, states that it could be literally anything (209). He calls the moment when the hero receives the reward "Seizing the Sword" referring to the stories in which "heroes battle dragons and take their treasure" which is often a sword (211). Although there a several stories which still involve a dragon and a sword nowadays, it is safe to assume that reward in modern stories tend to go beyond that and often involve personal growth, self-realisation and clarity.

Stage 10: The Road Back

This stage of Vogler comprises four stages of Campbell's Monomyth (stages 12 to 15). The road back to the Ordinary World is initiated either by an "inner force", for example the wish to

see loved ones again, or by an "external force" such as "an alarm going off, a clock ticking, or a renewed threated by a villain" (Vogler 221). Situations in which the hero is chased out of the Special World appear frequently in hero stories and have their own name in theatre, namely "racing for the curtain" (223).

The flight might only be successful because the hero has received a magical gift such as superpowers, a magical object or magical friends (Vogler 223). This kind of flight is, thus, also known as "magic flight" (223). Campbell also mentions the magical flight and offers the story of Medea as an example (Campbell 170). Sometimes, however, the hero, according to Vogler, decides to stay in the Special World, either for a longer period of time or permanently (Vogler 226).

What Vogler does not mention is the hero's hesitation to return home which is essential in Campbell's stage 12. Furthermore, Campbell suggests that the hero is required to go home in order to be beneficial to the hero's community, whereas Vogler portrays the hero's return more as a choice. He does not once mention that it is a requirement.

Stage 11: Resurrection

According to Vogler, for the story to "feel complete" to the audience, there has to be a resurrection moment once more, which signals the climax of the whole story (229). The hero has to create "a new self" for entering the Special World and now has to shed the journey self in order to create a new self once more for the Ordinary World he or she is re-entering (230). This new self should include both the good parts of the old self as well as the lessons learned throughout the journey (230). What is more, Vogler states that the climax of a story should always provide "the feeling of catharsis" (236). "Catharsis" means "to cleanse, purge" and is known in English to mean "purifying emotional release" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online). Vogler suggests that catharsis works well through "physical expression of emotions such as laughter and crying" caused through the climax in the audience (237).

In contrast, Campbell does not write a lot about the resurrection itself in his stage 16 but focuses more on the skill to travel between the two worlds (Campbell 196). It is this skill that probably creates a new version of the hero, as he or she did not have this ability before. Therefore, one can assume that the hero is also reborn through this process of being a part of both worlds now.

Stage 12: Return with the Elixir

The hero has survived all ordeals and the resurrection and returns to their home (or other starting point) with the elixir from the Special World (Vogler 249). The elixir, both Campbell and Vogler agree, should be something the hero shares with others in order to enhance their lives in some way (249). Furthermore, Campbell and Vogler agree that the elixir can be something literal (e.g. medicine or a treasure) or metaphorical (e.g. peace or knowledge) (255). If a hero returns empty-handed, he is, according to Vogler, not a hero but a selfish and unenlightened person (256). Therefore, a hero's journey always involves a selfless act or intention.

Additionally, all the loose ends of the story are tied up, also known as "denouement", meaning the issues are resolved, most of the questions of the audience answered, thus giving the audience a sense of an ending (Vogler 250). During the denouement phase, sometimes last rewards and punishments are received which should support the audience's feeling of closure (255). Vogler, unlike Campbell, points out that a story's ending can only finish in four ways, namely with "a period, an exclamation point, a question mark, or an ellipsis" (261). Although Vogler does not elaborate much more on those four types of endings, one can assume that it is up to the author and the hero story they have created, what type of ending suits the journey best. Choosing an incompatible ending might lead to dissatisfaction in the audience and should be avoided.

3. Comics

3.1. Introduction to Comics

In order to determine a correct and concise definition of what comics are, it first is necessary to discern whether they are a medium, a genre, or a format. While Scott McCloud refers to comics as a "medium", this designation is arguably inaccurate, as comics are published in a variety of media (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 9; Jüngst 11). The same applies to the term "genre," as comics contain a large number of genres such as Science Fiction, Action and Romance themselves and, therefore, cannot be categorised as a genre themselves (11). Genres also tend to show resemblance in their "outward appearance" and their content; however, comics do not share these two qualities (11). David Eisner claims that comics are a "format", because this term describes primarily the "visual and verbal components" to determine a text as a comic and not the outward appearance or content (6). For this paper, comics will be referred to as a format as the other two terms, medium and genre, do not accurately define comics.

Peeters Benoît introduces the idea of a prototypical comic which includes shared visual and verbal components and thus defines a comic and its components as a "narrative in a sequence of panels combined into a page layout where words appear in speech balloons, captions or as onomatopoeia integrated into the picture" (17). However, he also claims that there are comics which do not contain all of these prototypical elements but are comics nevertheless (17). Benoît is not alone in struggling to find a definition and a precise list of core components for comics. McCloud argues that the "choices" of the comic's artists and authors is what makes a comic a true comic (*Making Comics,* 9). He states that only the correct choice of "moment," "frame," "image," "word" and "flow" are the core components of a comic which enable the reader to identify the text as a comic (10). Nevertheless, he fails to mention in more detail what he means by these five choices and does not outline a clear definition for a comic. Jüngst agrees with Benoît in stating that the content of a comic is not a "parameter which is

needed in order to define a given text as a comic" (14). She states that the outward and inward appearance as well as the semiotics of a comic are vital to discern a text as a comic (14). The discussion of what are the core elements of comics continues to this day. As comics develop over time, it can be assumed that some elements which are now seen as vital, might not be considered relevant in ten or twenty years.

This discussion of what makes a text a comic also includes the question of what was the first comic in history. Maurice Horn attempts to define comics by listing texts which are generally accepted as comics in his *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*. The problem with this approach is that some of these listed texts are widely accepted as comics but differ from Benoît's prototype. Some of the first comics, according to Jüngst, are the "Egyptian murals," "Aztec engravings" and the "Bayeux Tapestry" (13). The Bayeux Tapestry was created in France in 1066 and is a "230 foot long tapestry" which visualises details of the Norman Conquest of England (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 12). The tapestry is read from left to right as it displays the events of the conquest in chronological order (13). It does not convey any panel borders but still shows clear separations of the single events by leaving space between the scenes (13). Egyptian murals, some dating back 2700 years ago, are read "zig-zag" "going up" (14). McCloud, as a number of other scholars, admits that it is a difficult task to decide "where or when comics originated" (*Understanding Comics,* 15). He sees Rudolphe Töpffer, who started his satiric picture stories in the mid-1800s, as the "father of the modern comic" as he was the first one to use panel borders and the combination of words and pictures (*Understanding Comics,* 17).

The general idea of a comic is widely known but the scholarly world still has not put forward a single, unanimously accepted definition for what comics are and what components are necessary to make a text a comic. Comics, just like other text types, are continuously changing and, thus, the debate around a definition is an on-going process which is unlikely to

end in the near future. Fortunately for this paper, defining what information comics are is a more straightforward task than finding the general definition of comics.

3.2. Instructional Comics

3.2.1. Introduction to Instructional Comics

Generally, comics can be divided into two broad categories: "entertaining" and "educational" (Jüngst 11). Entertaining comics are simply labelled comics, whereas "educational comics" are always referred to by their full name (11). Both divisions have been around for decades, but entertaining comics are undeniably more prevalent than educational comics (11). Examples of popular entertaining comics are those published by Marvel (e.g. *Spider-Man* and *Thor*) and DC (e.g. *Batman* and *Wonder Woman*). Educational comics, according to Joshua Caldwell, are designed for two main purposes, namely, to transfer knowledge and to entertain (2). Entertaining features frequently included in educational comics, are, for instance, "visual fun", "jokes", "funny characters" and "entertaining storylines" (89). Educational comics also include "emotive elements" more often than other formats and, thus, appeal to a wider range of audiences than formats which present academic content, such as academic journals, non-fiction books and conference papers (5). Moreover, elements such as "suspense", while not necessarily important for knowledge transfer, unquestionably have a positive impact on the reading experience of the reader and often turn complex topics into easily understandable concepts (89). This could be done, for instance, by creating an adventurous storyline based on space travel where there is danger around every corner and the main characters struggle to survive while they simultaneously provide the reader with information about planets, black holes and stars.

In addition to the two broad categories of entertaining and educational comics, there are also different subcategories of educational comics. According to Leonard Rifas, educational comics comprise a large number of "related (and somewhat overlapping) categories" such as "true-fact comics," "religious education comics," "political campaign comics," "health

education comics," "biography and autobiography comics," and "instructional comics" (145-57). I will primarily engage with the category "instructional comics", also known by the term "information comics", in order to answer this thesis' research question.

To transfer information of an instructional comic successfully to the reader, the communication utilised by the comic is highly important. Two types of communication exist regarding the delivery of information in comics, namely "expert to expert communication" and "expert to non-expert communication" (Jüngst 1). Expert to expert communication comprises specialists of a specific field within an expert community and their exchange of knowledge and new insights with each other (1). This type of communication is practised, not only in information comics, but also through academic forums such as "scientific journals or conferences" and is predominantly accessible to members of an expert community (1). However, knowledge transfer, also often referred to as information transfer (as information becomes knowledge at a later stage), does not only occur in the realm of expert to expert communication but it also transpires by means of expert to non-expert communication, albeit in a less organised and institutionalised manner (Heeks 433; Jüngst 1). Usually, the information transferred to a non-expert audience does not primarily focus on the most recent scientific discoveries, but rather on the basic information required in order to understand the gist of a certain topic (1).

For the most part, expert knowledge tends to be "highly formalised" and requires previous knowledge of the subject matter, which makes the subject matter less approachable and comprehensible to non-experts (Jüngst 1). Furthermore, assuming that certain academic issues might appear rather unattractive and uninteresting to non-experts, some experts have successfully attempted to combine "fun" and "entertaining" elements with the information they wish to present (1). For example, various media, approaches and formats have been used to reach a non-expert audience – one being the format of educational comics (1).

Concerning the expert to non-expert communication in instructional comics, Eisner presumes that there are two types of instructional comics, namely the "technical instruction comic" and the "attitudinal instruction comic" (144). Technical instruction comics offer information on the "processes which can be carried out following the instructions in the comic," while attitudinal instruction comics aim to change the behaviour of the readers regarding a particular issue (144). Additionally, Jüngst rightly introduces a third type, in order to comprehensively cover the full spectrum of instructional comics (18). She utilises the term "fact comics", stating that there are instructional comics which aim primarily for knowledge transfer (18). All three types of comics can be combined and an instructional comic does not have to adhere exclusively to one type (18). For instance, fact comics on health issues might implement elements of attitudinal instructional comics by, on the one hand, presenting information regarding the topic of HIV, while, on the other hand, potentially trying to change negative attitudes and prejudice towards people with HIV.

To discern whether a comic is an instructional comic, certain criteria exist. First, instructional comics usually use the prototypical comics format, which has been described in detail in chapter 3.1.1. (Jüngst 20). Second, they are used to "popularise information" and belong to the "didactic-instructive texts" (20). Third, they accord to one of the three types defined by Eisner and Jüngst, as mentioned above (20).

Nowadays, instructional comics appear in various media, which are selected depending on the function of the instructional comic and the target group for whom it has been designed (Jüngst 26). For example, instructional comics appear in the form of brochures (e.g. *Super Hamster* printed and published in the USA), hardcover books (e.g. the WWF comics), posters, postcards and flyers (27-28). Moreover, they occur within comic series, in magazines and on the internet (29). Evidently, brochures are the most commonly used media for instructional comics as their printing costs, compared to comic books, are low and they are easily distributed (27). Instructional comics on posters are, for the most part, produced for advertising purposes,

while instructional comic series often appear in weekly newspapers to "create a soap-opera effect by presenting one episode per week" (28). The type of media selected depends certainly on the target group of the instructional comic, the author's budget and the purpose of the instructional comic (26). For example, a flyer might be useful for information that needs to reach a wide range of people quickly. Teenagers usually cannot afford to buy an expensive comic book and they also might not decide themselves to buy and read information on the topic of pregnancy and safer sex. A flyer, however, can be distributed to them free of charge and may reach the teenager target group quickly.

While substantial research has been conducted on entertaining comics, unfortunately, there is a lack of extensive research on instructional comics. Research on information comics had not begun until the 1980s, and is still lacking in key details such as the history of instructional comics (Rifas 145). Nevertheless, a number of sources contain information on instructional comics; these sources, are of non-academic nature (Jüngst 38). These sources, although non-academic, are without a doubt important, as they offer a different perspective on instructional comics (38). For example, the internet provides a space for the companies and producers of instructional comics to place their advertisement and sell their comics (38). As a result, one can find comments from both the companies and comic fans often describing the reasons behind the designs of certain information comics as well as the "effect they have on certain target groups" (38). Most instructional comics attempt to incorporate "real-world clues" to reach as many readers as possible and aid these readers' identification with characters and the story (95). Elements such as "body postures, clothes and speech" play an important role in the identification process of the readership (95). The internet provides a useful starting point to discern whether these elements do in fact help comic fans relate to characters and the story (95). Still, comments on the internet are not always reliable and have to be considered critically. They often do not represent a concise and complete picture of the readers' overall opinion and hence can also be misleading or easily misunderstood. Empirical studies would be preferrable as they

include a wide range of readers and are usually carried out by a team of experts in the empirical field.

3.2.2. Components of Instructional Comics

One important aspect of instructional comics is popularisation. Without it, information comics would hardly ever be published (Jüngst 39). According to Whitley, the process of popularisation can take numerous forms (4). However, for information comics, the dimension of "knowledge itself and its transformation" is crucial as, information comics require "a special kind of transformation" (Jüngst 40). Instructional comics "make a difficult subject easier to understand for ordinary people" and, therefore, need a different strategy for popularisation than, for example, academic journals, which aim for a different target group entirely (OAD 980).

The strategies for popularising an information comic and, as a result, arousing interest in the reader, while simultaneously rendering information less complex, concentrate on the design of the pictures and pages as well as on the written text and the aspect of communication (Jüngst 42). In addition, as a means to thoroughly engage the audience attention, entertaining elements are key in the popularisation process, which is generally achieved through the character design and the narrative and will be looked at more closely in chapters 3.2.4. and 3.2.5. (42). The following sections in this subchapter will elaborate on the importance of pictures, panels, infographics, entertaining elements, character design, narrative, text, communication, page layout and reading fluency in instructional comics for popularisation purposes.

Pictures, Panels and Infographics:

The main attention-grabbing occurs through the "outward appearance" of the comic, the front cover and first page being the most important components in this regard. Weidenmann accurately claims that pictures are the crucial factor of comics as they "attract the eye of the

prospective reader" more than is the case with words (438). Weidenmann is right when he states that it is the pictures at which the potential consumer first looks and that the pictures are unquestionably the crucial factor according to which the reader decides whether or not to engage with the comic (438). This is one of the reasons why front covers are in colour, even if the rest of the comic is in black and white (Jüngst 49). Examples of popular and successful instructional comics in black and white are McCloud's *Making Comics* and *Understanding Comics.* Despite the rest of the comic being black and white, the front covers are in colour. With these two comics, the author explains, on the one hand, the aesthetics and history of comics and, on the other hand, how to create one yourself. The front cover's design tends to lack panels or speech balloons and rather uses attention-grabbing elements such as "personalisation, emotion and suspense" techniques (49). The design of the cover tends to be a dynamic picture of the main protagonist and often includes elements of humour or adventure, thereby introducing the common tone and mood of the instructional comic (50). These front cover strategies promise the reader that the comic is interesting and worth their time and money, inviting them to join the adventure.
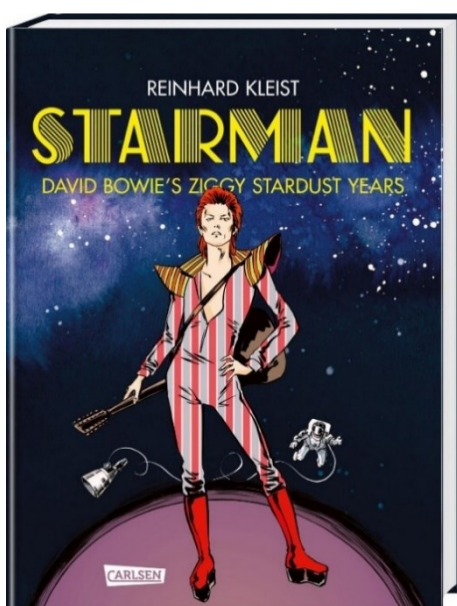
Fig. 1. Information Comic on David Bowie.   Fig. 2. Information Comic on Shakespeare.
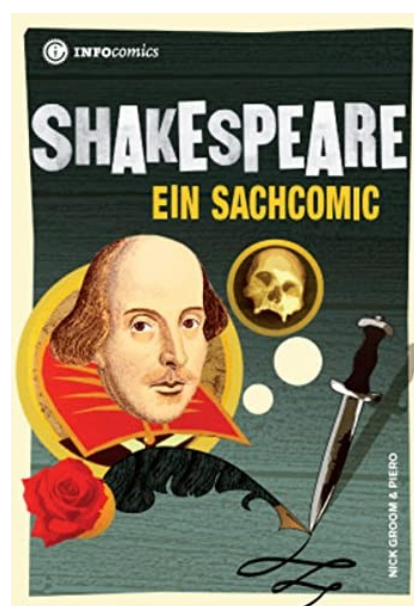
Fig. 1 is an information comic on David Bowie's life. The front cover displays the main protagonist, David Bowie, in the middle of the picture in red, thus indicating the importance of this person. Bowie's clothes, shoes and hair are exotic and portray him as if he is not of this world, even alien. This effect is intended, as David Bowie enjoyed creating fictional characters for his albums and taking on these roles, one of these being Ziggy Stardust, an alien who visits earth. Additionally, Bowie's alias Ziggy's body language as well as his facial expression in the picture portray him as someone confident and calm who is standing on top of the world and, therefore, communicate to the reader that the comic's adventure will be extraordinary and spectacular. What is more, the background as dark space and the astronaut floating in the air are also elements which make the viewers curious as to which adventures they will be taken on both through Bowie's music and the information comic. Space travel, aliens and otherness are usually valuable tools to generate a sense of adventure and interest in the comic's reader.

Fig. 2 shows the front cover of an information comic about Shakespeare. Again, the main protagonist of the comic is clearly visible. Elements such as daggers and skulls communicate death, danger and adventure which are all effective themes to keep the reader interested and create suspense. Moreover, the cover's positioning of the dagger and quill as potential writing utensils invites enquiry into the image's meaning on the part of the viewer, thereby further engaging the interest of potential readers. Furthermore, romance appeals to a wide range of audiences, so it is not surprising that a red rose, a symbol of love and passion, can be found on the front cover as well.

Moreover, the pictures in the instructional comic are required to be well-designed, in order to be understood and to maintain the reader's interest. Visual literacy, meaning the capability to read and decipher a picture and its adherent information and meaning, depends greatly, on the one hand, on the artist's talent but, on the other hand, also clearly on the reader (Orland-Barak and Ditza 11). The common presumption of comics being easy to understand is simply incorrect. Pictures in comics often include cultural references which can be difficult to

decode for people who are not members of this particular culture (160). For instance, some symbols and cultural references used in Japanese mangas might be indecipherable for Western readers and, as a result, create confusion. The food onigiri and the visual metaphor of a bloody nose are examples for such references. An onigiri is a triangular formed rice ball eaten as a light snack, while a bloody nose symbolises a character's sexual arousal. Without this specific cultural knowledge, it might be challenging to understand a comic.

Fig. 3. Onigiri.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Fig. 4. Nosebleeds.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Furthermore, pictures in information comics vary in function, possessing, for example, "informative, arousing/emotive and expressive" qualities which can also lead to misunderstandings concerning the information displayed by a picture (160). They aim to transfer certain information and at the same time follow a narrative to tell a story, which may present the reader with a substantial amount of information to process (160). Frankly, not every reader is accustomed to simultaneously reading text and looking at pictures (159). This skill definitely needs to be learned and practised and a lack of this skill is often a factor in non-comic readers not purchasing or persevering with instructional comics (159). This is one of the reasons why information comics feature black and white rather than colour pictures: in order not to strain the reader further (161). Of course, black and white comics are also less expensive to reproduce and, hence, able to be more widely distributed (161). Another potential reason for the reader having difficulties understanding a certain instructional comic might be the comic's

target audience (161). Many instructional comics are undoubtedly written for adults only using complex terminologies and concepts, or portraying social situations which children might find difficult to completely comprehend (161). For instance, the information comic *The Mental Load: a Feminist Comic* by Emma deals with issues such as domestic violence and maternity leave, which are themes more suitable for adults than for children. But not only are certain themes of instructional comics sometimes difficult to comprehend, but also the design of a comic including its panel layout.

Pictures in comics are usually divided into panels. Panels, meaning the single picture in a comic, consist of a "frame" and appear in a "sequence of pictures" on a page (Jüngst 163). McCloud correctly explains that a panel can be seen as a camera shot created for the reader (*Making Comics*, 24) and that it also "gives an impression of place and time" (Jüngst 165). The panel aids the reader by focusing on the most important aspect of the current scene, while indirectly telling the reader where to look next (24). The objects, actions and people in the middle of a panel are usually the most relevant ones (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 25). Nevertheless, sometimes it is the void or empty space that comprises the crucial meaning and displays, for instance, the mysterious absence of a person, a distance that needs to be overcome, or suspense (25).
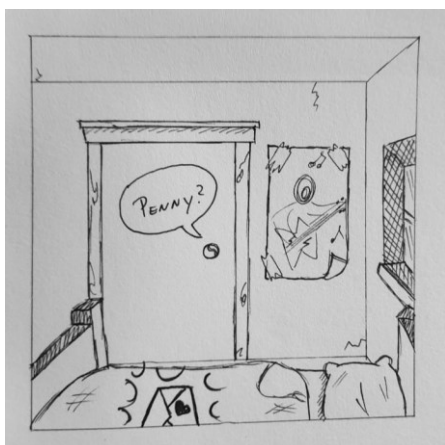
Fig 5. Mysterious Absence.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Fig 6. Distance to Overcome.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)
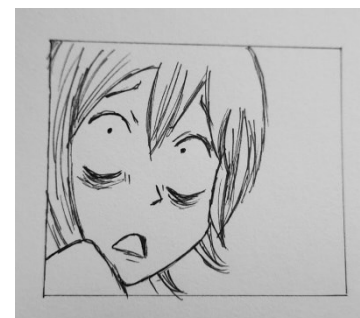
Fig. 7. Suspense.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Fig. 5 presents such a mysterious absence. By means of the speech balloon which represents a question from a character behind the door, the readers know someone is looking for a person named Penny. Through the lack of response to the question, the empty room and the ominous letter in the middle of the bed, an absence of this person is created. Fig. 6 displays some physical distance between two people, although one could argue there is also an emotional distance as well. The way the person drags the bag behind him- or herself, implying weariness and tiredness, and the way his or her shadow nearly touches the person in the front indicates some sort of closeness between two people being lost. Last, the picture in panel Fig. 7 creates suspense by displaying character's fearful expression without directly showing what he is seeing.

Additionally, not only does the picture within a panel carry meaning but also the "frame size" of a panel, which means the "distance between viewer and action" (Jüngst 164). As readers undeniably like change and variety, the right amount of different frame sizes can keep the reader's interest and aid him or her in fully entering the world of the story. For example, "extra long shots" are designed to exhibit the setting, whereas a "close shot" creates an intimate and personal atmosphere (164). Extra long shots can be found in many Wild Western comics, where they are used in order to effectively introduce the adventurous setting to the reader. Close shots are naturally used frequently for romantic scenes or for situations where the focus is on the relationship between friends or family members. In addition, a frequently applied shot is the "establishing shot" at the beginning of a new scene in a comic, as it reveals the setting to the reader adequately (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 22). The establishing shot is then followed by one or two panels which seem to zoom into the setting to disclose further details of the location and situation (see fig. 8 for an example) (22).

Fig. 8. Establishing Shot.
(McClouds, *Making Comics,* 22)

The establishing shot generates the illusion of being in the location yourself, while at the same time preparing the reader for a new part of the story and a new setting. Furthermore, the "point of view", also known as "POV", enhances the narrative in a panel further (Jüngst 164); for instance, the "front angle" indicates "involvement", and a "high angle" signifies "viewer power" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 154). For example, the high angle is regularly used in superhero comics to cleverly illustrate the hero's or villain's power, confidence and/or dominance. Every frame "implies an implicit point of view" and often serves the purpose of promoting the narrative or creating anticipation in the reader (Villarejo 38). Nevertheless, the comic's designer has to understand that an overuse of varying either frame sizes or POV too often can overwhelm and distract the reader, which would have the opposite effect to attention grabbing.

Another important aspect of panels in instructional comics is the information they provide on the setting. Settings are "primarily an informative element", but also stir emotions in the reader (Jüngst 176). For example, "present-day settings" might evoke positive or negative memories in the reader due to their familiarity, whereas "historical settings" communicate adventure and excitement (177). The number of setting categories in comics is endless, but for

the instructional comic specifically designed for this thesis, the "fantasy setting" is of most interest (177). It is not uncommon for fantasy comics to be based on the story template the Monomyth including elements such as fantastic creatures, magic, danger, allies and foes (Erbacher et al. 117). Examples of fantasy comics based on the Monomyth are *Brindilla* by Brrémaud and Federico Bertolucci and *The Highest House* by Mike Carey and Peter Gross.

One element which is often used and needed in instructional comics but hardly ever in other comics are scientific illustrations, also known as "infographics" (Jüngst 186). The term "infographic" is a clipped compound of "information" and "graphics" and denotes a "visualisation of data or ideas that tries to convey complex information to an audience in a manner that can be quickly consumed and easily understood" (Smiciklas 3). For instance, graphs or "imaging techniques such as X-rays or microscopy" are used in information comics to explain certain processes or concepts (Jüngst 186). It is also common to use photography in instructional comics, or highly detailed illustrations which are more complex than simplified cartoon-like drawings (186). This often includes the "magnifying glass technique" which is a method of zooming in closer on a certain point of the previous panel to visualise those details more adequately (186).
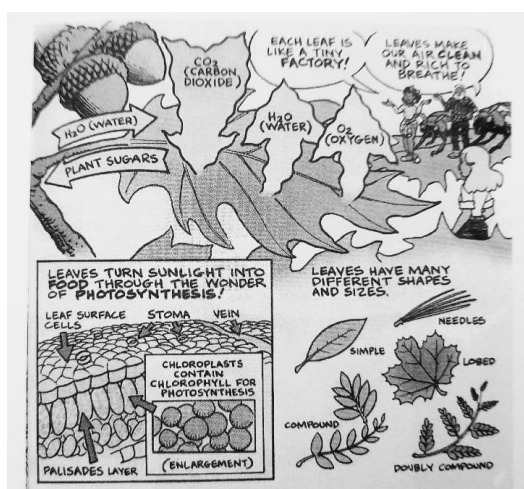
Fig. 9. Detailed Scientific Illustration. Fig. 10. Magnifying Glass Technique.
(Bursch and Schmidt 11) (Deschaine and Woodring 3)
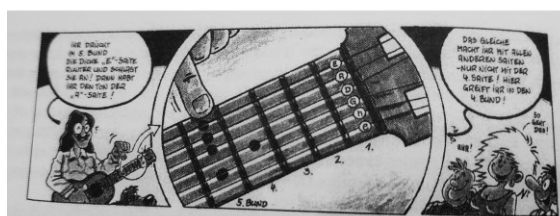
Looking at Fig. 9, it is clear that this is a detailed scientific illustration, i.e. an infographic. It explains certain matters concerning trees, leaves and photosynthesis by using detailed illustrations of leaves, which look like microscopic close-ups and include arrows and panels within panels. By instilling panels within panels and guiding arrows the reader knows which panel is a close-up of which part of the leave. Nevertheless, in the example displayed in Fig. 9, the reader will probably find it difficult to truly know where to look first as the Western reading order is from left to right and top to bottom, which would discourage the correct reading order for this particular infographic, namely from the right bottom corner to the top left corner, and then from bottom left to bottom right. This unclear order is mismanaged by the artist and might lead to confusion and hinder the comprehension of the topic the infographic tries to explain. What is more, as there are so many details within this infographic, the artist has overlooked the positive effect the use of colour could potentially have in displaying the details more clearly and helping the reader distinguish between these details. Therefore, fewer panels within panels and a simpler illustration as well as the use of a common panel reading order would have definitely been more helpful to understand the information and meaning behind this infographic.

Fig. 10 depicts the use of a magnifying glass technique to enlarge a section of the neck of a guitar. While a small circle at the base of an arrow locates the enlarged section within the context of the guitar's neck, the arrow itself effectively directs the reader's view to the area of focus. Thus, the arrow successfully enables the reader to place the detailed middle panel into the overall context of the comic. This infographic is a panel within a panel and uses the teacher character to explain how to do a certain chord. The middle panel zooms to a close-up of the top of the guitar, which even has the round shape of a magnifying glass, while the teacher continues explaining the issue further via speech balloons. As a result, the reader's focus is drawn to the most important details of the teacher's instructions and has both an overview and a close-up of the guitar. The example displayed in Fig. 10 is a simple yet very effective infographic.

However, some information (for example, the concept of socialism) is too abstract to be explained merely by pictures, and, therefore, other techniques are needed. For example, characters in instructional comics occasionally explain abstract information by talking directly to the audience (Jüngst 196). Another popular technique is the "visual analogy," whereby an idea or process is depicted by means of an image that has a similar connotation and is thus easily understood through the cultural and emotional associations that co-occurs with it (El Refaie 15). For example, some information comics attempt to explain processes in chemistry or physics, using the behaviour of humans or familiar objects as a visual analogy. As a result, the abstract information is turned into something concrete and tangible.
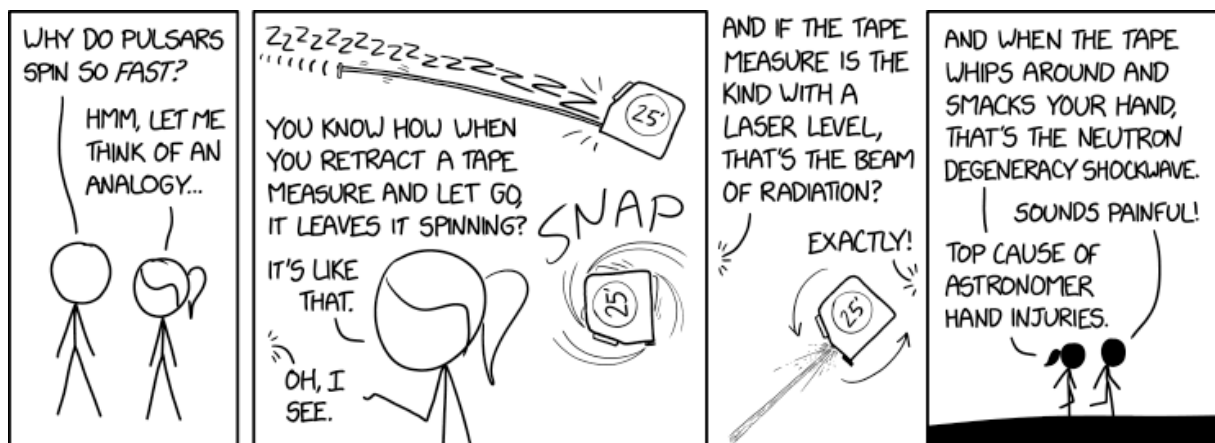
Fig. 11. Pulsar Analogy.
(*Explain XKCD* Comic #2413)

Fig. 11 uses a visual analogy by referring to a tape measure and its usual behaviour to explain why pulsars spin quickly. The panels and pictures are kept simple but the use of the tape measure analogy, the text accompanying it and the illustrations successfully elucidate a complex matter in a simple way. This visual analogy is probably designed for readers who are unfamiliar with basic knowledge of astrophysics and who therefore require core information on this topic. Visual analogies are a perfect tool to explain complex matters intelligibly to a non-expert audience.

<u>Entertainment: Character Design and Narrative:</u>

Further attention-grabbing and, therefore, popularisation is accomplished through a comic's characters as well as the amusing elements which are expressed through them. The more the characters are relatable and funny, the more likely it is that the reader will remain engaged with the instructional comic (Jüngst 201). The character Donald Duck from the comic series *Lustiges Taschenbuch* is an example of being both funny and relatable. Donald's favourite activity is to be lazy and have a nap, which most of the readers probably enjoy as well. He is easily frustrated and becomes angry when someone interrupts him during his leisure time. Additionally, he is very clumsy and, as a result, he is regularly involved in amusing situations. However, he also possesses a goodhearted nature as he shows fatherly feelings towards his three nephews whom he took in to raise all by himself. This creates a character with human-like feelings (even though he is a duck) and most readers surely appreciate this character trait in Donald. Both sides of him, the clumsy/lazy as well as the empathetic, make him relatable, as humans also tend to have more than one personality trait. Consequently, Donald's personality is something the reader is most definitely able to find in many different people around the world and, therefore, the character Donald is, in a way, familiar to the reader. Indeed, readers might easily find an echo of themselves in Donald.

Concerning character development, the following nonverbal communication aspects are vital: "bodily contact, proximity, posture, physical appearance, facial and gestural movements, direction of gaze, timing of speech, emotional tone of speech, speech errors and accents" (Jüngst 201). Through different characters, amusement and excitement can be transmitted to the reader (206). For example, the characters Thomson and Thompson from *The Adventures of Tintin* regularly display amusing behaviour. The brothers Thomson and Thompson, two incompetent detectives, entertain the readers through their clumsiness and stupidity, and, thus, offer comic relief in these comics. Moreover, that the main characters are designed in "the

tradition of the funnies style" is quite common in instructional comics (206). These characters usually smile and laugh frequently and are often portrayed as being clumsy and cute (207). An example of a main character in the tradition of the funnies style is Arale from *Dr. Slump.* She is always in a good mood, smiles continuously, is overly naïve and lacks common sense. As she is drawn in the Japanese chibi style (the characters are drawn extremely small and chubby with an oversized head and big eyes), her appearance is adorable and cute. Furthermore, serious characters can be a means of generating amusement through the juxtaposition of an emotive picture with speech balloons distributing informative content (207). Additionally, "side actions" which do not contribute to the main narrative but are highly amusing are added in instructional comics to provide the reader with further entertainment (207). For instance, in the manga *Ranma ½* the actions of the character Ryoga Hibiki do not contribute anything of importance to the main story but are certainly enjoyable as he has no sense of direction and transforms unwillingly and repeatedly into a perky, small pig. However, it is vital to not overuse side actions as a comic's artist as to not distract the reader from the main narrative.

Text: Speech Balloons, Lettering and "Sensual Response":

Not only well-designed pictures but also an instructional comic's written text are key to holding reader's attention. Words are able to explain a situation, even when a picture cannot (McCloud*, Making Comics,* 30). Abstract concepts, such as socialism, ethics, culture and freedom, are often more effectively explained through words than pictures and social interactions in comics likewise require words (31). Information comics especially require verbal text frequently as they contain numerous instructions (Jüngst 121). The functions of verbal text in an instructional comic are clearly to "convey information, instil certain emotions in the reader" and "express the author's artistic personality" (121). For example, the *InfoComics* series by Wilfried Stascheit et al. deals with a broad range of abstract topics such as psychology, time, quantum theory, capitalism and logic. Both verbal text and pictures are successfully being utilised by

these comics to explain these complex concepts. Fig. 12 displays not only texts and pictures, but also emotions of oppression and fear conveying meaning on different levels. Without words, however, the picture would definitely not be fully comprehensible to the reader.
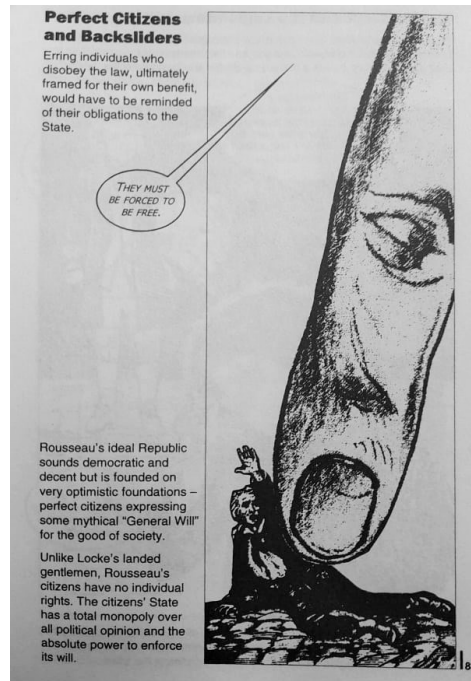
Fig. 12. Combination of Picture, Text and Feelings.
(Stascheit et al., *Political Philosophy,* 83)

Most of the text in comics evidently consists of dialogues either between two or more characters or between characters and the reader (Jüngst 122). Spoken language in comics is shown through speech balloons, which are the "interface between text and comic characters" and "inform the reader about speech tone and the position of the speakers" (Rigaud, Burie, and Ogier 134). Jüngst accurately explains that they hold direct speech or thoughts and are "linked to the speaker by the means of a tail" (100). Unfortunately, they only offer a limited space for text, which can cause problems, particularly for instructional comics, which often need to display a large amount of information concerning an issue, instruction or complex concept (100). As commonly known, speech balloons exist in different shapes and sizes and in Western comics they are typically placed in the upper part of the panel (Fig. 13), in contrast to Japanese

comics (mangas) which place the speech balloons at the side of the panel (Fig. 14) (100). Western comics predominantly feature round speech balloons (Fig. 13), whereas mangas use slim and vertically oblong ones (Fig. 14) (100).

Fig. 13. Western Comic.
(Morrison and Quitely 23)

Fig. 14. Japanese Manga.
(Tsukushi 136)

Fig. 13 is a page taken from the Western *All-Star Superman* comic and clearly features typical round speech balloons all in the upper part of the panels; the speech balloons in Fig. 14, which shows a page from the Japanese manga *Made in Abyss*, are, by comparison, slim and oblong and positioned at the side of the panels. Both styles, the Western and Japanese, can be easy or difficult to read depending on the relative familiarity of the reader with the respective reading orders of panels.

Speech balloons also have the important function of structuring the panel and directing the reader's focus through the panels and pages (101). Information and emotions are conveyed

not only through the text in a speech balloon, but also through its shape and design (101). For example, a jagged border of a speech balloon denotes the speaker's anger and may indicate that the character is shouting (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 134). A speech balloon which looks like a cloud, on the other hand, is used for the inner monologues and thoughts of a character (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 142). These specific conventions are familiar to regular comic readers but can be difficult to understand for those new to comics. Concerning instructional comics, it is sometimes necessary to display a large amount of information at once which cannot fit into one small speech balloon. Therefore, the information is split into "several speech balloons in a sequence" just like paragraphs in other text formats (Jüngst 102).
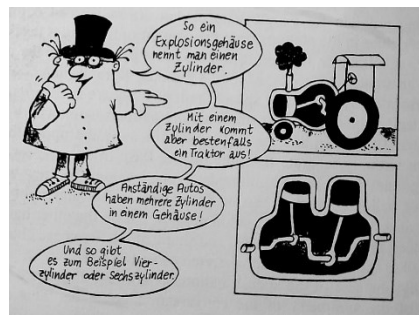
Fig. 15. Speech Balloons in a Sequence.
(Lustig 11)

Fig. 15 depicts such a sequence of speech balloons. The character Prof. Tobias Knispel splits his information in four different speech balloons. The reader knows that the information contained in the four speech balloons belongs together, as the tails of the speech balloons are connected with each other and skilfully guide the reader's eyes from one text to the next.

In addition to the role played by the shape and content of a speech balloon in conveying emotions, a further important factor is lettering. Verbal text in speech balloons is usually printed in capital letters (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 135). In instructional comics, words in bold highlight the most important information and further structure the text (Jüngst 135). If a word or sentence is larger than the rest of the text, it unquestionably adds to its "sound" and creates

more volume to the spoken text (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 144). Another example would be text that is transparent and that seems to disappear, which naturally indicates either a character whispering or a distant voice (145).

Fig. 16. Emotions Displayed through Lettering.
(McClouds, *Making Comics,* 143)

For example, Fig. 16 presents four different panels in which the lettering of each individual speech bubble depicts a different emotion. By the use of larger letters and bold type, the phrase "Best party ever" in the speech balloon of the first panel is experienced by the reader as being louder and of more prominence than the rest of the speech balloon's text. The word "France" in the second panel creates a suspicious tone through the use of quotation marks, whereas the shaky lines in speech balloon number two reflect the shaken up, fearful attitude of the speaker. Furthermore, through the use of bold letters, it adds to the shock experienced by the characters in this panel, making him seem to loudly cry out in an anxious manner. In panel 4, the large, bold, crooked letters as well as the exclamation marks mirror the character's deep and violent despair very well.

Pictures and texts in comics can, not surprisingly, stimulate emotions and "sensual response" in the reader (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 128). For example, special symbols such as three wavy lines indicate that something is smelly or smoking (128). Symbols such as these are so called "visual metaphors" and enable the reader not only to see, but also to hear and smell what is happening (128). Visual metaphors were used by the Sumerians as early as 5000 years ago in Ancient Mesopotamia (131). They initially used cartoons which, over time,

developed from direct representation of images to abstract forms which only they were able to decode (131). Another technique to add sound and emotions to a word or sentence is the use of "onomatopoeia", a word or phrase that imitates a sound, such as "meow" or "whoosh" (Longman Pronunciation Dictionary 567). Onomatopoeia is used in almost every comic and is, thus, a standard element for the comic format (Jüngst 131).

However, some textual information in instructional comics, such as items of terminologies, cannot always be transferred or explained by symbols, shapes or onomatopoeia. Teaching new terminology in instructional comics can present a challenge for the instructional comic's author, as the information is required to fit in a small speech balloon and has to suit "the character who gives the information" (Jüngst 130). It is very unlikely that every instruction or piece of information that explains specific subject matter in an instructional comic can fit into a single speech balloon. If the information is too dense or too complex to be explained in a few sentences, authors of instructional comics often cleverly include separate pages, such as "fact pages" or the "glossary" (131). Fact pages can be found either at the end of the comic or within a chapter, giving the reader a chance to refer easily to an explanation whenever needed (131). Information can also be delivered through spoken text by the characters (140). Normally, it is the wise expert-character in the instructional comic who "explains, describes and categorizes" terminology to the reader (141). The use of expert characters to provide information and explanation is a feature not only of Western instructional comics, but also, for example, of Japanese comics (mangas) (141). The expert character represents a narrative tool of universal appeal to the reader of information comics, as the vast majority of the readers can identify with the experience of being a student, while also having experience of teachers and mentors in their own lives.

<u>Communication Strategy:</u>

In the twenty-first century, we find ourselves in a world filled with self-help books and do-it-yourself YouTube videos. Most of us are familiar with situations in which we need to understand a complex matter as quickly as possible, for example in order to fix something that is suddenly broken. The great majority of us are non-experts in this field and need basic information from an actual expert - be it in the form of books, videos or instructional comics. Concerning the communication strategy of instructional comics, information is generally delivered by an expert in a specific field to an audience with an interest in this expertise (Jüngst 41). The readers of such an instructional comic are usually non-experts (41). For this reason, the communication in most information comics is that of an expert to a non-expert (41). The expert role, however, must not necessarily be occupied by an expert per se, but also potentially by a mediator, such as a journalist, who possesses certain knowledge through his or her own research (Glaser 8). These are referred to as "mediators", "self-taught experts" or "informed non-experts" and are often criticised for using "second-hand knowledge" and, hence, unfortunately creating texts that often lack correctness or completeness (Jüngst 43). Yet, it is rare that an author is also an expert and often the author and the artist are not the same person (44). Interestingly, it is quite uncommon to simultaneously possess the skill required to write an engaging narrative and to be a talented artist, while also being an expert in a specific field. Therefore, three possibilities exist for the combination of writer and artist for instructional comics. The first possibility is the expert as author as well as amateur designer (44). A comic with this combination is, for example, Saad Tayyab's *Biochemical Education in Leisure*. Tayyab is a chemistry teacher and started to design instructional comics for his students to explain chemistry processes in a more comprehensible way. It is clear by looking at his pictures that he is not a professional artist, however his comics still explain chemistry effectively. Indeed, it could be argued that the imperfection of Tayyab's pictures enhance his students'

appreciation of his efforts, the personal touch therein displayed increasing their motivation to engage with the subject matter in question. The second possibility is the expert as author as well as talented artist, which is, as mentioned before, a very rare scenario (44). Examples of this possibility are limited, yet not altogether unheard of. The best example is Jay Hosler, a professor of biology and a gifted artist. He has designed several educational comics (e.g. *Clan Apis* and *The Sandwalk Adventure*) by himself and readers can safely trust the comics' information being correct and complete due to his expertise. The third possibility includes the expert as an author who works closely with an artist or a team of artists (44). There are many examples of this third combination, one being the *Quer-Comics* series by Wolfgang Wimmer and Gabriel Nemeth alias Tschap. Choosing an expert author and an expert artist as a team for creating an information comic seems to suggest itself in order to produce the most professional and best outcome. The same three possibilities can be found with the mediator as the author (44). The mediator finds the information needed either through his or her own research or through regular communication with expert advisors (46). Nevertheless, the expert advisors are typically only "indirect agents", as the text for the comic is not written by them but by the mediator (46). It appears to be the case that it is not important which of the three possibilities is carried out efficiently by all involved by the competent use of use of popularisation techniques.

The majority of information conveyed by a comic, nevertheless, is through the combination of words and pictures (Jüngst 221). There are different types of word-image combinations that can help to convey certain information or meaning in instructional comics (*Making Comics,* 130). Firstly, the "word-specific" combination focuses mainly on the given text which is complete and not necessarily in need of any picture to explain a certain issue (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 153). Secondly, in the so called "picture specific" combination, the picture fully explains the situation within a panel without need of further text (153). "Duo specific panels" are created to portray the "same message", whereas the "parallel combination" carries out the opposite function as the meaning of words and the pictures seem

not to relate to each other (154). Another combination is the "additive", whereby words "amplify or elaborate" on an image, or vice versa (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 130). The most common, however, is the "interdependent combination", in which words and images support each other to convey information and meaning (130). These combinations are then merged with further "informative, emotive and expressive" elements to offer a well-rounded information package to the reader (131). After all, it is common knowledge that the most known feature of the comic's format is the combination of pictures and words and their dynamic with each other.

Page Layout and Reading Fluency:

In order for its story and the information presented therein to be understandable, not only a comic's words and text, but also the page layout must be thoroughly selected. As most comic readers know, panels in comics function within a sequence and some panels are more relevant than others, as they present new aspects (Jüngst 168). These important panels are termed "key frames", whereas the others are the "in-between frames" (Jüngst 168). According to Hillary Chute, panels and comic pages "situate the reader in space, creating perspective in and through frames" as the reader has to decelerate in order to make meaning of the picture-text and panel combinations (277). It takes time and effort, on the one hand, for the artist to effectively create meaning through the panel and page composition, and on the other hand, for the reader to freely immerse him- or herself in the panels and page to decipher these embedded meanings. In Western countries, panels are read from left to right and from top to bottom (McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 86). Importantly, the reader has to interpret not only each panel and its information, but also the space between panels (89). If the panels are designed well, the mind will "flow easily through the conceptual territory between panels" and the ideas behind each panel will surge "into one another seamlessly" (90). McCloud calls this flow "a silent dance of the seen and the unseen" which is unique to the artform of comics (*Understanding Comics,* 92). To guarantee reading fluency of panels, certain aspects need to be considered while designing

an instructional comic. Some comics impede comprehension through the use of complex panels which overlap or are aligned in a way that might confuse the reader as to which panel to read next (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 33). Another interruption of reading fluency could be caused by an ill-considered excessive change of POV or the very detailed and, hence, overloaded background of a panel (35). Panels, including their texts and images, as well as the page layout, demand therefore structure and simplicity.

Fig. 17. Inadequate Panel Use.
(McCloud, *Making Comics*, 33)
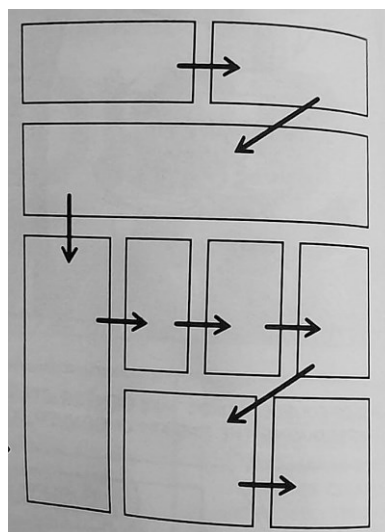
Fig. 18. Adequate Panel Use.
(McCloud, *Making Comics,* 32)

A poor example of panel use is displayed in Fig. 17. Although there are certain elements, such as arm movements and hand pointing that suggest a reading pattern, it is absolutely not clear which panel follows which. Too many panel-wall-breaks and borderless images make this page virtually impossible to read. McCloud would probably state that there is no flow whatsoever between those panels. In contrast, Fig. 18 presents a panel arrangement without any unnecessary motions coming from within the picture. The design is simple as well as transparent following the Western reading order for comics. There is no need for added compositions such as panel-wall-breaks to help the reader determine the reading order. Comparing Fig. 17 and 18, it is noticeable that both use the same panel composition. However,

one uses it competently, while the other does not. A balance between simplicity and special effects is necessary for visual fluency as well as keeping the attention of the reader.

3.2.3. Target Groups and Simplification Strategies

Instructional comics are normally created to explain a topic in a simple manner. This is one of the reasons why a large number of instructional comics have titles such as "X made easy" (Jüngst 67). These kinds of titles attract first and foremost people like teachers or parents, so-called "secondary target groups", who hope that their children or students will either be motivated to learn more about the subject or will better understand the material after having read the comic (68). A secondary target group or audience is the second most important consumer entity aimed at to popularise a product (Blythe 135). As shown above, in some cases teachers have even gone as far as creating instructional comics themselves to interest their students in a specific subject matter.

In the case of instructional comics, the primary target group are doubtlessly people who would like to learn more about a certain topic themselves, whereas the secondary target group are teachers or parents, who are invested in the learning of others (Jüngst 68). As concerns the primary target group of instructional comics, it can be itemised according to several characteristics, namely by "age, interest or geographical distributions" (68). The target groups of educational comics, according to Sones (235), are generally "children and the military" and depend highly on the "stories, style and characters chosen" (Jüngst 69).

As the readers of instructional comics are usually new to the examined topic, fortunately hardly any "prior knowledge" is needed when reading the comic (Jüngst 73). Therefore, a "simplification strategy" is applied by "replacing complex terms by everyday language" and demonstrating "scientific illustrations" in a less abstract way than in the original version of an illustration (73). The two principles of simplification, namely "linguistic and content simplification" assist in the creation of understandable information in an instructional comic

(Honeyfield 431). Some information which does not seem relevant to the comic's author might be left out or mentioned only briefly (Jüngst 73). This, however, could lead to the danger of falsified or incomplete information, which should be avoided at all costs (73). To avoid omitting certain vital elements of a topic due to lack of space in a comic, information comics can be created as a series, the information thus simply distributed among different volumes of the comic's series (72) For instance, the comic series *Stella Seattle* or *Matz & Mikke* present "one aspect of a given topic after the other" and can therefore investigate a wide range of issues concerning one single topic (72). Brochures, on the other hand, can survey only one particular facet of a subject matter (72). An example of an instructional comic in form of a brochure is *Adventure of the Garbage Gremlin.* It deals with the specific topic of how to correctly recycle and the reasons behind this phenomenon, and is aimed specifically at a younger audience.

3.2.4. Character Design

It is not difficult for people to discern whether an element in a picture represents a person or something else. To distinguish a character from, for example, an object, the reader recognises a person in a picture by one main key element, namely "symmetry" (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 58). McCloud claims that symmetry is the core characteristic of life with which we have learned to recognise a living being (*Making Comics,* 59). In comics, the design of so-called "bilateral symmetry" is what helps the readers to distinguish a living being from other parts of the drawn picture (*Making Comics,* 60). Bilateral symmetry is a "symmetry in which similar anatomical parts are arranged on opposite sides of a median axis so that only one plane can divide the individual into essentially identical halves" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online). This might sound overly simplistic, but there is truth in McCloud's statement. Fig. 19 below shows evidence to this claim as well as the following explanation.

Fig. 19. Bilateral Symmetry.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Fig. 19 shows bilateral symmetry in the form of a picture of a bunny. The left and the right side are identical to each other and include both a mouth and eyes. These elements help the viewer to identify the image as being that of a living creature. According to McCloud, if a picture shows bilateral symmetry as well as two dots (an indication for two eyes) and one line underneath these two dots (an indication for a mouth), one could easily identify this image as a living being (*Making Comics,* 60).
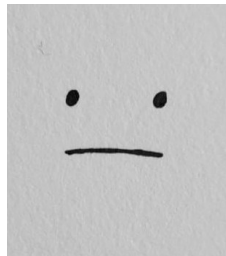
Fig. 20. Image of a Living Being.
(Picture by Tamara McMinn)

Although Fig. 20 displays nothing but two dots above a short, horizontal line, the human brain processes it as being a face of either an animal or a human, hence, giving proof that McCloud's claim is clearly correct. Most viewers of this image would agree that it is not clear whether the image is supposed to illustrate, for example, a frog or a child, it is nonetheless universally identifiable as a being of some sort.

However, the inclusion of bilateral symmetry, two dots and one line is undoubtedly not enough when creating characters for a comic. Well-designed characters need to show uniqueness by means of distinctive character traits, their inner thoughts and physical appearance (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 63). First of all, fictional characters become alive when their personal biography and, therefore, their personality is revealed and are relatable when their backgrounds, inner thoughts and life circumstances are similar to those of the reader (65). This is true, for example, of the comic character Spiderman, as he regularly struggles financially, is often lonely and has girlfriend issues. Most teenagers will be familiar with one if not all of these three problems and, therefore, are able to relate to Spiderman easily. In addition, characters become interesting when their hopes and expectations for life collide with other characters or world constructions (66). In the world of X-Men, for instance, there are different views on the role and position of the mutants in society, which repeatedly leads to conflicts between different groups of mutants and humans. Moreover, to ensure an intriguing character design, McCloud suggests basing one's characters on, for example, C. G. Jung's four psychological types: sensation, intuition, feeling and thinking (*Making Comics,* 67). By basing one's characters on these four psychological types, it is easy to know, as the artist, how each of the characters will act in specific situations. This also ensures that the characters are not too similar too each other and are all unique in their own ways. For example, McCloud bases his four main characters in the comic series *ZOT!* on the four psychological types: a robot represents the thinking type, a girl, Jenny, the feeling type, the boy, Zot, the intuition type and the monkey (Jenny's transformed older brother), Butch, the sensation type (*Making Comics,* 69). Secondly, characters not only have to differ from each other by their personality traits and inner thoughts but also through their appearance, to assist the reader in distinguishing them from each other (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 70). For designing unique looks of characters, Eisner recommends, for instance, the incorporation of animal attributes (44). Nevertheless, one needs to be careful not to create stereotypical characters by using this technique, as they could easily become flat

and, therefore, uninteresting to the reader. Facial expressions, body language and clothing, also aid in the creation of characters which are unique and easily recognisable (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 75).

Fig. 21. Animal Attributes in Characters.
(McCloud, *Making Comics,* 73)

Animal attributes, as suggested by Eisner, can clearly be seen in Fig. 21. By using, for instance, the features of a scrunched-up face of a dog for a human face, the character is designed in a unique and explicit way. The dog attributes can further be seen in the dog-ear-shaped hair of the man and the partially closed eyes. As most readers are familiar with bull dogs, they probably will unconsciously assign character attributes such as grumpiness, alertness and sturdiness to the character.

The most important character composition in a comic is that of the focaliser. The focaliser is the character with whom most readers should identify, and the unfolding story is usually seen through his or her eyes (Horstkotte and Pedri 330). The focaliser resembles the target group, which means, for example, that a young, female focaliser is meant to be relatable for young girls (331). Spiderman, for instance, was the first superhero created as a teenager rather than an adult to expand the readership by making the main character relatable to adolescents. The design of a focaliser is "target-group specific" and is "not restricted to one type of information comic" (Jüngst 76). The focaliser's general task in information comics is to arouse the reader's interest in the topic and to point out which of the pieces of information in

the comic is the most crucial one (76). Whenever he or she is addressed by another character, it often implies that also the reader is indirectly addressed, as most of the readers identify with him or her when the character is designed adequately (76). Therefore, the focaliser has the role of the learner in most information comics, thereby reflecting the reader's role (77). In the information comic *Laura, Love and the Pill*, the focaliser, Laura, is a teenage girl who is insecure concerning sex and who, after a long struggle, sees a doctor. This is most likely a process and struggle most teenage girls can relate to. Furthermore, as parents and doctors speak with her, by means of the identification process with the focaliser Laura, the readers experience the dialogues as if directly addressed to them.

Nevertheless, some focalisers are not meant to be one hundred percent relatable, as their function could also be that of entertainment (Jüngst 80). In this case, the focaliser then generally lacks knowledge and is perceived as being unintelligent (80). As a result, the clumsy focaliser repeatedly faces problems he or she cannot solve on his or her own and requires regular assistance (80). One of the positive effects of such a focaliser type is that the reader might feel comparatively more "intelligent" and, therefore, motivated to continue reading the instructional comic (80). In addition, clumsy focalisers evoke sympathy in the reader, which is a useful "attention-keeping device" (81). Such focalisers "keep the stories going and add to the visual fun" (80).

Another important character composition in an instructional comic is that of the expert (Jüngst 83). Importantly, one needs to distinguish between the author as expert or mediator of the field, and the expert as a character within the instructional comic, also known as the "invented expert" (83). The invented expert has to be an "authority on the subject" and should be "credible as well as likeable" (83). To make an expert not only a "know-it-all" but also charismatic, experts are often a potent and harmonious combination of being funny and being competent (84). For example, one of the many Einstein characters in *Adventure in Basic*, who is the invented expert in the comic, is "friendly and chaotic" making him more relatable and

likeable to the readers (84). Another example of an invented expert is the character Sensei Akira Toriyama in the instructional comic *Manga Zeichenkurs*. Sensei Akira is an expert in the field of drawing mangas and teaches his student (and, thus, the reader) how to become a successful mangaka. He does not only show artistic skills and knowledge, but also naturally exhibits humour through his sarcastic comments and violent outbursts.

Invented experts, however, do not always have to be human or characters from the present. Sometimes the focaliser is on a "quest for knowledge" observing and listening to experts often in the form of "fantastic journeys" (Jüngst 77). The reason for using adventurous, fantastic journeys in most information comics is that readers associate these with a "pleasant reading experience" and, as a result, the reader's attention is grabbed immediately and efficiently (78). It is then when the focaliser talks to invented experts from "different times, places or worlds" and even experts who are not human but animals or fantastic creatures (Harvey 16). Non-human invented experts do not only exist in information comics, e.g. the follicle mite in *Sandwalk Adventure*, but also in cartoons and movies. Examples are Yoda in *Star Wars,* Owl in *Winnie the Pooh* and EVE, the probe droid, in *WALL-E*, to name a few.

Two crucial issues to consider when designing characters for an information comic are gender and race. Information comics typically include mixed-gender groups of characters with one exception: some information comics primarily target a single gender group only due to their specific topic (Jüngst 90). For instance, the information comic *Stella Seattle* by Dominic Capello is about the topic of safer sex for gay men and AIDS prevention and thus is designed to appeal to a male readership (90). However, information comics that aim at closely defined target groups are rare and usually information comic designers include both genders for their main characters (90). A positive development regarding information comics is that authors depict both girls and women as "decision makers" in the story (90). It is not unusual to find "extremely strong girls versus extremely weak boys" in information comics (90). It is vital to portray strong, female characters not only in comics but also in information comics, as this

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emphasises that women are as deserving and capable of learning about a new, complex topic and gaining new skills as men. Strong, intelligent female characters in instructional comics normalise women working in scientific fields or other fields such as mechanics which are often dominated by a high percentage of male workers. An example of two female main characters in an information comic are the characters Rin and Ami in *The Manga Guide to Molecular Biology*. Together they travel, with the help of a virtual reality machine, inside the human body to explore topics of molecular biology. Another example is the female student as a main character in *Chile ist aufgewacht! Das Ende einer neoliberalen Ära*.

In regard to the aspect of race, most Western information comics depict a multi-racial group to reflect the reality of Western society such as *The Not-So Secret Society: Tale of the Gummy* by Matthew Daley et al. and *Howtoon: [Re]Ignition* by Fred Van Lente, Tom Fowler and Jordie Bellaire (Howard and Jackson II 17). Occasionally, authors of information comics do not have to consider a politically correct mix of characters, as their characters cannot be "classified in terms of race" (18). For instance, animals or fantastic creature are often designed to avoid the issue all together (18). Others, including the Comic Company London, design their characters with a variety of skin colours such as blue, yellow and green to avoid creating racial stereotypes (19). Jüngst rightly states that a multi-race-group of characters in information comics "reflects the reality" of most societies and emphasises the idea "that all races can live together in peace" (21). The more a variety of genders, races and religions is depicted in instructional comics, the more likely it is that they reach a large number of people, while at the same time avoiding creating stereotypes, such as depicting certain jobs as being the domain of a particular gender.

3.2.5. The Narrative

Narratives play an important role in educational comics, as they assist the reader in following the plot more easily, are "pleasant to read" and are another useful attention-grabbing device

(Kubli 116). Concerning the importance of a narrative in an instructional comic, there are differences between attitudinal instructional comics, fact comics and technical instructional comics (Eisner 25). The narrative within an attitudinal instructional comic is often the message itself and usually uses "everyday stories" and "elements of fun" (144). As previously mentioned, attitudinal instructional comics are created and read for the promotion and learning of new behaviours and social interactions and, hence, it is important that the story and characters are comprehensible and relatable to the readers. In the case of fact comics, it might be difficult to include an efficient and engaging narrative all together, while technical instructional comics might only use very few elements of the narrative depending on the genre of the comic (145). Fact and technical comics primarily have the purpose of informing and instructing the reader and, therefore, do not always require a strong narrative. One could argue that a variety of characters and a complex narrative might even distract the reader from the core information the reader wants to attain. Nevertheless, a skilled writer and comic artist might also be able to enhance the readability and comprehensibility of the important information in the comic by using well-designed characters and a coherent narrative. Therefore, the significance of the narrative in information comics varies greatly from instructional comic to instructional comic, according to their perspective purposes (145).

Jüngst claims that there are three main approaches as to how to use a storyline in instructional comics (Jüngst 306). First, she states that there are instructional comics in which the "narrative is the information", which would be true, for example, of biographical instructional comics such as *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima* (306). This comic, drawn and written by Keiji Nakazawa, utilises an autobiographical narrative and visualises the events before, during and after the detonation of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima in 1945. Second, in some instructional comics the narrative presents the frame used to facilitate the information transfer, but the narrative is not part of the informative content (306). An example for this second approach would be the environmental instructional comic *On the Trail of the Missing*

Ozone, which has children as its target readership. The information given by the comic on the causes, effects, and solutions to ozone depletion is not part of the narrative. The third approach includes instructional comics without a narrative (306). These instructional comics are very rare as they do not attract many readers and, thus, are not suitable for popularisation purposes.

In general, the narrative structure in instructional comics is based on "donor genres" (306). Donor genres do not originate from the comic format but have nevertheless been used by it (Zanettin 172). A large variety of genres have been incorporated into instructional comics and these create certain expectations in the reader, as does the comic format itself (172). Donor genres are mainly utilised to supply the reader with familiar and easily recognisable elements and to add structure as well as suspense to the comic (173). For example, genres used mainly for TV such as animal documentaries or oral genres such as lessons or talks among friends are also applied to information comics (173). Other donor genres frequently found in instructional comics are the fantastic journey, the superhero story, the detective story and the real-life story (Jüngst 308). The main focus for this master thesis is on the fantastic journey donor genre, as it will be the base of the instructional comic specifically designed for this thesis.

The fantastic journey is a story which includes fictional countries, which deviate from reality, and magical elements (Faktorovich 126). These stories are often based on mythology and fantastic creatures and humans with magic skills, such as witches, frequently appear in them (127). Fantastic journeys consist of three main parts, namely: a beginning, middle part and an end (Jüngst 308). Usually, the main characters start and end their journey in the Ordinary World, whereas the middle part contains the magic, supernatural features, ordeals and victories (Windling 39). In addition, the fantastic journey genre is profoundly popular not only in comics but also in other media such as movies and books (39). For example, the well-known and extremely successful story of Harry Potter is based on this genre. His journey begins in the Ordinary World of England and always ends there at the conclusion of each volume. Having

discovered that he is a wizard, he spends an entire year in Hogwarts, a school for wizards and witches, in each volume, where he meets magic creatures and other fantastic wonders.

The narrative pattern of the fantastic journey genre in instructional comics normally includes not only magical elements, but also a group of children or an adult expert who arrive in the abnormal world and meet a native guide (Jüngst 309). This guide functions as an adviser of the new world and guides the children or adult expert throughout their journey of knowledge (309). They could not survive their voyage without the guide and are only able to come back to the Ordinary World through the guide's expertise (309). One example of an instructional comic based on the fantastic journey genre is the series *Matz & Mikke*. The focalisers in these instructional comics are a boy, a girl, and the android expert Lino. In one of the volumes, the group of three travel in time and arrive in Ancient Egypt, where they become acquainted with an Egyptian fisherman who functions as their guide. On their journey, they learn about the place and time as well as having to overcome fantastic ordeals, for example, zombie-like mummies and the ghost of the pharaoh. Fantastic journeys can follow a simple narrative with a small number of characters and clear plot to follow, or they can have greater number of creatures and people and a complex story structure. However, the former is arguably preferable for an instructional comic, as the story should support the main goal of an instructional comic, which is not only to entertain the reader but also the transfer of knowledge.

4. Analysis

The aim of this thesis paper is to find an answer to the research question: *What features are necessary to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic which uses the Monomyth as a story template to teach poetry analysis?* The method used to answer the research question is the "data-driven" bottom-up approach, thus collecting enough specific and detailed data to then understand the underlying general patterns – going from the specific to the general (Burns 107).

The first step of the "data-driven" bottom-up approach is to collect data on all three issues (instructional comics, poetry analysis, and the Monomyth), which has been done in detail in the previous chapters as qualitative research in forms of literature review (Burns 103). Secondly, the newfound data is analysed. However, with the data-driven bottom-up approach, research does not end here (103). The bottom-up approach is a "recursive spiral or cycle of action and reflection", thus, the analysis of data must be carried out in a "dynamic way" and not in a linear manner (103). Therefore, collecting data (= previous chapters of this paper) and reducing the data through the research process to the most important information (= the designed comic, see appendix) leads to the desired answer to the research question for this paper (104). The dynamic reflection and recursive spiral of a data-driven bottom-up approach can be observed through this analysis chapter as it "explains" and displays "patterns" (also known as "general conclusions") which were found through this specific research, thus "revisiting" the findings once more (107).

This chapter will be structured as follows: each unit (= chapters of the designed comic) will be analysed separately concerning the three issues (instructional comics, poetry analysis, and the Monomyth) starting with the front cover and unit 1. This is done in order to apply the data-driven bottom-up approach correctly and, at the same time, to confirm that the researched and collected data is definitely applied to the designed comic.

Front Cover and Unit 1:

The designed instructional comic's front cover contains a picture that "attracts the eye of the prospective reader" as it is in colour, while the rest of the comic is created in black and white like most instructional comics (Weidenmann 438). Furthermore, it lacks speech balloons and panels which is typical for a front cover of an instructional comic (Jüngst 49). Additionally, front covers of comics usually include a dynamic picture of the main protagonist, which can be clearly seen in the designed comic cover for this thesis (50). Penny, the main character, is in

the centre of the cover, standing on a flying, oversized poetry book, thus, creating a dynamic atmosphere as the wind seems to move her hair and cape, nearly blowing her little sidekick chihuahua Couplet away due to the book's speed. Moreover, elements of humour or adventure are usually portrayed on an instructional comic cover (50). The humorous element is Couplet, the small dog, who clings onto the poetry book, while showing exaggerated facial expression of dread. Adventurous aspects are visualised by Penny's outfit, which includes a cape and earth-coloured clothes, which is often worn by fictional treasure hunters such as Indiana Jones in *Indiana Jones*, or Sydney Fox in *Relic Hunter*. In addition, riding a flying book towards either a sunset or sunrise, while standing bravely on its spine could also be seen as an indication for an adventurous journey ahead. Front covers also use attention-grabbing elements such as "personalisation, emotion and suspense" techniques (49). Emotions are displayed through the dog's scared facial expression and Penny's excitement, while suspense is created by showing a fictional, adventurous event (flying on a book) without explaining what has happened before and what will happen next.

Concerning unit 1 of the designed comic, McCloud suggests starting a comic with an "establishing shot" by creating a "long-shot" panel followed by a "middle ground and close-up panel" (*Making Comics,* 22). Unit 1 begins with a long-shot panel of Penny's house, adhering to the principles of McCloud for establishing shots, namely including "realistic details" and creating a "wider view" for the reader (*Making Comics,* 162). Not only are realistic details included on the front cover of the designed comic (e.g. squirrels, butterflies and cracks in the concrete and wall), but also a wider view, as the panel is bigger than the rest of the panels on page one creating a sense of location of where Penny lives.

Furthermore, symbolic expressions in forms of star-shaped eyes are used on page one (last panel) and page three (panel six). Symbolic expressions do not "rely on an understanding of real facial expressions" and are often "metaphorical" (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 96). Penny's and Professor Scribe's star-shaped eyes can be deciphered as a glint in one's eyes and

emphasises their excitement and enthusiasm. Moreover, other comic illustration tools such as cloud-shaped panels on page two (signalling a flashback/memory), the worm's eye view (page two, last panel) and fourth wall breaks to direct the readers eye (page five) were included in unit 1. Additionally, the transition "moment to moment" is used on page four (last panel) as the action of a closing eye is displayed in a "series of moments" (15). Another transition appears on page three (panels three and four), namely the "subject to subject" transition, where "a series of changing subjects" (Couplet, Penny and Professor Scribe) are shown "within a single scene" (15). The transition "scene to scene", which assists in managing long timespans within the story, is also displayed in forms of the caption 'twenty minutes later' (page four) and an open panel stating 'last year' (page two) (17).

In regard to the Monomyth, the designed comic is based on Vogler's modern approach of The Hero's Journey, which contains 12 stages. Unit 1 incorporates Vogler's first three stages. The first and second stages are the beginning of the hero's story and usually include a "call to adventure", which is visualised on page one in form of an alarm going off in Penny's room (Campbell 42). The story of the Hero's Journey always starts in the ordinary, mundane world; in Penny's case, the reader finds the main protagonist in her own house in a quiet middle-class neighbourhood (Vogler 99).

Vogler's stage three, called "the refusal of the call", is established on page four (first and last panel), by Penny not paying attention to the professor (Campbell 49). She draws a picture of him instead of taking notes and falls asleep in the end (Campbell 49). These two panels can be seen as a demonstration of Penny's refusal to enter the journey of passing the poetry class to finally understand how to analyse a poem. During this stage, the author needs to illustrate the hero's motivation of the journey, which is Penny passing her poetry class (displayed on page one, last panel and page three, second panel) (Vogler 125). Vogler explains that it is usually the main character's fear that causes the refusal at first, which is illustrated through Penny's dreadful memory of last year's exam failure (page two) (Vogler 130).

Unit 2 displays a variety of important instructional comic elements. As mentioned in the previous chapters, an instructional comic's main purposes are to transfer knowledge and to entertain (Caldwell 2). The dog Couplet occupies the role of comical relief, which is an important tool for attention-grabbing within a comic (Jüngst 201). "Funny" characters are often clumsy and cute (207). Features like Couplet's big eyes and small body as well as his urge to relieve himself on Sir Eatalot's coat make him the non sequitur element in unit 2. Additionally, his clumsiness can be seen on page six in panels two and three, where he falls and lands rather hard on his head, and on page seven, where the mentor kicks him far away. The small dog's misfortune also allows the reader feel empathy towards him and, thus, engages them further with the story.

Concerning character design in unit 2, Penny is shown as a round character due to her revealed "inner life", "visual distinction" and "expressive traits" (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 63). While unit 1 shows her fear of poetry and Professor Scribe as well as her struggles to pass poetry class, unit 2 displays her determination to accept the poetry quest and finally pass the poetry exam (page eight). Her visual distinction is her hair, with one hair streak always standing up vertically (e.g. page eight, last panel). Surprised and scared facial expressions (e.g. page six, first and last panels; page eight, first panel) are her frequently drawn expressive traits and appear in the next units as well.

What is more, pull backs and close ups are both used in unit 2. After Penny and Couplet fall out of the magical portal, a "pull back" is used to show the new location and create a "sense of being there" for the readers (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 19). Moreover, by not showing an expected establishing shot in the beginning of unit 2 (two middle-ground panels are shown instead), suspense is increased as the reader's sense of place is delayed (23). In contrast, the close ups of Penny and Sir Eatalot (page eight) enable the reader to notice important details (the

characters' emotions) and areas of change (Penny's eyebrows and mouth) getting to know the characters as a result (34).

In regard to the hero's journey, unit 2 includes stages four and five, namely "meeting with the mentor" and "crossing the first threshold" (Vogler 139, 151). The mentor figure, usually a "wise old man", is illustrated through a humanised goat named Sir Eatalot (first encounter: page six, panel three) (142). Sir Eatalot's humour (page seven, panel five) and involvement in Penny's journey (page seven, panels one, two and six) are also included in unit 2. These are common character traits of a mentor in a quest (140). According to Vogler, occasionally, a mentor also exhibits kindness and assistance, while giving the hero important information concerning the hero's journey (144). This is visualised on page seven (panels one and two), where the mentor offers the protagonist instructions regarding the quest. He also demonstrates kindness and his goodwill towards Penny by approving of her decision to start the quest by thinking "Well done, Penny… well done" (page eight, last panel), while simultaneously smiling encouragingly (page eight, panels four and five).

Stage five (crossing the first threshold) is indicated by Penny's decision to walk through the gate. In the Monomyth, the threshold signifies a transition from a known territory to an unknown one involving "the hero's courage" (Campbell 66). Therefore, the act of crossing the threshold is an "act of will in which the hero commits wholeheartedly to the adventure" which can be seen on page eight (panel two) through Penny's determined facial expression and verbal announcement "I need to pass my poetry class!" (page eight, panel three). Walking towards the adventure is not only an internal decision, but also often symbolised through physical openings such as "doors," "gates," or "arches" (Vogler 152, 154). The opening in the designed comic is pictured through a Japanese gate (page six, last panel).

Unit 3:

In unit 3, the "choice of flow" is utilised (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 34). By repeating the same elements, the reader notices subtle changes and new important information easier, such as small exclamation marks, facial expressions and changing emotions (e.g. page nine, panels one and two as well as panels four and five) (34). In addition, clarity is enhanced by balancing "intensity" versus simplicity (45). For this, "contrast", "urgency" and a different shaped speech balloons are used to express a stronger emotion and louder voice (page 10, panel 1) (47). The words in bold and bigger font ('poetry analysis') creates volume in Penny's voice and a thicker line used for the speech balloon emphasises the urgency of the utterance (Jüngst 135).

Stage six represents the Monomyth aspect in this unit. As the name of this stage suggests, stage six is where the hero meets "tests," "allies," and "enemies" (Vogler 159). Campbell suggests that these ordeals could be, amongst other things, "bites by beasts" and "meeting mythical creatures", which are portrayed by dangerous, teeth-showing wolves (page nine, panel three) and a talking, yet to be identified, creature named Flame (first appearance: page nine) (Campbell 86). The first challenge of the quest, fighting off wolves by shouting 'poetry analysis' is successfully completed, and Flame becomes an ally by joining their journey (page ten, last panel).

Furthermore, in stage six, the wondrous, unknown, dangerous and exotic world is introduced (Campbell 90). Vogler calls this world, the "Special World", which has its first appearance on page nine, panel one, where the reader experiences the thick, mysterious forest in "sharp contrast" to the "Ordinary World", which is Penny's calm and structured neighbourhood and college in unit 1 (159). Moreover, stage six can also be used to indicate which character can be trusted and "relied upon", which can be seen through Couplet's facial expression revealing mistrust towards the newly introduced character Flame (page eleven, panel three) (161).

Stage seven ("approach to the inmost cave") of the Monomyth is included in unit 4 (Vogler 169). The cave of stage seven can have any form commonly holding "supreme wonder" and "terror" and does not necessarily have to be a literal cave (171). In the case of the designed comic, however, a literal cave is drawn with an entrance shaped like a skull signalling danger (page eleven, last panel). Within the "inmost cave", the protagonist and allies always experience disheartening situations, which are displayed through Penny's deep fear of poetry (page 13, last panel) and Flame's heartbreaking memory of past events (page 16 and page 17) (Vogler 176). The protagonist only overcomes challenges through the unique group dynamic and their combined skills (Campbell 82). Flame is the expert of poetry and solves the riddle with its knowledge (page 14 and page 15), while Penny's strength is friendship and love (page 18, panels one, two and three).

One of the two main purposes of an instructional comic is to transfer knowledge (Caldwell 2). In an information comic, abstract information cannot be merely explained by pictures, but is explained through a wise expert-character (Jüngst 140). Flame, the poetry expert of the group, explains poetry terminology in order to complete the quest challenge (page 14 and page 15), thus, indirectly teaching the readers as well. In addition to the expert-non-expert communicative situation, other information is conveyed in unit 4, namely sound. In the last panel of page 12, the word 'pop' appears with the ghost of poetry, while a tapping sound of feet is communicated through the words 'tap tap' (page 15, panels three and four). These sound effects can only be perceived with the reader's eyes and not ears and, according to McCloud, there is no right or wrong in portraying sound on paper (146). However, there are tools to assist the transmission of the wished sound effect through graphic devices, such as the "shape," "line" and "colour" of the word (147). The word 'pop' is emphasised by its sharp edges, creating the

illusion of a small cracking sound, while showing thicker lines, generating the effect of loudness.

Unit four is the first unit to include elements of poetry. Flame briefly explains terminology such as foot, metre, metrical patterns, and rhythm to the reader (page 24). Penny's fear of poetry (also already shown in the units before) indicates the common students' and teachers' apprehension towards poetry (see thesis chapter 1.1). Another poetry element is the ghost of poetry, his appearance being a reference to that of William Shakespeare.

Unit 5:

"The ordeal" stage (stage eight) of the Monomyth is used for unit 5. The hero faces her greatest challenge and "most fearsome opponent" in this stage (Vogler 183). Penny's greatest challenge is to solve a poetry riddle on her own, which she successfully does (page 20, panel three). Her greatest fear is to lose her chihuahua friend Couplet, which is prevented by her correct answer on a poetry question (page 22). Normally, a death and rebirth situations are displayed in this stage as well, as that is what the audience "enjoys the most" (184). The dog Couplet pretends to die from drinking the wrong potion but wakes up seconds later as Penny chooses the correct rhyme scheme after all. This scene presents a semi death and rebirth scenario for the readers to enjoy. Campbell also states that the hero grows in maturity, confidence and enlightenment through this ordeal, which is shown in the last two units: unit 6 and unit 7 (128).

Information transfer in this unit not only occurs through expert non-expert communication between characters, but also through the author (expert) to the readers (non-experts) (e.g. pages 19 and 20). This information transfer usually focuses on basic knowledge (author, voice, rhyme schemes) on the given topic (poetry) and doesn't depict any "recent scientific discoveries" (Jüngst 1). In addition, the borderless image on page 22 (last panel) is used in order to create a "sense of place" and a sense of being there yourself as a reader (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 33). Concerning the new setting, a castle, (page 23), this panel

adheres to McCloud's suggestion of showing life-like details and also a sense of standing yourself in the wooden doorframe (*Making Comics,* 23). This establishing shot also illustrates a "distance about to be crossed" (from the cave to the gate of the castle) creating a moment of suspense for and anticipation within the readers of what might lie ahead in the next unit (25).

Elements of poetry discussed briefly in unit 5 are: rhyme schemes (embracing rhyme, alternate rhyme, chain rhyme, rhyming couplets, difference between voice and authorship) (pages 19 and 20). The difference between voice and authorship of a poem are explained through a short poem that reflects the story if the characters Flame and Sir Eatalot (entire page 19). Thus, a clear distinction between the voice (Flame) and the author (Sir Eatalot) can be made by both the hero as well as the readers as they have already heard/read about Flame's past with the poet Sir Eatalot in previous chapters.

Unit 6:

In unit 6, several emotions are expressed explicitly through differently drawn facial expressions/muscles of the characters as well as symbolism and exaggerations. The following emotions are expressed in unit 6: calmness (page 24, panel one and two), uncertainty (page 25, last panel), excitement/joy (page 26, panel one), surprise (page 26, panel three), a state of being pleased (page 27, last two panels) and determination (page 28, panel two). The emotions of joy and surprise are two of six basic emotions and can be "modified" and "mixed" to create many more emotions (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 83). To draw readable and clear emotions as an illustrator, one has to focus on the muscles of the character's face (92). For example, the emotional expression of surprise often includes the "brow-lifter" pulled up, eyes and mouth wide open and all other muscles passive, which is exhibited on page 26 (panel three) and page 28 (first panel) (93). It is also important to mention that each main character should possess a "personal expression" which is "tailored" specifically to them and their unique individual style (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 89). For instance, Penny frequently expresses surprise and

determination throughout the comic (e.g. page 24 (panel two and three), page 26 (panel one, three and four), page 27 (panel three and five) and page 28 (panel two and three)), while her mentor Sir Eatalot always seems pleased with Penny whenever she reveals her perseverance and courage (e.g. page 27 (panel five and six)).

Additionally, emotions in comics are also expressed through "symbolism" and "exaggeration" which are depicted in the comic in forms of surprise-lines (e.g. character Flame: page 24 (panel two and three)) and question marks as well as exclamation marks (e.g. character Penny: page 27 (panel three, four and five) and page 28 (panel three and four) (94).

Vogler's reward-stage (stage nine) is embedded in unit 6, the second to last unit of this comic. In the Monomyth, when the hero and her group have successfully completed and survived the quest, a reward follows (Vogler 205). The hero usually takes the reward immediately, without hesitation, into her possession, which is also done by Penny on page 27 (panel 3) (205). This is seen as a "transaction", where Penny earns the reward by having overcome all obstacles (208). The reward, or elixir in our case, is a guideline on a scroll on how to pass Penny's poetry class. According to Campbell, the reward (or "ultimate boon" or "ultimate goal") can be anything (the "Holy Grail," an "elixir," a "sword," a "skill" or a special power) (154). Penny, the hero, does not only receive an elixir and an instruction manual on poetry analysis with the scroll, but also a new skill, namely, to read, understand and work with a poem on her own. What is more, completing a hero's quest also "grants new powers or better perceptions" showing that the hero has changed (Vogler 211). The change in the hero Penny can be perceived on page 28 (panel two) where she is determined to continue and finish her poetry class. There is no fear in her anymore, which, in contrast, was very different in the beginning of her journey (e.g. page two (panel five), page four (panel three), page nine (panel one) and page 13 (last panel).

Rhetorical figures and a step-by-step guideline for poetry analysis are the poetry aspects of this unit. Flame explains that rhetorical figures are not meant to be taken literally and reveals

the meaning of the idiom "pull your socks up" on page 25 (last two panels). Penny, however, introduces a meta-level of rhetorical figures and guesses (correctly) that in their case, they have to make an exception and take this idiom literally (page 26, panel one) in order to overcome the hurdle: a gaping abyss (page 25, panel three). The step-by-step guideline on the scroll (= elixir/reward of the hero's journey) unravels the 'secret' of how to analyse a poem (page 27, panel four) and is, at the same time, the portal back to the Ordinary World. The detailed steps on how to analyse poetry of the scroll can be found on the fact page (last page of the comic).

Unit 7 and Fact Page:

General comic elements such as choice of flow and symbolism are employed in unit 7. The choice of flow is a selection made by the author/illustrator to direct the readers "between" and "within" panels (McCloud, *Making Comics,* 32). By using arrows on page 32, the audience is guided from panel to panel avoiding confusion and an interruption of their reading flow. Concerning symbolism, Couplet's eyes in shape of hearts (page 31, panel three) and a drop of sweat (page 32, panel two) are "symbolic expressions" of certain emotions (96). These symbols are "metaphorical" and the audience needs to "know the code" in order to understand their meanings (96). The heart-shaped eyes indicate love and affection towards the character Penny who celebrates her victory, while the drop of sweat implies nervousness and tension during the exam season.

The "fact page" (page 33 and 34) is a typical feature of an instructional comic and is placed either at the end of the comic or within a chapter (Jüngst 131). Its purpose is to provide an overview of a certain subject (in this case: poetry analysis) and, at the same time, render information that is too "dense" or too "complex" to be explained in a few sentences within a speech balloon (131). Moreover, the fact page merges all three main topics of this thesis together: the Monomyth (as the reward/elixir is shown through the scroll-shaped page), poetry (poetry analysis is explained) and instructional comics (fact page).

In the last unit of the designed comic, three stages of the Monomyth are combined: stage 10, 11 and 12. Stage 10, "the road back," leads the hero back to the "starting point" (= Ordinary World), which is also the "ultimate destination" of the hero's journey (Vogler 219). In Penny's case, the starting point is her poetry classroom, where her journey began (page 29, panel two). Returning also includes another "threshold crossing," defeating a last opponent and implementing the lessons learned in the Special World (221). The threshold is the same magic whirlwind that transported her and her dog into the Special World in unit 1 (page 28, panels three and four) and her opponent is the poetry exam that has yet to be passed (page 31). She implements her learned lessons by finally passing the poetry exam. The passing of the exam is what Campbell calls the reaching of "enlightenment". He further states that in this stage, victory is always celebrated (154). The celebration of Penny´s triumph is illustrated on page 32 (panel two), where she and her dog jump happily up in the air.

Stage 11, "the resurrection," can involve an exam and is often the "most challenging passage" for the hero (page 31) (Vogler 229). Throughout the comic, it is made clear that poetry analysis and passing the poetry exam are Penny's most dreaded issues. Moreover, the designed comic ends with a "quiet climax," which does not involve the "most explosive, dramatic, loud or dangerous" moments, but rather an experience of emotions that give the reader a sense of closure and conflict resolutions (235). Penny's written exam is such a quiet climax, where she conquers the 'last villain' quietly and firmly. What is more, in this stage, a "relief of anxiety" has to be felt by the readers, "providing feelings of catharsis" which is expressed through Penny's joyful facial expressions, her relieved and excited jump in the air, confetti surrounding her and Couplet and her elated singing (page 32, panel two and three) (237). Campbell concurs that this stage needs to demonstrate that the hero is successful in both worlds, namely the Ordinary World and the Special World, which is exhibited by Penny effectively completing both the poetry quest and the poetry exam (196).

Vogler's last stage, "the return with the elixir," includes the hero to receive the reward, return home and continue the journey (Vogler 249). The reward and return home have already been explained in the previous paragraph, and the continuing of her journey is her continuing her poetry class and passing the exam. Vogler also argues that there has to be a clear "untying" or "unknotting" of lives and events (also called "Denouement"), but not all questions have to be answered (250). Open-ends and "ambiguities" are permitted in the last stage (251). The untying is done by Penny noticing a candleholder on Prof. Scribe's desk, which looks like Flame, the elixir/scroll in her backpack and a goat outside the window, which bears a resemblance to her mentor Sir Eatalot (page 30, panels one, two and four). As a result, the readers cannot be certain whether the hero only dreamt about the poetry quest or what parts of Penny's journey truly happened, thus, creating ambiguity and uncertainty. In addition, the story between Flame and Sir Eatalot constructs an open end as the reader does not know whether these two characters will see each other again or how their relationship will develop. Another open end and open question are generated through the last panel of the comic (page 32). In this panel, Prof. Scribe is seen with the same earrings Sir Eatalot wears, eliciting questions in the reader whether Prof. Scribe and Sir Eatalot are the same person. According to Vogler, the hero may have a "series of mentors" who have different functions throughout the journey, but the mentor might also not be who he/she pretended to be in the beginning of the journey (44).

Poetry aspects mentioned in unit 7 and on the fact pages (page 33 and 34) are: structure of a poem (line and stanza), voice and author, stress, metrical pattern (trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter and hexameter), foot and types of feet (iamb, trochee, anapaest, spondee and amphibrach), rhyme (end-rhyme and internal rhyme) and rhyme schemes (rhyming couplets, alternate rhyme, embracing rhyme, chain rhyme and tail rhyme), rhetorical figures (oxymoron and metaphor) and interpretation ideas and questions.

5. Conclusion

This thesis focuses on three issues: instructional comics, poetry analysis, and the Monomyth (also known as 'the Hero's Journey') and aims to answer the following research question:

"What features are necessary to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic which uses the Monomyth 'the Hero's Journey' as a story template to teach poetry analysis?"

Qualitative research on these three topics in the form of literature review and the bottom-up approach were carried out. Through the extensive research on each of the three topics, detailed information was collected, an overview gained, and the "data-driven" bottom-up approach applied to draw general conclusions in order to answer the research question (Burns 107). As a next step, an instructional comic was created according to these new insights. This instructional comic concentrates on teaching poetry analysis while incorporating the plot template 'the Monomyth' and features of instructional comics (for designed instructional comic see appendix). The instructional comic focuses on a heroine who goes on a quest, including all 12 stages of Vogler's Hero's Journey and guides the readers through the different steps of poetry analysis. The designed comic, the analysis chapter and the conclusion chapter render a detailed interpretation of the findings regarding the research question.

First of all, findings and outcomes to answer the research question and, thus, creating such a unique comic will be examined and interpreted in the following paragraphs. Secondly, a discussion on problems encountered during research and critical awareness of limitations of this thesis will be identified. Lastly, ideas for future research and projects will be offered.

Answer to research question and problems encountered during research:

Research findings clearly indicate that reading and understanding poetry is important for several reasons. It not only serves as a "solid form of education", but also assists in "creating identities" (Parini 15). Furthermore, Wordsworth (281) argues that poetry can bring "tranquillity in our

lives", while Hodgson (3) takes Wordsworth's idea further and states that poetry "affords pleasure and wisdom". Poetry also stimulates "intrinsic motivation" which is the fundamental goal when teaching students (Kusurkar, Croiset, and Ten Cate 978). In addition, all three aspects: the Monomyth, poetry and comics are perceived as entertaining and engaging which is discussed in detail in the previous chapters. Ultimately, teaching and learning how to read poetry makes this thesis research on how to implement poetry analysis within an instructional comic to be relevant and valuable.

Additionally, in order to analyse poetry, certain devices need to be explained and understood. This is where the first difficulties concerning this research for this paper was encountered. Extensive research and handbooks on poetry analysis and its devices exist, however, it is not clear which of these devices are perceived as beginner-friendly for teenagers and which for advanced (older) students. As the designed comic is created for upper secondary students (to introduce them to basic understanding of poetry analysis), it is vital to identify appropriate devices according to their age and language abilities. However, different experts on poetry offer different opinions on what is considered basic knowledge on poetry analysis, but none of them specifically focus on teenagers (14 to 19 years old) as a target group. Therefore, for this paper and designed instructional comic, the decision was made to only use those devices, which were, on the one hand, explicitly proposed as beginner-friendly and, on the other hand, suggested by most scholars who have published handbooks for beginners. These poetry devices are: line, stanza, voice, author, stress, metrical pattern (and examples), feet (and examples of types of feet/foot), rhyme and rhyme schemes (and examples), and rhetorical figures (and examples).

While examining Campbell's Monomyth and Vogler's Hero's Journey for this thesis, it came to be understood that the instructional comic should be based primarily on Vogler's rather than on Campbell's concept, as the Hero's Journey offers a more modern approach to this story plot (Vogler 9). Nevertheless, several features of the Monomyth were applied as well if deemed

necessary. What is more, Jung's "universal archetypes" of a hero's story such as mentor, hero and ally found their place in the comic as well and are also advocated by both Campbell and Vogler as efficient tools for a story (Jung 43).

All 12 stages of Vogler's Hero's Journey were studied and, as a next step, implemented into the comic's story in chronological order. However, Vogler argues that not all of his stages have to be included or in chronological order for the story to be efficient, engaging and successful (4). He understands his 12 stages as a "flexible guideline" in contrast to Campbell's "formulaic" and "rigid framework" as the story of a hero has to remain unpredictable, dynamic and full of surprises (4). Nevertheless, as teaching and learning how to analyse poetry can be complex and confusing, the decision (concerning the designed comic) was made to use all of Vogler's 12 stages chronologically to support the learning process of and render information to the readers/students in the clearest manner possible.

Although incorporating these 12 stages into the comic did not cause any particular problems, several issues occurred regarding Vogler's flexible approach on these 12 stages. He does not elaborate on how to come to a decision on what to include and what to exclude concerning his stages, leaving the choice to the artist/author/expert. As I am neither a trained artist nor a trained writer, making these decisions without clear guidelines could have had an unintentional negative impact on the designed comic, though this could probably only be judged by professional artists and writers and is difficult to evaluate from my position. Furthermore, as Vogler's approach promotes flexibility, more than one correct answer to the research question of this thesis and more than one type of an efficient and engaging instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey is possible. Just as scholars seem to be flexible on what poetry devices are appropriate for beginners, so is Vogler when he claims that there is not one formulaic answer to an effective structure for a hero story. As a result, this thesis' designed comic is based on extensive, academic research and is, therefore, evidently an efficient and

engaging instructional comic, however other approaches on designing an instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey and poetry analysis could also lead to a positive outcome.

Regarding instructional comic features to create an efficient and engaging comic, it was determined that numerous elements, which are seen as crucial no matter the type of comic, were necessary to include in the comic for this paper and answer the research question. According to Benoît, panels (and their arrangements, shapes and sizes), speech balloons (and their shapes and sizes), captions, intriguing characters and onomatopoeia are all elements which can be found in most modern comics (17). Therefore, these features were all included in the designed comic. Moreover, McCloud states that the correct choice of "moment," "frame," "image," "word" and "flow" are also core components of a comic (*Making Comics,* 10). This, however, poses a similar challenge as already faced with poetry analysis and the Hero's Journey, as McCloud describes briefly what he means by these terminologies, but leaves it to the artist/author/expert once again to determine what aspects of these five choices to implement and what to omit. Nonetheless, the research question was not merely directed on general comic aspects, but more specifically, instructional comic components.

According to Jüngst, instructional comics are created for two main purposes, namely entertainment and knowledge transfer (11). Consequently, the research was directed to what makes a comic entertaining and educational. Caldwell's suggestions for entertaining factors are "visual fun," "jokes," "funny characters," "suspense," and "entertaining storylines" and, hence, are included in the designed comic as well (89). Concerning the knowledge transfer, two types of communication can be used in an instructional comic, according to Jüngst. She explains that "expert to expert communication" and "expert to non-expert communication" are both efficient tools to deliver certain information (1). As the designed comic does not address an expert community, the "expert to non-expert communication" was chosen in order to render a basic understanding of poetry analysis to teenagers.

Additionally, according to Weidenmann, other criteria need to be included in the process for the comic to be an instructional comic. For instance, to create an instructional comic, he claims that the outward appearance (= front cover) is of importance as it usually determines whether the instructional comic will be bought/read (438). He argues that this is the reason why most front covers of instructional comics are in colour, while the rest of the pages are kept in black and white (438). Jüngst discovered through her research that front covers of instructional comics lack of panels and speech balloons and include elements of "personalisation, emotion and suspense" (49). For these reasons, the front cover of the designed cover is drawn in colour and depicts two interesting characters who show two different emotions while standing on a gigantic flying poetry book, which creates a tone of adventure, dynamic and suspense. To display the personalities of the two main characters Penny and Couplet on the cover, personalisation is realised, and the interest of the reader aroused. Panels and speech balloons are missing in order to adhere to instructional comic principles. As instructional comics are normally created to explain a complex topic in a simple manner, Jüngst states that a variety of instructional comics hold titles such as "X made easy" (67). This is the reason, why the designed comic received the title "The How-to Guide with a BOOM!" (which is displayed on the front cover). This is one of many ways to apply the "simplification strategy" which is often used in instructional comics (Honeyfield 431). Another simplification strategy incorporated in the designed comic is the linguistic strategy where complicated and/or new terminology is either eliminated or explained in a more comprehensive measure.

To transfer more complex knowledge to the reader, textual information in instructional comics is not only given through speech balloon texts, but also through "fact pages" (Jüngst 131). Both approaches are used in the designed comics: information is explained through speech balloon text by various characters as well as through a fact page. The fact page can be found at the end of the comic as suggested by Jüngst (131).

Future research and project suggestions:

The designed comic is based on extensive research and, therefore, an adequate example of what an efficient instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey explaining poetry analysis could look like. However, it is critical to understand that the designed comic is not only effective in theory but also has the wanted effect (entertainment and knowledge transfer) on actual students. For example, the designed comic could be distributed to different schools, school types and age groups in Austria. Through interviews, observation, and testing, its effect could be (re)evaluated and, if necessary, the designed comic can then be enhanced accordingly. Moreover, a workbook (containing some of the same characters from the designed comic) to assist the students in learning poetry analysis as an addition to the designed comic might be a useful tool to consider creating. In general, research on features essential for different English language class topics such as text types (e.g. essays, reports, blog posts, blog comments) and grammar could be carried out in order to create a series of instructional comics for upper secondary students. Furthermore, a volume on poetry analysis for advanced students might engage upper secondary students further once they have finished reading the designed comic and have completed the (not yet existing) workbook.

Therefore, the research for this paper led to the overall conclusion that scholars in all three areas (the Monomyth, poetry analysis and instructional comics) agree that key features exist, however, it seems that they seem at odds with each other on what these key features are. There are multiple valid other approaches on how to design such a specific instructional comic than the one presented for this thesis. Nevertheless, the answers found concerning the research question of this paper as well as the created instructional comic are based on extensive research and, thus, display a valid example of an efficient and engaging instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey explaining poetry analysis.

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7. Appendix

7.1. Designed Comic

UNIT 1

PENNY'S HOUSE...

CRING

Today is the day...

biggest fan

eager

1

5

UNIT 2

6

14
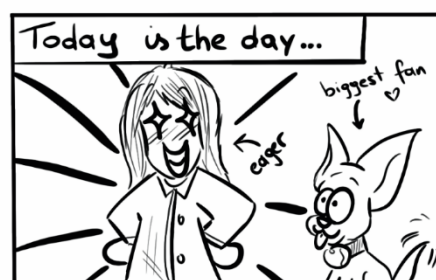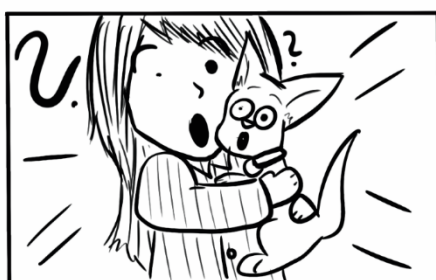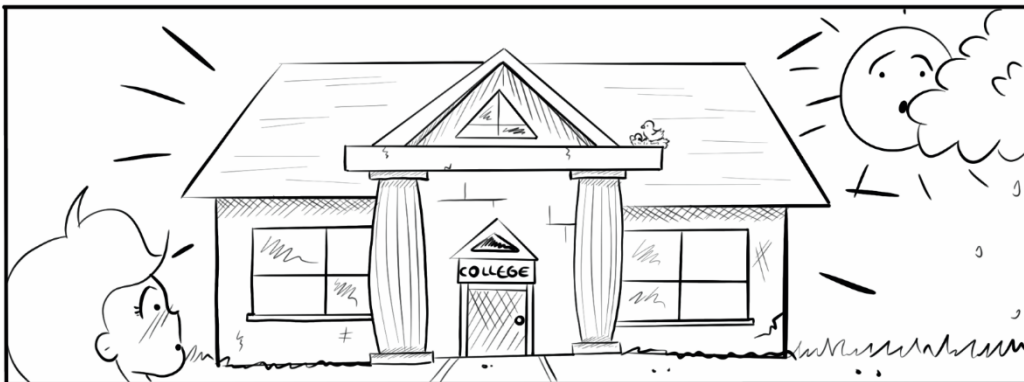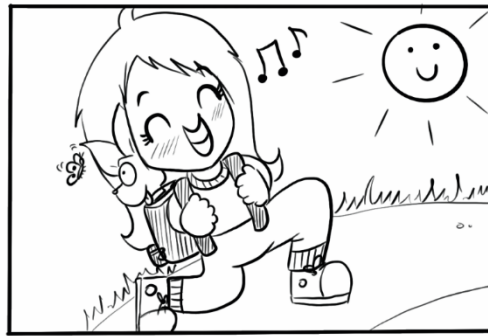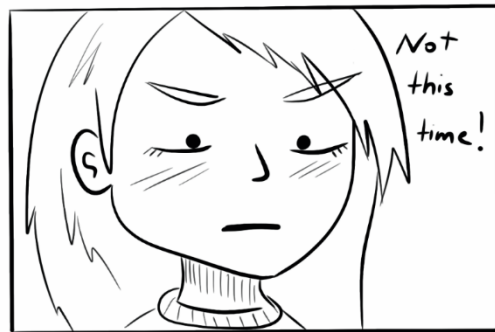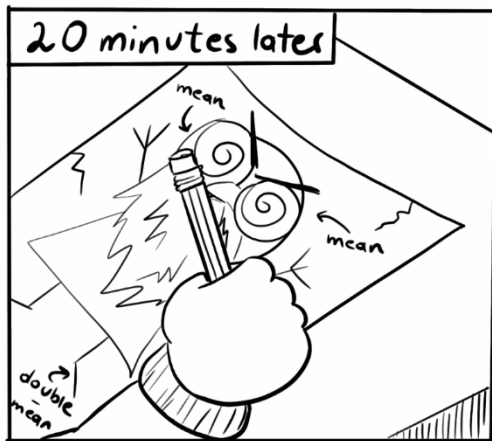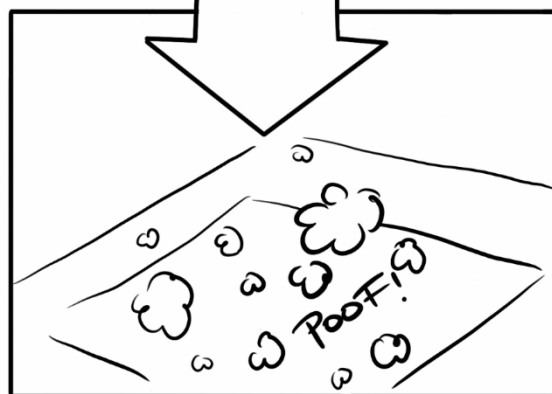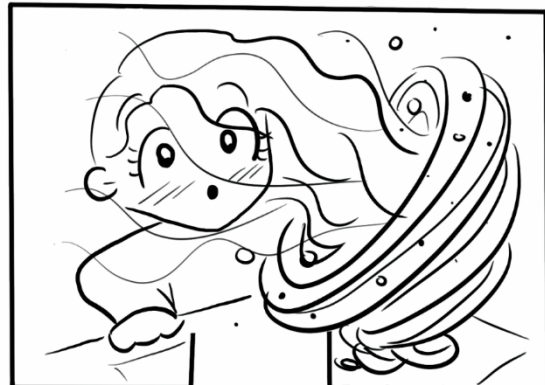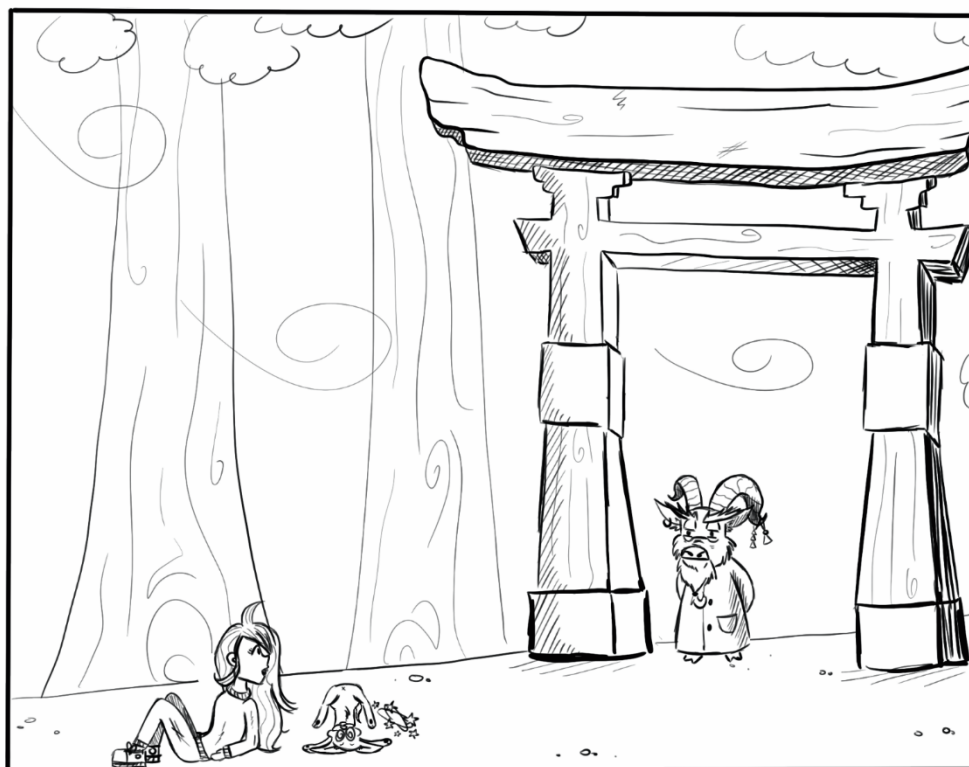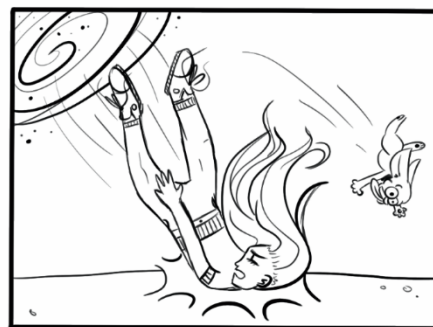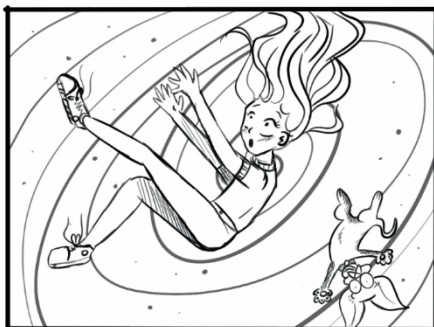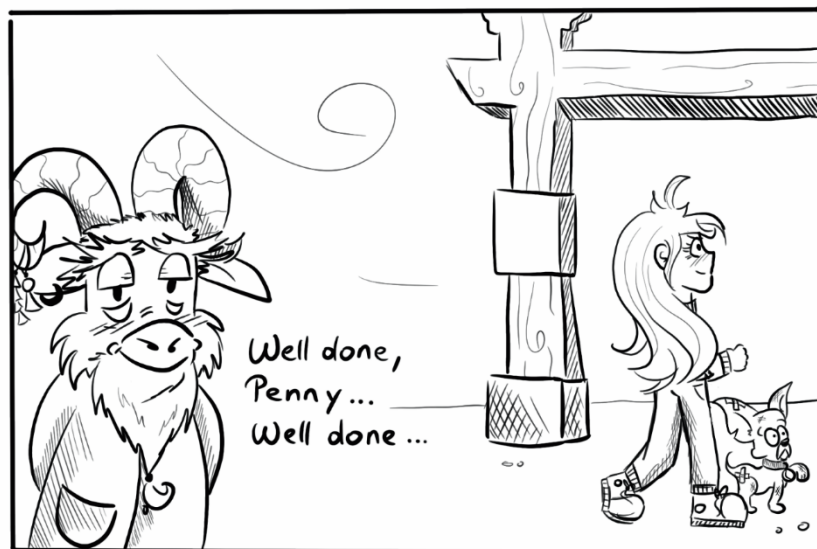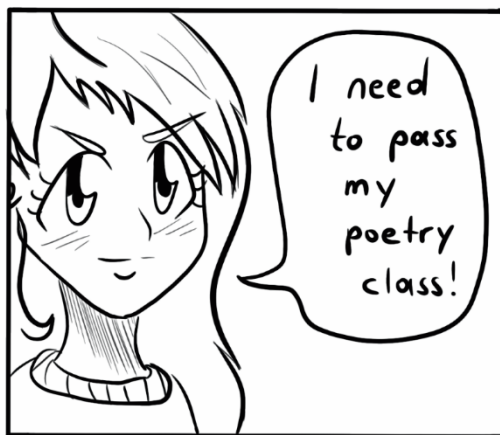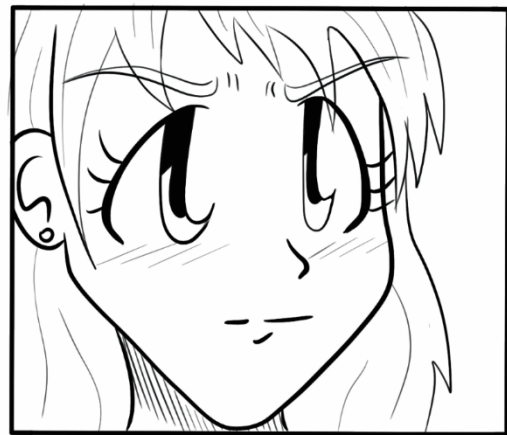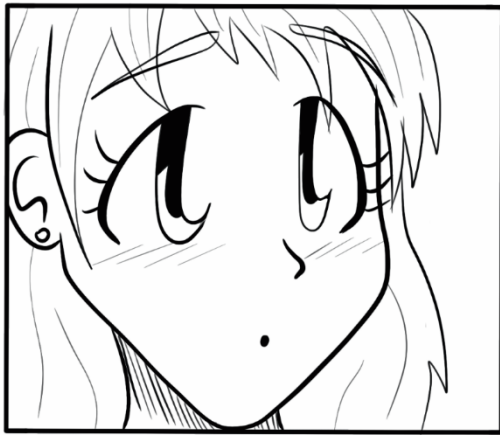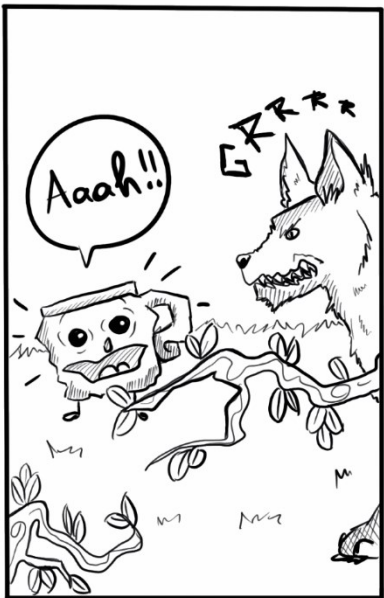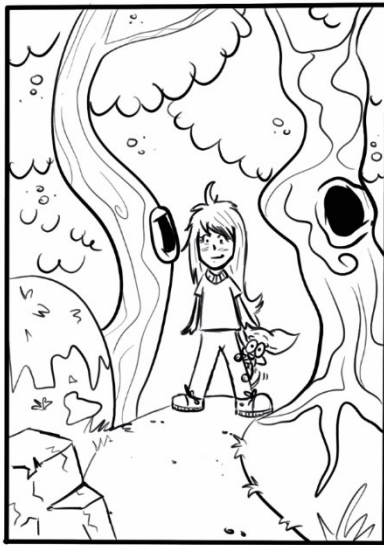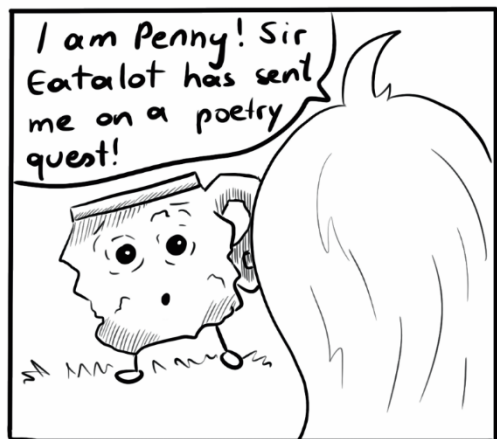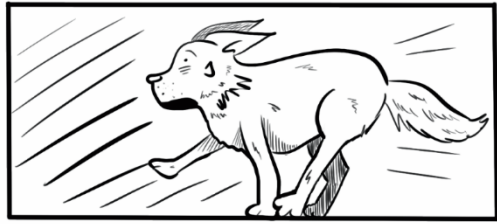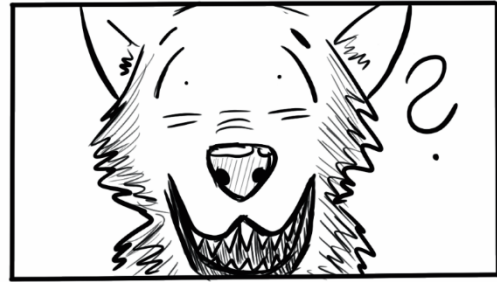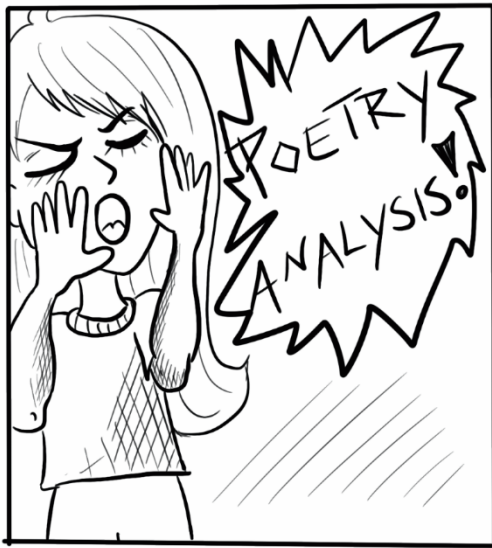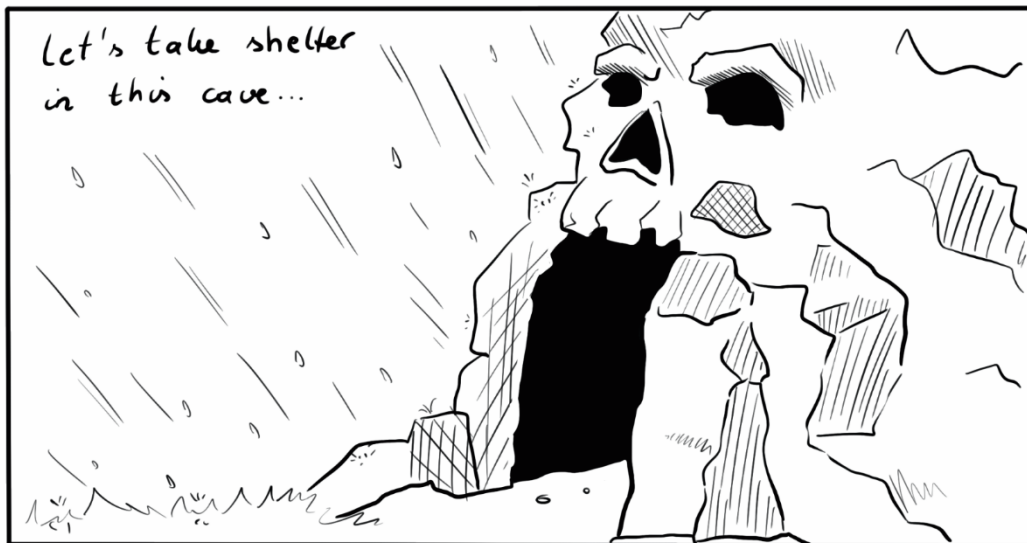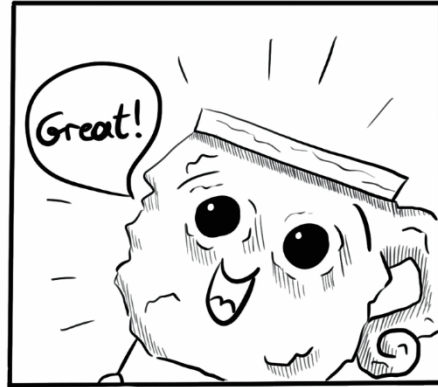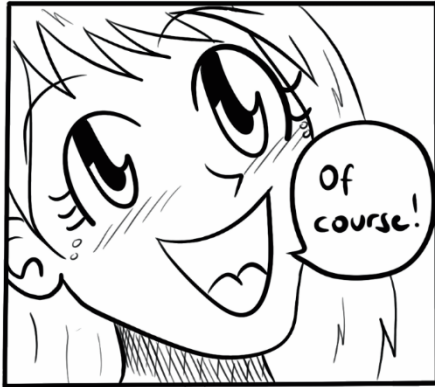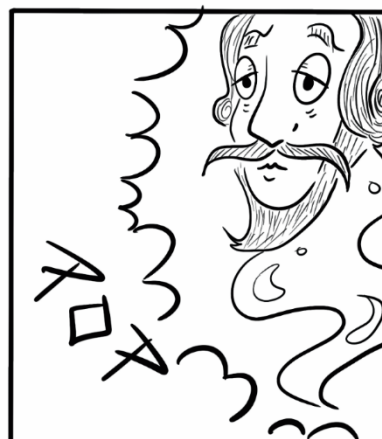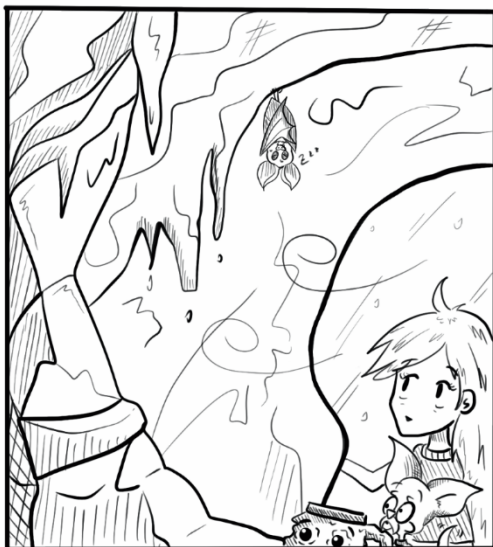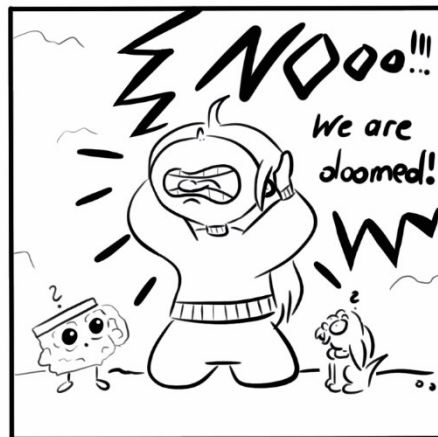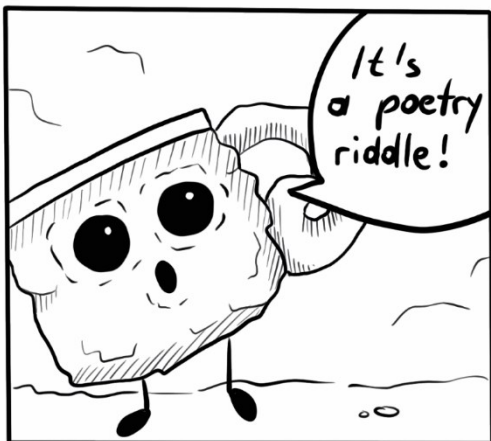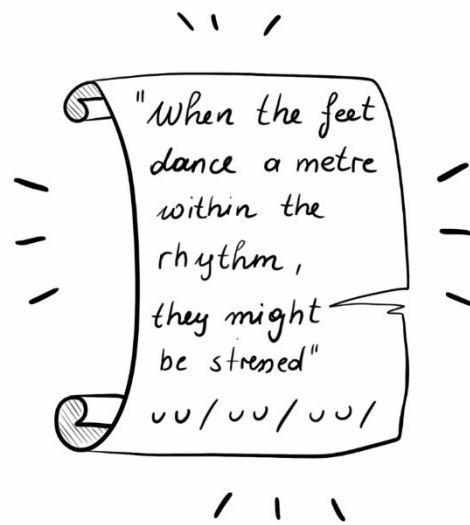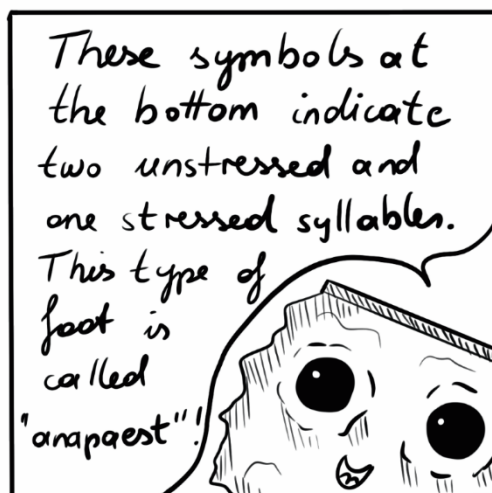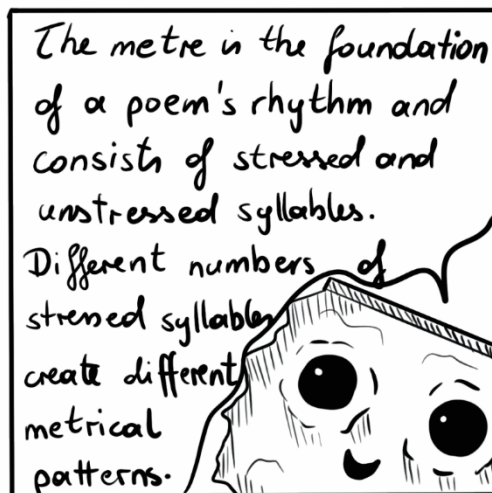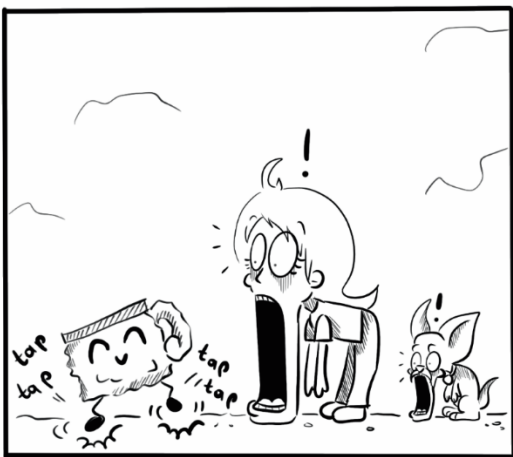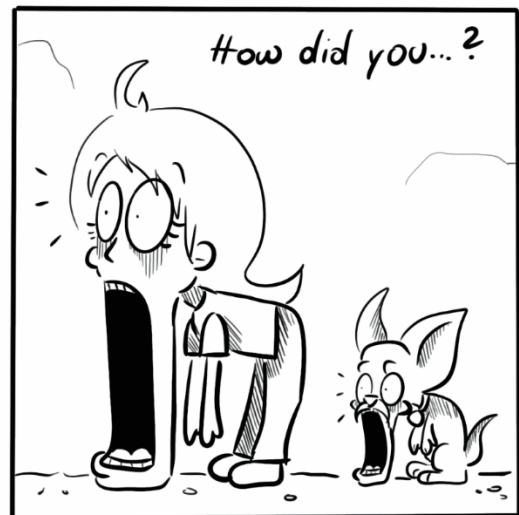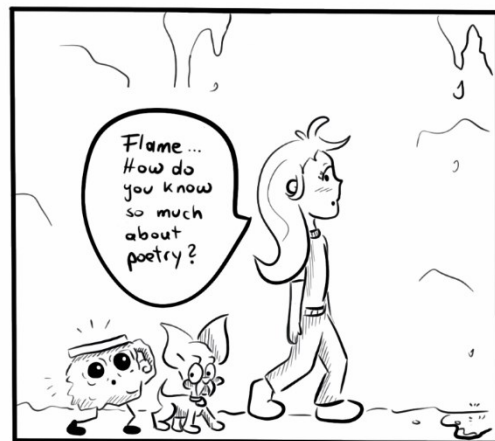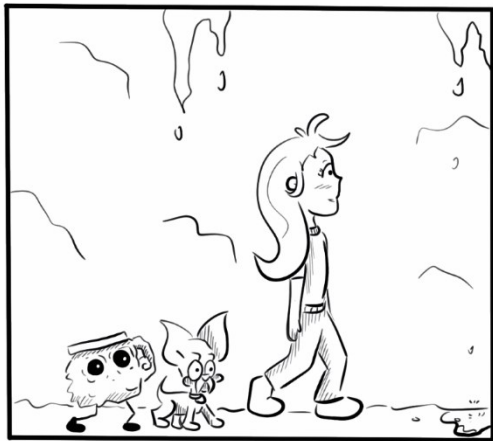
I realised, because of my anger, I was burning our house down!

... but we were lucky... both of us survived...

I was so ashamed... I left and never saw him again...

Poof

17

Look!

A new riddle!

18
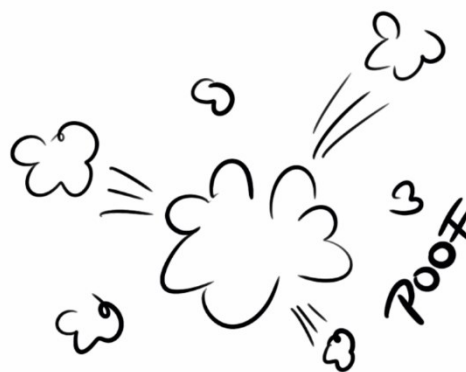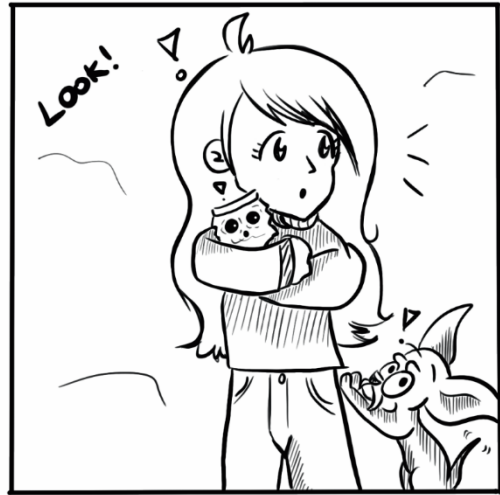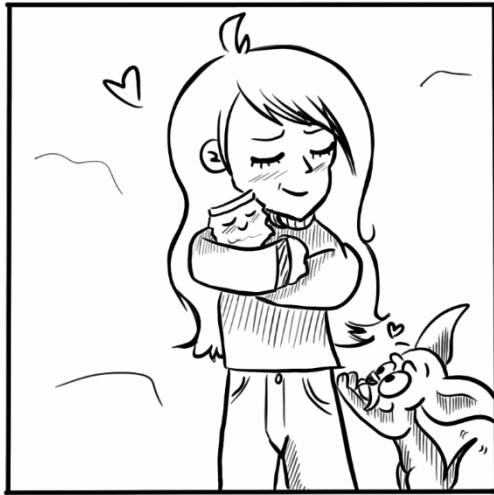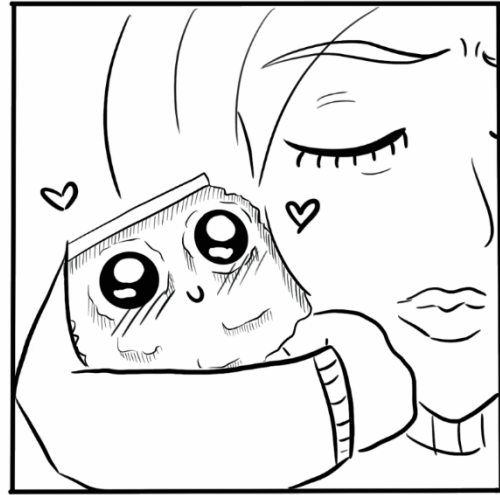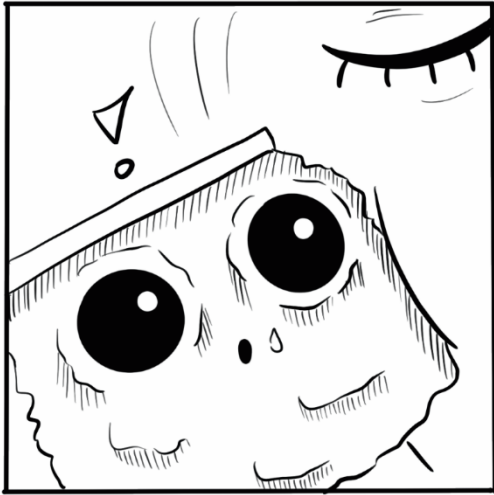
UNIT 5

Drink from the bottle with the correct rhyme scheme. If you can tell the name of the author and the voice of the poem, two bottles with the wrong answer will disappear.

POEM:

years ago we were friends,
creating poetry and memories,
then I burned down the house with ease,
this is how it ends...

Sir E.

Hmm...

The signature of the poet is "Sir E."! Sir Eatalot is the author of this poem!

The "voice", also known as "lyric person", is the fictionalised speaker of a poem. The voice is me! I burned down our house years ago!

19

23

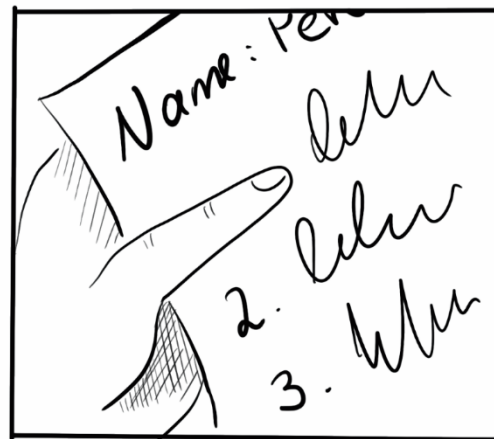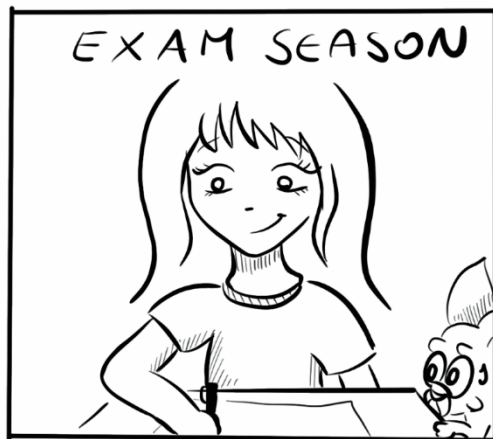# UNIT 6

24

28

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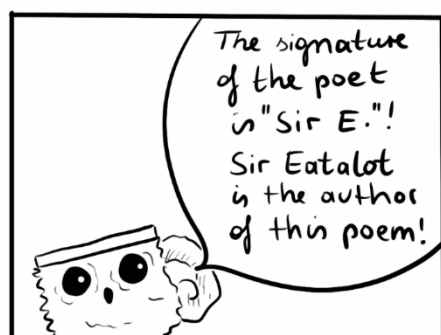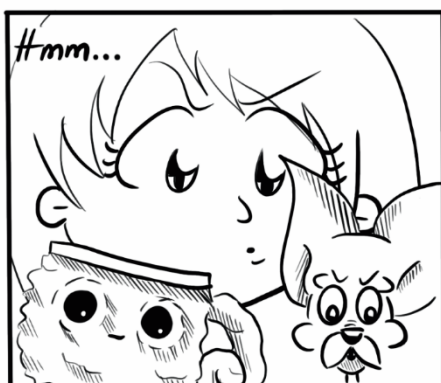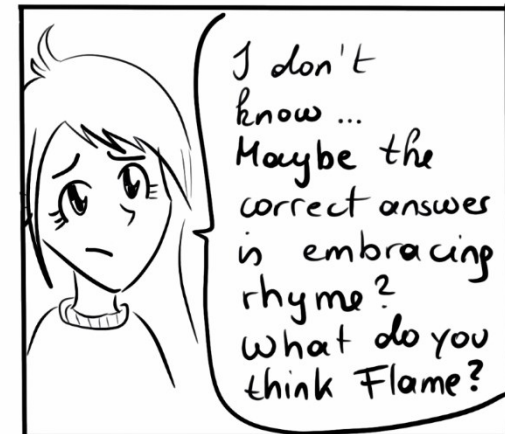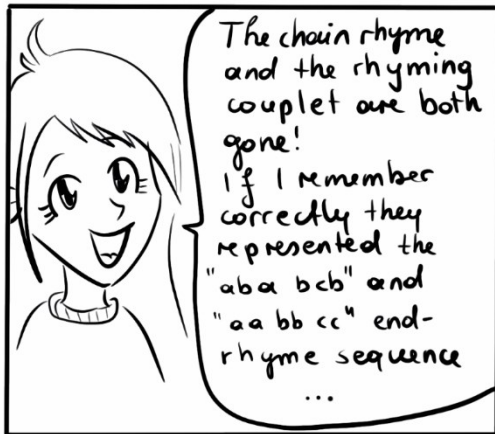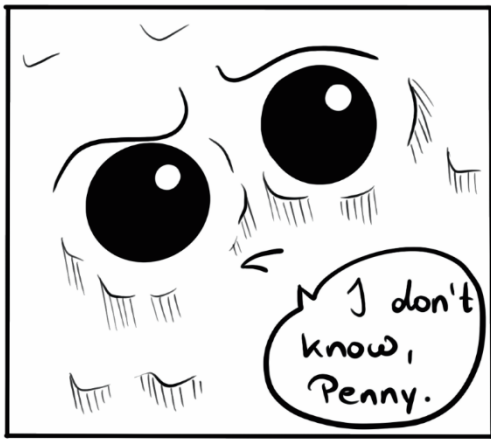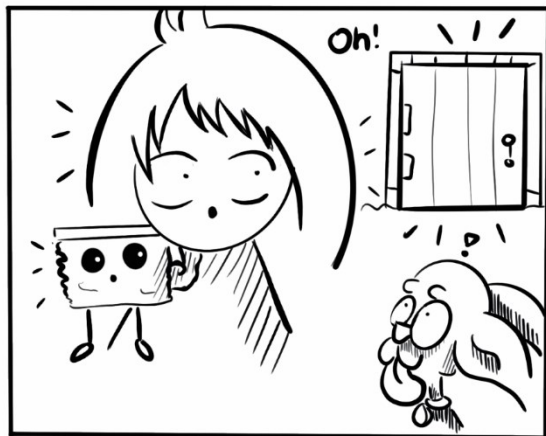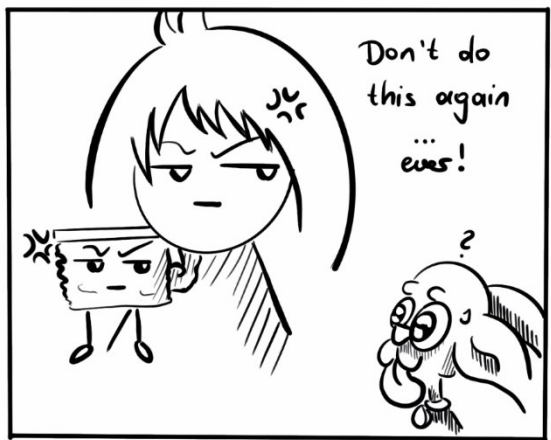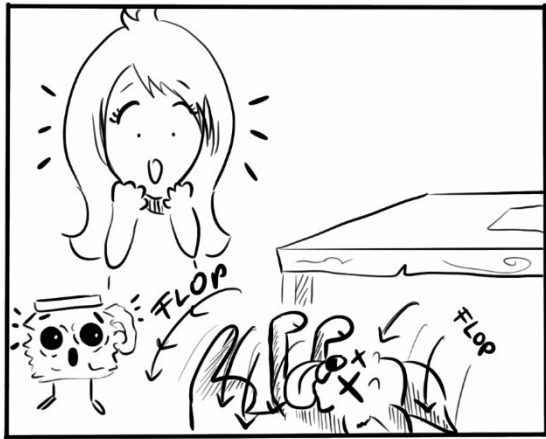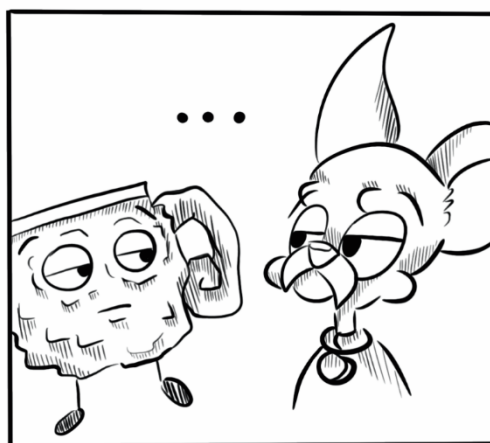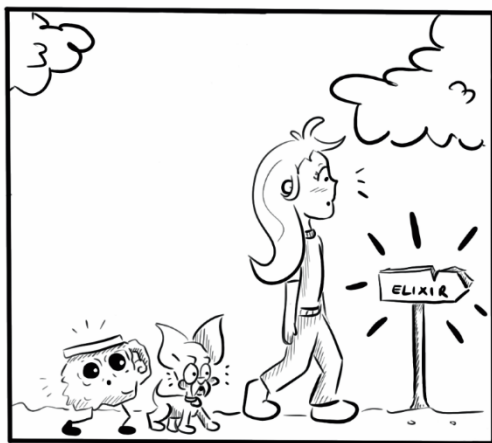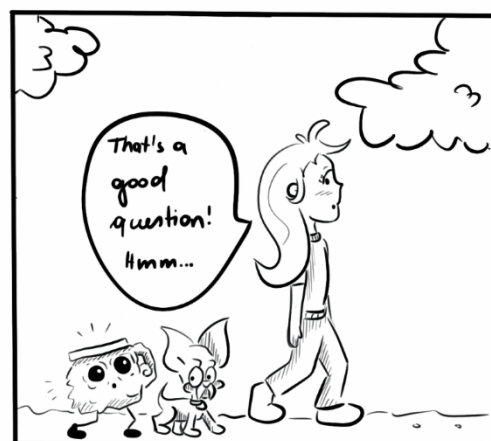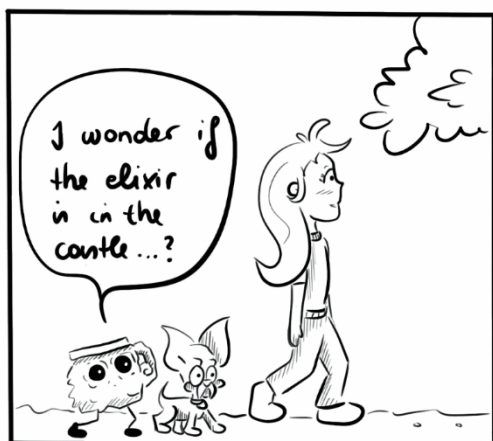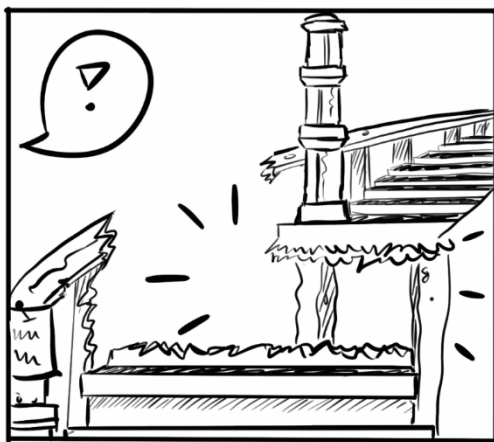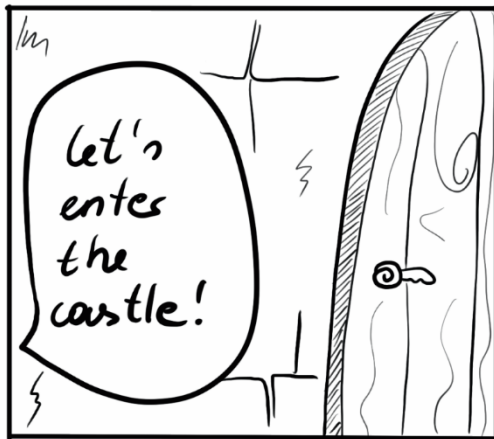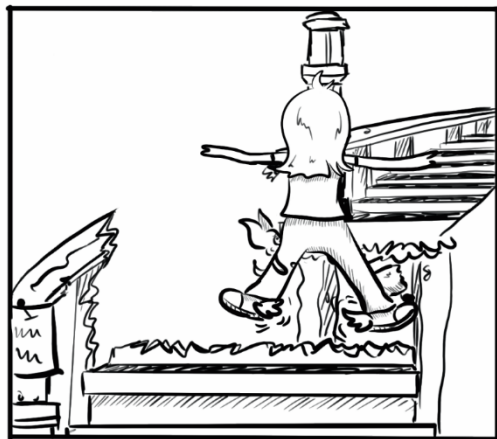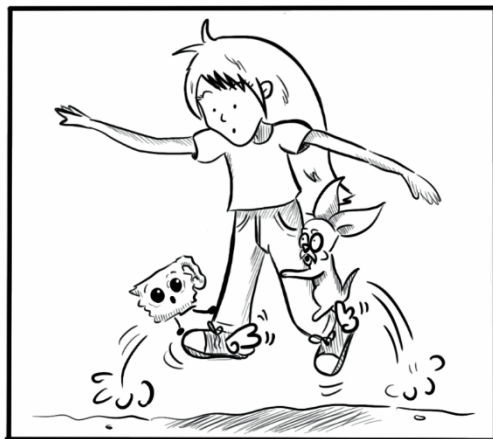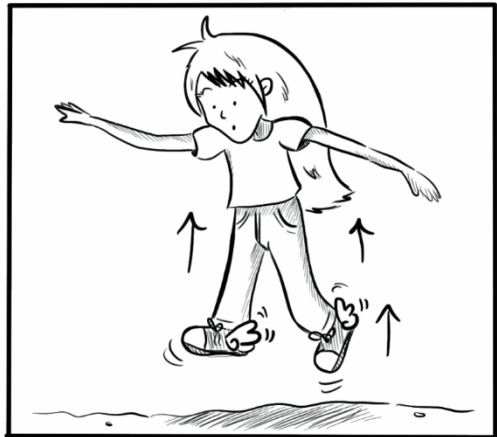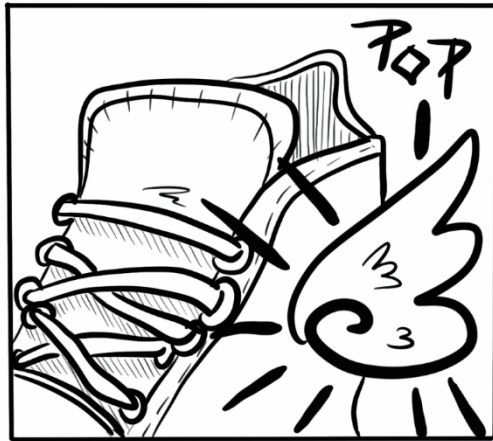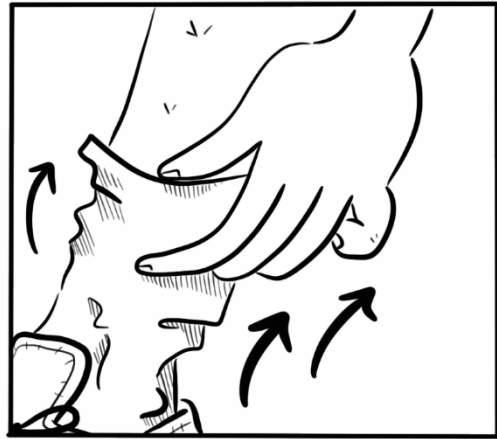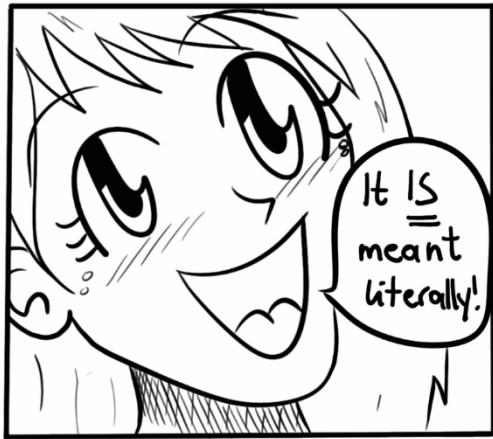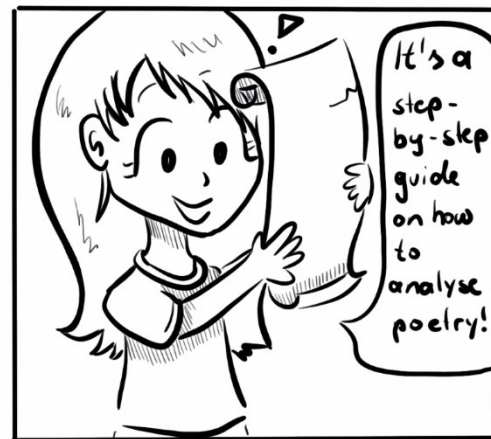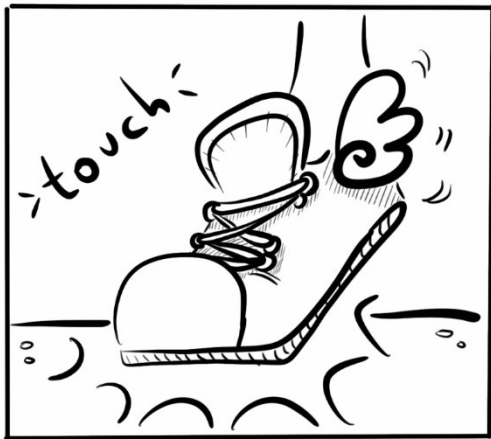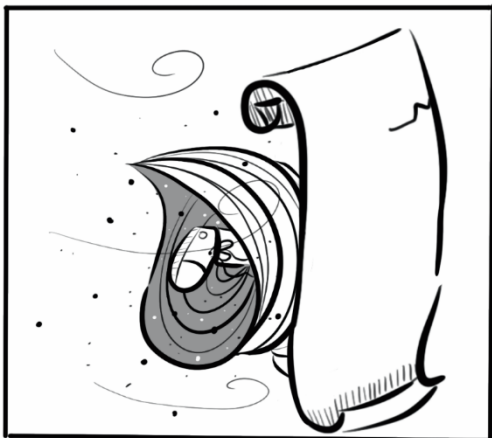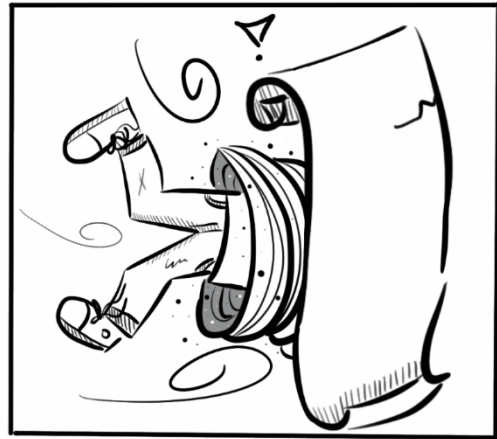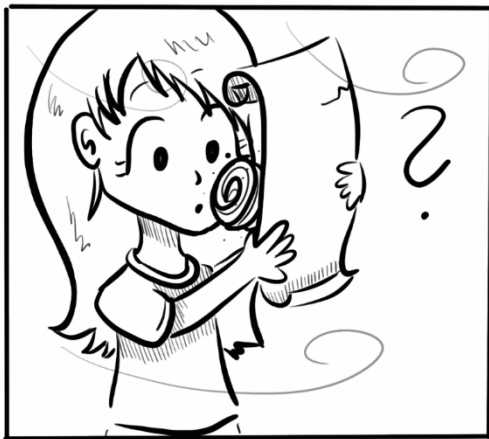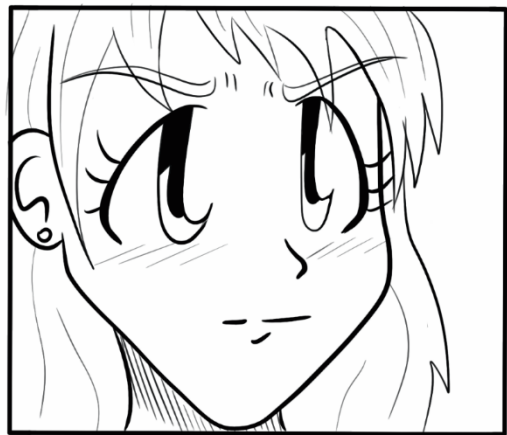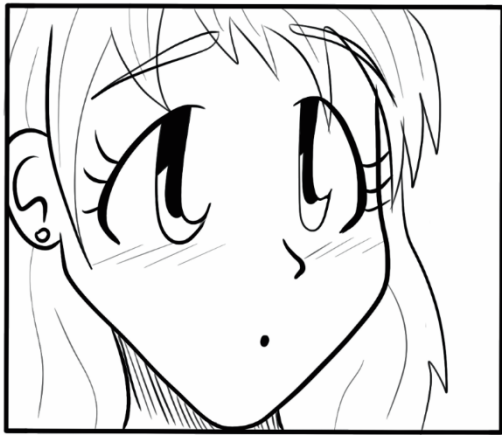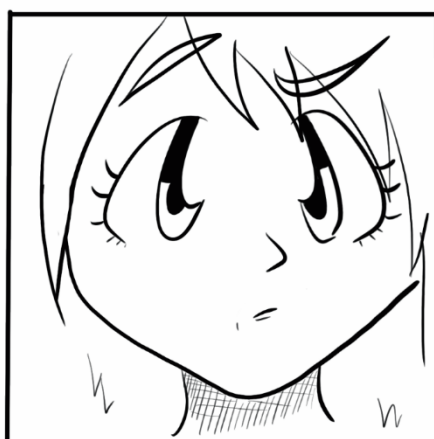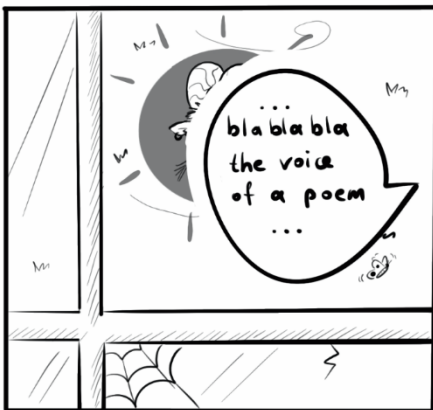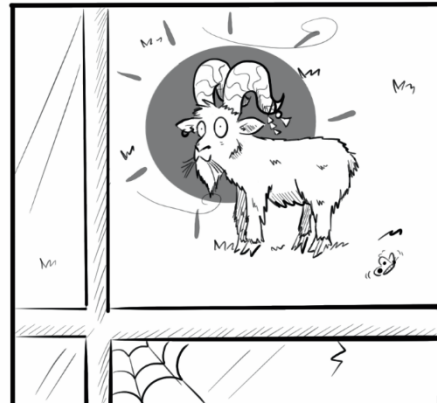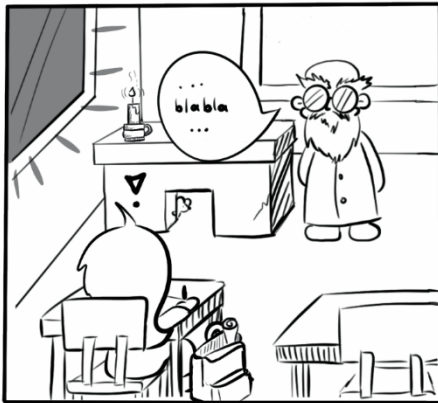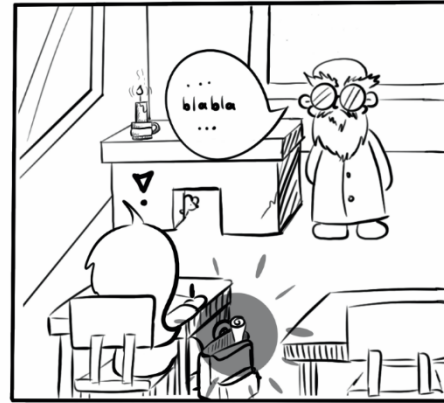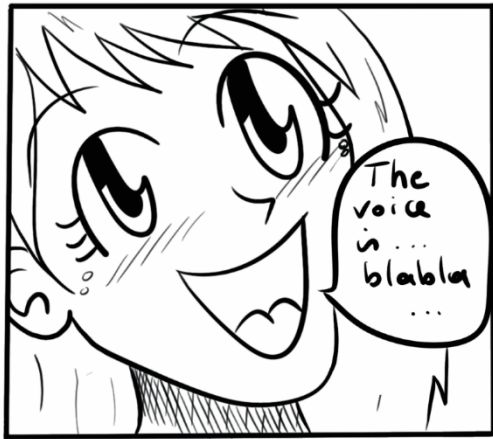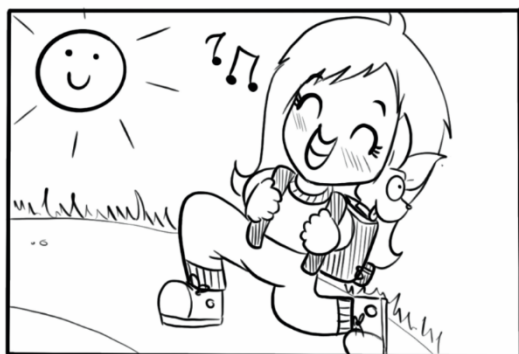
ELIXIR
How to analyse poetry:

STRUCTURE OF A POEM

Line { years ago we were friends,
creating poetry and memories,

then I burned down the house with ease,
this is how it ends...
} Stanza

VOICE VS AUTHOR

Author: writer's speaking voice / poet
Voice: fictionalised speaker of poem

STRESS AND MORE

Stress: the emphasis given to one syllable over another

↓

Metrical Pattern: pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (meter consists of feet)
EXAMPLES:
Trimeter (3 metrical feet in one line),
Tetrameter (4), Pentameter (5), Hexameter (6)

↓

Types of Feet: arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables
EXAMPLES:
iamb (unstressed u + stressed /),
trochee (/ u), dactyl (/ u u), anapaest (u u /),
spondee (/ /), amphibrach (u / u)

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Rhyme & rhyme scheme

Rhyme: the repetition of identical or similar sound
EXAMPLES:
<u>end-rhyme:</u> rhyme between stressed final vowels
<u>internal rhyme:</u> rhyme between words within a line

Rhyme scheme: ordered pattern of end-rhymes
EXAMPLES:
rhyming couplets (aa bb cc),
alternate rhyme (abab cdcd),
embracing rhyme (abba cddc),
chain rhyme (aba bcb cdc)
tail rhyme (aab ccb)

Rhetorical figures

Rhetorical figures: a group of language devices that create an alternative meaning for something
EXAMPLES:
<u>oxymoron:</u> contradictory terms appear in conjunction (e.g. deafening silence, minor crisis, ill health)
<u>tropes:</u> wordplay based on the meaning of words (e.g. metaphor)

Questions to ask
& interpretation ideas:

* How does the poem convey meaning?
* What does the poem say?
* What is the poem about?
* Does the poem tell a story?
* How does the poem depict characters?
* How does the poem balance "old" and "new"?
* When was the poem written and for/to whom?

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Author, expert and illustrator:

Tamara McMinn alias "McTammy"

Bibliography:

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Williams, Rhian. *The Poetry Toolkit: The Essential Guide to Studying Poetry.* 3rd ed. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

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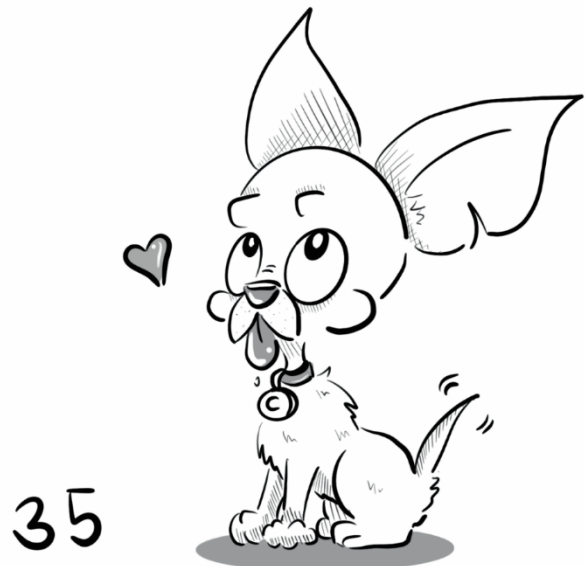
7.2. English Abstract

This thesis combines the topics poetry analysis, the Hero's Journey and instructional comics in order to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic for upper secondary students and, thus, to answer the following research question: What features are necessary to create an efficient and engaging instructional comic which uses the Monomyth 'the Hero's Journey' as a story template to teach poetry analysis?

An attempt to research these features and then to design an instructional comic based on the findings has never been done before and is, thus, unique and important due to several reasons. Teaching and reading poetry educate us on how to communicate our experiences, feelings and thoughts and stimulates intrinsic motivation, while reading instructional comics assist us in grasping complex matters effortlessly. In addition, the plot structure of the Hero's Journey by Christopher Vogler has not only been used in a large number of successful movies and books such as *The Lion King* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, but also makes its appearance in the form of the Monomyth in ancient hero stories all over the world. Therefore, it seemed only logical to combine the Hero's Journey, instructional comics and poetry analysis in this thesis.

For this, qualitative research in forms of literature review and data-driven bottom-up approach was carried out to identify the necessary features to design such a specific comic. Based on the found patterns, an instructional comic was created in order to answer the research question. These discovered patterns are the key to a successful balance of an engaging, legend-filled instructional comic that, at the same time, teaches in an academic yet entertaining way how to analyse poetry. It is appealing not only to academics, but also to children, young adults and general audiences who are interested in captivating stories.

The results of this thesis reveal that it is not possible to generate an ultimate list of features nor a formulaic recipe on how to design such a comic, as there is not only one way to create such a comic. There are various effective approaches to create an efficient and engaging

instructional comic based on the Hero's Journey to teach poetry analysis, and this thesis paper demonstrates one of them.

7.3. German Abstract

Diese Masterarbeit verbindet die Themen Gedichtanalyse, die Heldenreise und Sachcomics um ein effizientes und unterhaltsames Sachcomic für Oberstufenschüler*innen zu konzipieren und die folgende Forschungsfrage zu beantworten: Welche Eigenschaften werden gebraucht, um ein effizientes und unterhaltsames Sachcomic zu designend, das auf der Heldenreise beruht und Gedichtanalyse erklärt?

Bis jetzt gibt es keine Forschung und auch kein Sachcomic, welche alle drei Themen miteinander verbindet und erforscht, was diese Masterarbeit daher einzigartig macht. Wichtig ist diese Forschung aus folgenden Gründen: Zum einen hilft uns das Lesen und Verstehen von Gedichten unsere Erfahrungen, Gefühle und Gedanken auszudrücken, und zum anderen stimuliert es die intrinsische Motivation der Schüler*innen. Sachcomics unterstützen das Verstehen von komplexen Gegebenheiten auf eine einfache Art und Weise. Die Heldenreise (von Christopher Vogler konzipiert, basierend auf Joseph Campbells Monoymth) wird nicht nur in erfolgreichen Filmen und Büchern verwendet wie etwa *Der König der Löwen* und *Der Herr der Ringe* Trilogie, sondern auch in alten Heldenepen auf der ganzen Welt. Daher ist es naheliegend Gedichtanalyse, Sachcomics und die Heldenreise für diese Masterarbeit miteinander zu verbinden.

Dafür wurde qualitativ geforscht mithilfe von Literaturrecherche und dem ‚data-driven bottom-up approach' um die wichtigsten Elemente herauszufiltern, die so ein spezielles Sachcomic möglich machen. Basierend auf diese gefundenen Elemente wurde dann ein Sachcomic für diese Arbeit entworfen. Diese Elemente sind der Schlüssel zu einem erfolgreichen, unterhaltsamen, legendenreichen Sachcomic, das gleichzeitig wissenschaftlich und anregend Gedichtanalyse erklärt. Das Resultat ist, dass es nicht nur Akademiker*innen

anspricht, sondern auch Kinder, junge Erwachsene und generell alle diejenigen, die das Thema so wie die Geschichte interessieren.

Das Fazit dieser Masterarbeit ist, dass es weder möglich ist eine endgültige Liste von Elementen anzufertigen noch ein formelhaftes Rezept zu entwickeln, um so ein Sachcomic zu erschaffen, da es mehrere Lösungsansätze dafür gibt – nicht nur den einen. Es existieren etliche effektive Zugänge, die zu einem effizienten, unterhaltsamen, auf der Heldenreise basierenden und Gedichtanalyse erklärenden Sachcomic führen können, und diese Masterarbeit zeigt einen davon.