MASARYK UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of English
and American Studies

English Language and Literature

Ondřej Tomášek

Translating Comics

M.A. Major Thesis

Supervisor: Mgr. Ing. Jiří Rambousek

2009

I declare that I have worked on this bachelor thesis independently,

using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

Author's signature

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Ing. Jiří Rambousek for his valuable advice and help.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 5
2. Comics and Cultural Studies 7
    2.1 What is Comics 7
    2.2 How Comics Work 10
    2.3 Authorship in comics 14
    2.4 History of Comics 14
    2.5 Types, Forms and Formats of Comics 21
3. Comics in the Czech Republic 25
    3.1 History of Comics in the Czech Republic 25
    3.2 Translated Comics in the Czech Republic 28
    3.3 Policy of Czech Publishers 29
4. Comics and Translation Studies 32
    4.1 Similarities and Differences with Translating of Other Media 32
    4.2 Translating Comics 34
        4.2.1 Localization, Domesticating and Foreignizing 40
        4.2.2 Onomatopoeia and Discourse-related Text 42
        4.2.3 Universals 46
        4.2.4 Translation of Proper Names 50
5. Conclusion 61
6. Works Cited 62
7. Appendix 65

1. Introduction

This thesis deals with a field of translation which has not been described in detail and which started to be analysed only recently – translations of comics. These translations were often overlooked in the theoretical works, partly due to the fact that comics are often regarded as literary genre focused mainly on children and teenagers, partly due to the fact that comics are considered to be genre of literature and therefore are analysed alongside other literary works, and partly due to the overlooking the fact that comics are an independent medium, just as literature, drama or film, and as such, comics have their own language, narrative strategies and system of signs. The false assumptions regarding comics as a genre of literature can be found not only in translation theory, but also in the theories within cultural studies. The first part of this thesis defines the medium of comics, their place within cultural studies and the similarities and differences between comics and other media (mostly literature and film).

Comics started to be translated into Czech in large scale at the beginning of 21st century. There were several translations before, but those were mainly from other language than English (mostly from French) and even these translations were only occasional. This thesis also maps the development of Czech comics (not for the purpose of comparison of the domestic works of comics with the translated ones, but for the purpose of analysis of the comics market and the development of attitude towards comics in the Czech Republic), both the translated and domestic comics.

The aim of the third part of this thesis is not to map all translations of comics from English into Czech or to analyse and compare them (such analysis and comparison would be difficult, inaccurate and incomplete due to the limited number of translators and large number of titles published in the Czech Republic, which creates a significant disproportion), but to determine stylistic and linguistic features of comics in general and define different elements which can

appear during the process of translating comics and suggest possible solutions while taking into consideration the existing solutions made by translators in translated works. This analysis does not focus only on style and textual features of the translations, but it focuses mainly on the elements which are directly connected to the medium of comics.

2. Comics and Cultural Studies

Before comics, their elements and their way of working and interaction can be discussed, it is necessary to define the term comics and specify it within cultural studies. Comics can be understood as a specific form of literature, or as a form of art, which is close to painting, and also as a kind of movie, which is motionless and captured in panels. All of these assumptions are partly right and partly wrong. Comics have some common features with these three media, but there are other features that are unique for every medium, but unlike the other media, comics have never been analysed in such a range as those three media. Will Eisner, one of the most important comics writer and theoretician, wrote in the Foreword of his book *Comics and Sequential Art*:

> For reasons having much to do with usage and subject matter, Sequential Art has been generally ignored as a form worthy of scholarly discussion. While each of the major integral elements, such as design, drawing, caricature and writing, have separately found academic consideration, this unique combination has received a very minor place (if any) in either literary or art curriculum (Eisner 5).

Although this book was published in 1985, comics have still not been recognized as a medium worth academic attention and discussion (except for few recent attempts) and therefore it is necessary to define comics, try to determine their place within cultural studies and describe their history.

2.1 What is Comics

To determine the similarities and differences of comics and other media, a definition of comics will be needed. Several definitions are used to describe comics. In *Comics and Sequential Art*, Will Eisner uses the term “sequential art”. Eisner defines sequential art as “the arrangement

of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea" (Eisner 26). However, this term is very vague, because it does not describe only comics, but it can be used as a definition for animation. More precise definition was provided by Scott McCloud, who uses Eisner's definition as a point of departure and defines comics as a set of "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" (McCloud 7). In his essay *Thump, Whizz, Poom: A Framework for the Study of Comics under Translation*, Klaus Kaindl defines comics as a "narrative forms in which the story is told in a series of at least two separate pictures" (Kaindl 264). All of these definitions exclude single-panel illustrations because work of comics consisting of only one panel is not sequential. McCloud explains that these single panel illustrations (or cartoons, as he calls it) only "derive part of their visual vocabulary" (McCloud 9) and compares them to a snapshot taken from a movie (McCloud ignores the fact that a single panel, unlike snapshot, can be narrative and stand independently without the need of any other outside elements). Moreover, if this definition was applied exactly, some strips of several strip series (for example, *Calvin and Hobbes* or *Red Meat)* would have to be excluded for not being a work of comics, because they consist of only one panel, while other strips from the same series would be regarded as a comics. Therefore, it is necessary to find another and more suitable definition.

In the essay *Comedy At The Juncture Of Word And Image*, its author R. C. Harvey provides another definition. According to Harvey, comics is "pictorial narratives or expositions in which words (often lettered into the picture area within speech balloons) usually contribute to the meaning of the pictures and vice versa" (Harvey 76). Although this definition could be used for single-panel comics, it ignores wordless comics. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, new definition based on these definitions quoted above will be formed. According to this new definition, comics are pictorial narrative created by one or more static expositions combining

images and non-pictorial symbols. Non-pictorial symbols can be divided into two categories: abstract symbols (which have some meaning, for example, symbol for peace, non-smoking signs etc.) and letters. Single-panel comics would fit into this definition because the text (formed by non-pictorial symbols) and image form just one exposition, which is sufficient for the definition. Wordless comics would fit there as well because they are a set of expositions and they also often contain non-pictorial icons. This definition would even fit on the rare case of wordless single-panel comics, where images and non-pictorial symbols form an exposition.

Using this definition, comics consist of five main elements: (1) it is pictorial, (2) it is narrative, (3) it is formed by static expositions, (4) it contains images and (5) it contains non-pictorial symbols. These five elements can be used in comparison of comics with literature, film and painting. This comparison clarifies and emphasizes the uniqueness of the medium of comics. The chart below shows which of these five elements comics share with literature, painting and film.

Comics	Pictorial	Narrative	Formed by static expositions	Contains images	Contains non-pictorial symbols
Literature		Narrative			Contains non-pictorial symbols
Painting	Pictorial		Formed by static expositions	Contains images	
Film	Pictorial	Narrative		Contains images	

The chart clearly shows that comics, thanks to their unique combination of elements, are a media and not a genre. That is a widely spread myth, which considers comics to be genre focused exclusively on children and puts comics on the same level as literature for children. As will be shown in the next chapter, comics can conceive almost any genre in the same way literature or film can. The chart also shows that comics are a combination of literature, painting and film rather than independent and solitary medium. Federico Zanettin states that comics are a media discourse: "Comics are not a medium in the same sense as print, films, TV, radio etc. are media. Rather, they use print as a medium, and could better be defined as a type of media discourse, which however cuts across the borders of media types" (Zanettin 2004, 1). This cutting across media types is caused by the fact, that comics use elements of all three media mentioned above. They use narrative methods of film and literature and images to convey their message like film or painting, creating a syncretic semiotic system with various discourses, texts and media (Zanettin 2008, 13).

2.2 How Comics Work

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, comics can be understood as a combination of three different media – literature, painting and film. Comics, as well as literature and painting, are meant to be perceived with only one sense. Scott McCloud labels paintings as "received information" and literature as "perceived information". Perceived information is more abstract and requires more knowledge to be decoded than received information. Comics stand between these two kinds of information (McCloud 49). Comics use two ways of delivering their message to the reader: textual and pictorial. Will Eisner sums this combination in these words: "The regimens of art (e.g. perspective, symmetry, brush stroke) and the regimens of literature (e.g. grammar, plot, syntax) become superimposed upon each other" (Eisner 8). Sometimes, comics

use only images to convey its message. Eisner comments on this form of graphic narrative and states that it requires more skilful artist to tell the story without using the words (Eisner 24).

McCloud also quotes Marshal McLuhan's identification of the two so-called "cool" media (media, which use iconic forms to get audience involved): television and comics. Eisner states, that "comics communicate in 'language' that relies on a visual experience common to both creator and audience" (Eisner 7). While reading a comic book, readers are becoming the active participants in creating a story due to the processes called interpretation (on microlevel) and closure (on macrolevel) because "modern readers can be expected to have an easy understanding of the image-word mix and the traditional deciphering of text" (Eisner 7). Eisner also states that comics are a "montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and verbal interpretive skills. [...] The reading of the comic book is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit" (Eisner 8). Due to the multitude of the communicative devices, reader can not perceive only the text or the image, but he or she has to perceive them both at the same time and derive message from both of them.

To better understand how comics convey their message and what is the role of the reader in the process, it is important to be aware of the fact that comics (as well as literature or film) operate on two levels – microlevel (single panels) and macrolevel (tiers, pages). On microlevel, the most important element in comics is visual language, "employing a series of repetitive images and recognizable symbols" (Eisner 8). Since comics are perceived only with one sense and also use received information to convey their message, images are used to stand for sounds, movements and emotions. For all of these elements, a series of conventionalized visualisations exists, either in textual (for example, sound effects) or pictorial (for example, lines representing movement or emotions) form. The visualisation of sounds is called onomatopoeia, which is described as "word which imitates, reproduces or represents a natural sound" (Garcés 237). It is

difficult to classify or otherwise categorize onomatopoeic words, because unified codification in graphic representation regarding lettering or punctuation does not exist (Garcéz 237). To achieve the goal of proper visual representation, comics use not only the style of art, but also other minor elements, like different shapes of panels and word balloons (their shapes determine the nature and mood of the situation and in some cases, the shape of balloon can represent a sound or emotion or the shape and borders of the panel can provide an idea about spatial arrangement of the scene, see Fig. 1), colouring (which sets the tone of the moment), different types of lettering (Eisner states, that text is often used as the extension of the image to emphasize mood or to support the message conveyed by the picture) or different perspectives (this element can be compared to the angle of the camera in film). Single panels are often compared to the cinematic frames, but as Eisner points out, panels „are often part of the creative process, rather than a result of the technology" (Eisner 38). Panels are often mistaken for „stills" or „frozen moments", which contain single instants or actions (Saraceni 7). That is not true. Single panels can contain longer periods (for example, when the dialogue is taking place in a single panel) or they can represent actions that take shorter period of time. The duration of the panel is often indicated by the width of the panel. Smaller panels often indicate shorter periods whereas wider panels often contain long, uninterrupted moments.

On macrolevel, gutters and super-panels play the most important part. Single panels are used to form super-panels (as Eisner calls them), which can be divided into two categories: tiers (a series of panels formed in one line) or pages. The arrangement of the panels is also part of the creative process because writer and artist form super-panels deliberately in order to emphasize the mood of the story, to make the narration more interesting and to convey rhythm and the flow of time. Pages are considered the basic articulatory unit of comics because they create an overall impression (Zanettin 2008, 14). Gutters are the blank spaces between single panels and they serve

as invisible connectors, which tie the panels into a coherent narration (McCloud 66). In his collection of essays *Apocalypse Postponed*, Umberto Eco points out, that comics, contrary to film, is able to create a continuum by putting static elements together (Eco 168). However, it is the reader and reader's imagination, and not the author, that gives the gutters their roles as transitions between single panels. The process, which enables the connection of panels and narration of comics in general, is called closure. Closure is a "phenomenon of observing the parts but perceiving the whole" (McCloud 63). Thanks to closure, reader can connect the panels into a narration. Closure (together with rhythmization and the size of panels) also enables comics to depict the flow of time (for example, greater number of small panels is often used to depict a short period of time, whereas larger panels are used to depict long uninterrupted moments). In comic books, the time is framed into the panels. In his book *Comics and Sequential Art*, Will Eisner quotes J. B. Priestley, who states, that the idea of time in comics is derived from the sequence of events (Eisner 30).

The text in comics is often placed into balloons (which represent direct speech or thoughts) or into captions (boxes in the corner of the panel, which represent narration). Saraceni states that captions are often used to provide information to help reader reconstruct the flow between panels and to help to fill the gap represented by a gutter (Saraceni 10). The text itself uses the same ways to emphasize certain details as the text of the work of literature does (usually by putting the words in italics). Authors of comic books usually try to avoid situations when text mirrors images and vice versa. They try to create a work of comics where the text and images interact and complete each other thus creating a balanced discourse.

2.3 Authorship in comics

In his book *Comics and Sequential Art*, Eisner asks: "Who is the 'creator' of a comic page which was written by one person, penciled by another, and inked, lettered (and perhaps colored or backgrounded) by still others?" (Eisner 123). Although comics are close to literature in its form, the matter of authorship could be better compared to the matter of authorship in film industry. Mainstream comics are usually a work of several people, contrary to the alternative and underground comics, where one person can work on all creative (script, art) and technical (colouring, inking, lettering) elements of the comic book. Usually, people working on creative elements of the comics are considered the authors. Not only writer, but also an artist is recognized as author of the comics, because "in order to consider, separately, the role of the writer, it is necessary to arbitrarily limit the 'writing' for comics to the function of conceiving the idea and the story, creating the order of telling and fabricating the dialogue or narrative elements" (Eisner 122). Artist converts writer's ideas into a fully functional narrative by putting the dialogue into balloons and arranging the panels. Words and images in comics are inseparable, but several degrees of cooperation between writer and artist can exist. Some writers just write the dialogues and setting for the story, while the mood, point of view and composition of panels and tiers are done by the artist. Other writers try to set the mood, the point of view and other elements and make a whole storyboard, which is later inked and coloured by artist. However, in both cases, the creative part of the process of making comics is done by writer together with the artist.

2.4 History of Comics

Comics in a form that is known today were established in the late 19th and early 20th century, but many predecessors of modern comics can be found throughout the whole history, and therefore it is almost impossible to pinpoint the exact period, in which comics were born.

Some elements typical for comics can be found on the Palaeolithic cave paintings, which were sequential and juxtaposed. Similar patterns can be observed on Egyptian paintings (hieroglyphs were often used to comment on the pictures, thus creating the first combination of images and words used to convey a narrative) and on many Greek and Roman friezes (for example, on Parthenon Frieze or Trajan's Column). One of the most famous examples of comics in medieval could be the Bayeux Tapestry. It combines words and images in one long sequence forming some sort of comic strip.

As McCloud points out, the beginning of the process which formed comics as they are known today started with the invention of printing, with which this art-form could be widely spread among people (McCloud 15). However, this also led to separation of text and images. Both of them developed independently and were not combined (with a few exceptions, for example, scenes from the lives of saints or morality stories were usually painted and accompanied by a text), but generally, mixing text and images was considered to be inappropriate. The next evolution step for comics came at the beginning of the 18th century. The first artist who was acknowledged as a pioneer of comics was Willam Hoggarth, English painter and satirist. His satirical and moralistic series of six paintings and engravings from 1731 named *A Harlot's Progress* (followed by another series in 1735 named *A Rake's Progress*) were meant to be read in a sequence. In this period, satirical cartoons in newspapers became widely spread. The first cartoonist, who combined words and images and therefore contributed to the shaping of the comics form, was Rodolphe Töpffer, Swiss artist, whose works were published in 1840's. Furthermore, the magazines such as *Punch* or *Judge* became popular in the USA and in Europe as well. In 1865, German caricaturist, painter and poet Wilhelm Busch published a picture story *Max and Moritz*, which is often regarded as a predecessor of modern comic strip. Unlike other

books for children published in this period, the pictures in *Max and Moritz* have narrative function and help to complete the story.

In the late 18th century, the predecessors of manga (Japanese comics) appeared in Japan. They combined words and images and many of them used sequences of pictures. They were in two forms – either as illustrated picture scrolls telling humorous stories and romantic stories, or as ukiyo-e (featuring motifs of landscapes or tales from history) and shunga (erotic art) woodblock prints. The scrolls and prints have their predecessor in tales about both mythical and real Japanese heroes and their deeds and about famous battles and wars. These tales were drawn on scrolls or wooden desks and commented by text, and therefore they are considered to be the first works of comics in Japan.

From the point of view of comics, 20th century can be divided into four eras (or ages, as they are described) – Golden Age (lasting from the late 1930's until the late 1940's), Silver Age (from 1956 to around 1970), Bronze Age (from 1970 to 1986), and Modern Age (from 1986 onwards). Although this division is often used only for American superhero comic books, it is the easiest way to describe the history of 20th century comics because comics in the United States, especially superhero comics, often dictate the trends to comic books of other parts of the world and other genres.

In 1920's, comics became widely published in Belgium and France and later spread into other countries (among which was also Czechoslovakia) adapting the medium of comics, modifying its certain elements and creating a specific sub-division of comics. The most famous series, which started in this era, was *Tintin*, and other popular series (for example, *Asterix* or *Lucky Luke*, written by René Goscinny) followed in the next decades. Their style was partly based on the style of newspaper strips and cartoons and was more schematic, contrary to the dynamism of Anglo-American comic books.

In the 1920's and 1930's, comics market in the United States (which was, unlike newspaper strips, primarily targeted on children) was established and comics (now in form as they are known today) became published in a large scale. In the late 1930's, at the beginning of the Golden Age, stories featuring Superman, Batman and other superheroes were published for the first time (in 1938 and in 1939) by DC Comics (which was the biggest publishing house during 1940's), the archetype of superhero was formed and superhero comics established itself as a defining and most visible genre of comics and kept this status until early 1980's, when genres which were designated for adults rather than for children became widely recognized. Superhero comics were not the only published genre in the Golden Age. Western, romance, and adventure stories were also published. World War II significantly influenced the development of superhero comics, which gained much popularity (alongside with the war stories) thanks to stories portraying the triumph of good over evil. In these stories, superheroes (mainly Superman and Captain America) were fighting Nazis and their leader Adolf Hitler or Japanese soldiers. After the war, the interest in superheroes and in comics generally faded away. Whereas in the years of the World War II, the comics were taken as a light and cheap entertainment like dime novels, in the 1950's, comic books were blamed for the rise of juvenile crime and they were gradually declining, both in quality and in sales. In 1954, German-American psychologist Frederic Wertham published his book *Seduction of the Innocent,* which accuses comic books for their bad influence on children. Wertham made statements on various examples (which were often taken out of their context), that comics is a threat to children, their psyche and their gamomorphism (for example, he stated that Batman and his sidekick Robin were homosexuals because they were living in one house without any female partners or that Wonder Woman liked – due to the use of her weapon Lasso of Truth – bondage and her strong, independent nature made her lesbian). He also dealt with other issues, like violence or sexism in comics. Wertham's anti-comics crusade

was later followed by other psychiatrists (the most well-known figure is British psychiatrist Geoffrey Wagner and his book *Parade of Pleasure*). This witch-hunt had a devastating effect not only on comic books market, but also on comics itself. As a result, CMAA (Comics Magazine Association of America) created Comics Code Authority, a set of rules, which determines, what could and what could not be published in comic books (for example, any flickers of violence, swearing and nudity were prohibited) and every comic book had to be checked and approved by special committees. This led to a reduction of published comic books and destruction of some genres, like horror stories or caper stories, which were popular before World War II and which could not meet the demands of Comics Code Authority.

In the post-war Japan, a specific form of comics called manga (in Japanese, manga means "whimsical pictures") was established. Manga was formed on two sources: Japanese picture scrolls and woodblock prints and the cultural influence of American comics which were brought to Japan by American soldiers during US occupation after World War II. The first popular manga series was *Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atomu)* written and drawn by Osamu Tezuka (considered one of the pioneers of manga and one of the greatest personalities of Japanese comics). Manga and its market were growing rapidly and soon, manga became "the single largest comics industry in the world" (Zanettin 2004, 4). With the large number of published titles, the number of genres was also growing. However, until the 1980's, manga was almost unknown to Western readers.

The revival of comics as a popular medium in the United States began in September 1956, when DC Comics published *Showcase* #4, which revived Flash, the popular superhero of the pre-war era. This event is considered to be a start of the Silver Age. By that time, only stories of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman were published, but they were not able to follow in the quality of the pre-war stories. After the revival of Flash, other superheroes of the pre-war era, Green Lantern, Green Arrow, Hawkman, and other heroes of DC Comics followed later. Despite

these achievements, DC Comics lost its dominant position on the comics market. Another big publishing house, Marvel Comics (successor of the publishing house Timely Comics, founded in 1939) presented its own superheroes, such as Spider-Man, Hulk, Iron Man and it also introduced some of the well-known superhero teams like Fantastic Four and X-Men. Contrary to DC Comics and some other smaller publishing houses, which targeted at younger readers, stories featuring Marvel superheroes were targeted not only at children, but also on teenagers and older readers generally. In his essay *The Night Gwen Stacy Died: The End of Innocence and the Birth of the Bronze Age*, Arnold T. Blumberg described this situation in these words: "Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Marvel Universe had made a huge difference, born out of the optimistic glow of the Camelot/Kennedy era and introducing much needed human elements into the cardboard cutout milieu of the superhero" (Blumberg 1). In the 1960's, underground comics, usually designated for mature readers and published in small numbers or self-published, were formed as a part of the counterculture of the 1960's and it presented the way to avoid the influence of the Comics Code Authority.

While the beginning of the Silver Age can be easily identified, the beginning of the Bronze Age has never been unanimously determined. However, most scholars and theoreticians agree, that the turning point between the Silver Age and the Bronze Age is a series of events, that happened between 1971 and 1973 rather than a single event. Arnold T. Blumberg describes them in this way:

> Early indications that the superhero world was changing came in 1971, when Lee and Marvel Comics brazenly dropped the Comics Code Authority seal of approval on a multi-issue Spider-Man story arc dealing with narcotics. The first such comics to hit the stands without CCA approval since its fascist-like implementation in 1954, Amazing Spider-Man #96-98 (May-July 1971) brought us

another fanciful showdown between Spider-Man and his arch-foe, the Green Goblin, while Peter Parker's best friend (and son of the Goblin) Harry Osborn struggled with a far more realistic danger – drug addiction. Having thrown down the gauntlet, Marvel opened the door to a new era in mature storytelling for superhero comics, and competitor DC Comics took up the challenge by echoing the Spider-Man story with one focusing on Green Arrow's sidekick Speedy, who had picked up a nasty heroin habit. Social relevance was now to be the watchword for the superheroes of the Marvel and DC universes, and topics like racism, poverty, drugs, and other concerns of the day were filtered through the somewhat simplistic lens of the superhero. Didactic in the extreme, with more than just a hint of sledgehammer moralizing, these tales nevertheless signalled a change in the genre. The superheroes were no longer flying above the crowds with their heads in the clouds; they were plummeting to Earth and dealing with the hard cold facts of life, and their readers were learning that even heroes couldn't always save the day (Blumberg 2).

The event, that finished the change of the Ages, was the death of Gwen Stacy, a supporting character in the stories featuring Spider-Man. Although it was not the first death of the character in a superhero comics (the death of a close relative is a key element in the origin of many superheroes, like Spider-Man and Batman), it was the first case, when superhero failed and his failure had such a terrible consequences. Blumberg sums it up: "The death of Gwen Stacy was the end of innocence for the series and the superhero genre in general - a time when a defeated hero could not save the girl, when fantasy merged uncomfortably with reality, and mortality was finally visited on the world of comics. To

coin a cliché, nothing would ever be the same" (Blumberg 5). Superhero comics lost its brightness and its stories were more realistic than those in the Golden Age or in the Silver Age and dealt with more serious topics.

Since 1980's, comics have been getting rid of its status of literature for children and teenagers, and they have gradually been strengthening their position as a medium capable of producing works not only for children and teenagers, but also for the adults. The range of genres is expanding and CCA is losing its influence in the production of comics (although CCA was never abandoned, it was modified several times – for example in 1989, the ban on referring to homosexuality was revised – and in these days, it is reduced to a mere formality and lots of series are being published without the approval of the CCA). In 1986, two graphic novels, Alan Moore's *Watchmen* and Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, were published. Although both of them are superhero comics, they focus on social and political issues (both of them comment on the Cold war and the possibility of outbreak of a nuclear war) rather than on action. *Watchmen* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* are considered to be the cornerstone in comics, because they represent the beginning of the Modern Age, which has lasted until today. Since their publishing, many works dealing with adult issues appeared, for example Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (dealing with holocaust and death camps), Brian K. Vaughan's *Pride of Baghdad* (which takes place during the second war in Iraq) or Jason Aaron's *Scalped* (a detective story taking place in a poverty-stricken Indian reservation). Due to these works, comics are now understood more as a medium rather than a genre.

2.5 Types, Forms and Formats of Comics

This subchapter deals with the classification of comics, which can be performed in several ways, since comics are "referred to as a publication format, a medium, a genre and a semiotic

system, depending on the approach" (Zanettin 2004, 1). Comics can be divided into types, forms and formats. Each of these categories uses different criteria for dividing comics. Types are related to the area where particular comics are being created, forms take artistic features of particular comics into consideration, and formats are related to publishing and publication policies.

Three main areas of comics can be distinguished – United States of America and Great Britain, continental Europe, and East Asia. Comics in these regions differ not only in choice of topics or style, but also in publishing policy and formats. Comics in the United States (also comic books from the rest of the English speaking world – Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand are often included in this subgroup) are considered to have the greatest influence on style and trends. The market contains various genres, as well as many underground and alternative publishing houses. As mentioned in 2.4, comics of continental Europe is more schematic (not from the narrative point of view, but from the point of view of the pannel arrangement and action development) and uses more conservative visual imagery. In every European country, the preferable format for selling is different (for example, comic books in Italy are published in "bonellianos" - black and white volumes of around hundred pages, whereas in France, comic books are published in hard bound albums and in full colours).

Manga uses different types of visual language than American or European comics. The most visible difference is the fact, that manga is read from right to left. As Scott McCloud points out, single panels seem to be more fragmented from each other, while putting the main focus on mood of the story rather than on their narrative function due to the use of different kind of transition (change form one panel to another), which is not used by Western authors (McCloud 79). Manga market contains almost every possible genre and is focused both on children and adults (a considerable part of the market containing several genres, like erotic or horror stories, are exclusively for adults). Adaptations of various works from various genres (for example,

Shakespeare's plays, *Bible* or Marx's *Capital*) are also very common. Manga is usually published monthly in anthologies in black and white. Newspaper strips and cartoons are almost unknown to Japanese readers. In the last several decades, comics and manga markets have been expanding in South Korea (local mutation of manga is called manhwa) and in Thailand.

Comics can be divided into three forms. This classification relies mainly on the length of the particular comics. The shortest form of comics is a cartoon. It consists of only one picture, which is combined with a textual commentary. It is one of the oldest forms of comics. Its beginnings can be traced to the middle of the 19th century and to the satirical drawings, which appeared in various magazines. Cartoons usually have satirical or humorous content and are related to political or social problems. The second form is comic strip. It usually consists of three pictures, but there are a few exceptions, which use only two pictures (for example, some of the *Red Meat* strips by Max Cannon) and some comic strips consist of four or even five pictures (for example, *Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson). The last form is called comic book and almost all works of comics (short stories, graphic novels or comic series) except cartoons and comic strips belong in this category. This category is very wide, because there are no strict definitions of these particular kinds of comics.

Format of comics usually refers to the way of publishing particular comics. This classification is closely related to the into forms because some of the categories have the same names, but these names usually refer to different aspects. Short stories are usually published in magazines, whereas cartoons and comic strips are published in newspapers. All of these forms are then republished in collections. These collections often contain works of one author, anthologies by various authors connected thematically are very rare (however, in Japan, anthologies of dōjinshi – manga written and drawn by amateur authors - are quite common). Comic series are usually published in weekly or monthly issues. These issues are later

republished in trade paperbacks (if the republished issues form a story arc – an isolated story, which is part of a larger series) or in graphic novels (if the issues form an isolated story and originally were not part of any series). Graphic novel can also be one story published in one book. Both republished issues forming an isolated story and story meant to be published as a whole in one book can be defined as graphic novels in the sense of format, but only the second case is a graphic novel in the sense of form.

3. Comics in the Czech Republic

This chapter describes comics in the Czech Republic (both Czech comic books and foreign translated comic books), their history and development (which was closely related to the history of Czechoslovakia) and also the changes of preferences on the comics market. So far, no book or article dealing with this topic and providing a complex overview has been published in the Czech Republic (except for a several occasions when the chapter about history of comics in the Czech Republic was part of the thesis dealing with the topic of comics). This chapter tries to map the very basics of the history of comics in Czechoslovakia and in the Czech Republic and uses these scattered and unconnected pieces of information as a framing resources.

3.1 History of Comics in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the development of comics was different than in other parts of the world. For most of the time, comics was considered to be a genre solely for children. This presumption was changed in the late 1990's, when foreign comic books were introduced to the Czech readers (although their massive and regular publication started a few years later). In the 19th century, satirical strips were not published in newspapers and magazines due to the censorship of the Austrian-Hungarian government. First published works of comics started to appear in 1930's in magazines for children, such as *Mladý hlasatel*, *Junák* and some others. Soon, they became very popular and comics became an established art form in the contemporary Czechoslovakia, although it was considered to be an art form targeted mostly at younger readers (comics were also criticized for luring children away from reading, but these opinions were common also in other countries). The most popular series published in this period was *Rychlé šípy* (written by Jaroslav Foglar and illustrated by Václav Junek, Jan Fischer, Bohumír Čermák and Marko Čermák). It was a series of stories about five young boys and their adventures (their

popularity, unlike the popularity of many other series, survived World War II. and the communist regime, and *Rychlé šípy* influenced several generations). After the breakout of World War II. and the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, almost all of the magazines for children were prohibited and lots of these series ceased to exist.

After 1948, in the communist era, comics was regarded as an "imperialistic" form of art, which is dangerous to both children and adults. Despite the effort of the regime to marginalize comics in Czechoslovakia (for example, by forcing the authors to replace the balloons with boxes with the text under the pictures), comics managed to survive this oppression in magazines for children and teenagers (although it did not manage to prove itself as something more than genre for younger readers) and the production and the number of series was larger than in the pre-war period. The most popular magazines, that published comics, were *ABC*, *Větrník* and *Ohníček*. Published stories were usually limited series (some of them, like *Příhody Malého boha* or *Ztracený svět*, were later followed by sequels). Beside the original stories (for example, *Zajatec ptáka Mauk* or *Vzpoura mozků*), which were written originally as the work of comics, adaptations of famous novels (for example, *Ztracený svět* or *John Carter*) were also very popular. For the first time, an attempt to succeed on foreign market was made, as can be seen on the case of *Octobriana*. *Octobriana* was meant to be published on Western comics markets (it was also one of the few comic books focused on the adult audience), but the complicated story of its origin and legal issues made from the eponymous character an uncopyrighted material, which was reimagined (sometimes very differently from its original intent) several times by various authors and artists (for example, Brian Talbot, John A. Short, Stuart Taylor etc.). *Octobriana* is connected with the name Petr Sadecký, who persuaded two famous Czech artists, Zdeněk Burian and Bohumil Konečný to create comics with a main character named Amazona – a warrior against civilization with the features of a jungle queen. After Burian and Konečný drew several

hundreds of illustrations, Sadecký took these illustrations and emigrated to the Western Germany. There he changed the name of the heroine to Octobriana and turned her into "a spirit of the October Revolution". He also claimed that Octobriana was created in the 1960's in the Soviet Union by underground and dissident artists calling themselves Progressive Political Pornography (PPP). It is not clear which alternative is true. Either way, Burian and Konečný sued Sadecký in a court case in Western Germany because they were afraid of the possible persecution from the Communist Party. They won, but they managed to recover only a few illustrations. The rest was later published by a small publishing house in London.

In the late 1960's, comics for children was developing. First "monotypic" magazines started to be published. These magazines consisted entirely of comic stories. The most famous and most popular magazine of this kind was *Čtyřlístek*, focused on small children. Shortly before the fall of communism, the "monotypic" magazine *Kometa* started to be published. It focused on older readers than *Čtyřlístek* (works of comics published in *Kometa* were more similar to those published in *ABC*), but economic situation and diminishing number of readers made this magazine end after three years. Between 1960's and 1989, many talented and respected writers and artists (Vlastislav Toman, František Kobík etc.) were active. The most famous writer and artist of this era is Kája Saudek, who, unlike many others, focused his work not only on children, but also on adults. His works were published in the magazines *Mladý svět*, *Student* and some others. He was also the only Czechoslovakian artist in the field of comics, whose work exceeded the boundaries of the medium. His artwork was used in the movies *Kdo chce zabít Jessii?* and *Čtyři vraždy stačí, drahoušku!* (both of these movies work with merging elements of comics and film together). Some of Saudek's works could not be published in that time and they have to be published after 1989. The most well-known example is the comic book *Muriel a andělé*, whose fragments were published in 1969, but the book as a whole was published in 1991 (Saudek

wanted to publish a second book named *Muriel a oranžová smrt*, but the story refered to the invasion of Soviet troops in 1968 and a part of the illustration got lost, and therefore this sequel was never published). The other example of the involvement of the censorship was Saudek's adaptation of the TV series *Třicet případů Majora Zemana* (this series revised the after-war history of Czechoslovakia in favour of the Communist Party), which was banned, because it mocked the original by being adapted into comics, a medium which was oppressed by the communist regime.

After 1989, the comics were no longer limited by government, but the situation and status of comics did not change for another decade. Magazines like *Čtyřlístek* and *ABC* were still published (unlike many others, which ceased to exist during the communist era or shortly after 1989) and they are still published today. First attempts to publish foreign comics regularly were made (for details, see the next subchapter), but the interest in domestic comics was fading. The revival of Czech comics came in after the year 2000, alongside with the rising interest in foreign comics. Since then, the number of published Czech works of comics is increasing. Czech comics also became acknowledged abroad. The greatest success of Czech comics was the publication of a short story *Princip nepravděpodobnosti* by Štěpán Kopřiva and Jiří Grus in the prestigious magazine *Heavy Metal*.

3.2 Translated Comics in the Czech Republic

As was mentioned before, first attempts to publish foreign comics in former Czechoslovakia appeared shortly after 1989. In 1991, Semic-Slovart started publishing several series, mostly owned by Marvel and DC Comics. The most successful series was Spider-Man (source texts were published in the United States in 1970's and 1980's). However, the initial success faded away, mainly due to the chaotic work of the publishers (mixing the publishing of

single issues, poor translation, and lifting single issues out of their mutual context) and in 1993, Semic-Slovart had already cancelled almost all the other series (Conan, Transformers or G. I. Joe) and Spider-Man was cancelled shortly after.

One of the few regularly published comic books dealing with foreign comics was the CREW magazine, which was introducing foreign works of comics to Czech readers and it is still active in these days. Later, CREW became also a publishing house and until today, it is the largest publishing house focusing exclusively on comic books. The other large Czech publishing houses are Comics Centrum (which focuses on less known comic books and independent comics, usually from USA and Great Britain) and BB Art (which focuses mainly on literature and publishes comic books as a side activity).

3.3 Policy of Czech Publishers

Because publishing comic books became regular only about ten years ago, it is not possible to speak about the development of publishing policy. Of course, comics were published in the Czech Republic before, but no pattern could be observed in that period. Publishing policy can be observed since 2002, when the first books of Alan Moore's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* were published by CREW. The commercial success of these comic books indicated, that foreign comic books could be published in the Czech Republic in large numbers. Since then, many graphic novels and series have been published, mainly from Anglo-american cultural surrounding (there were also attempts to publish French albums, but they were not successful, and in the past few years, the number of manga and manhwa published in the Czech Republic is increasing). Publishers try to introduce the most famous works of comics and also the latest trends in various genres. However, publishers often tend to produce graphic novels or stand-alone series or mini-series rather than running series or several

interconnected series. They are aware of the fact that larger series (especially superhero series) are usually connected to other series and it would be impossible to provide all the necessary information to the readers without publishing the related series (for example, the publishing of a Marvel superhero crossover *Divided We Stand* will probably fail in sales because this crossover is tightly connected to the preceding event in Marvel Universe – *House of M* and *Messiah Complex* – and also to all the series featuring superheroes that are involved in this crossover).

Foreign comic books are not published on regular basis in the Czech Republic and therefore no series (either finished or still running abroad) are being regularly published. The most common formats published in the Czech Republic are graphic novels (containing one isolated story) and comic books (containing one story arc from a larger series). These formats (alongside with French comic albums or Japanese tankōbons – manga books) are usually transferred from source culture, so for almost every graphic novel or comic book, a corresponding original in the source language can be found. Comic strips are usually collected in collections of strips which, unlike comic books containing story arcs, are not taken from the source culture and they have no corresponding original.

The process of localization is often connected with the transfer into any source language (for more on localization, see 4.2.1). Czech publishers try to keep the level of localization low. The biggest example of localization can be found in the publishing policy of Spider-Man and other series by Semic- Slovart. Although publishers tried to keep the format (32-page comic book, which is published monthly), the Czech edition was mutilated due to one important element. In the original, the story does not cover all 32 pages, but only around 24 pages (the rest are advertisements). Because publisher wanted to keep the format, they needed to replace the advertisements with something else and therefore they filled these pages with another story, either from that particular series (or with just part of it, and the rest was published in the next

issue, where the missing pages were filled with another story) or with completely different series (for example, the missing pages in the Spider-Man series were filled with the stories from another Marvel superhero series *Cloak and Dagger*). Today, localization is scarcely performed in the process of translation and it is used only to modify the format, not the discourse. Some colour comic books were published in black and white (for example, the first four volumes of the series *Sandman* or comic books from the series *Comicsové legendy*, which contain Marvel superhero stories) and some of the comic book were published in the Czech Republic as two books (for example, *Until the End of the* World, the second book of the series *Preacher* which contains two story arcs, was published as two comic books, *Až do konce světa* and *Lovci*). Otherwise, localization is not used. Formats of French albums and Japanese tankōbons are preserved (in the case of tankōbons, the pages were not inverted in the Czech translation and therefore the intended direction of reading – from right to left – was kept).

4. Comics and Translation Studies

This chapter represents the core of this thesis. It deals with the problems that may occur during the process of translation. However, it does not focuses on stylistic features of the text, nor does it deeply analyse particular comic books, but rather it describes various elements connected exclusively with the translation of comics (onomatopoeia, discourse-related text etc.). It also deals with the topics that are described and analysed by translation studies, but which are connected to the translation of comics as well (universals, proper names).

Before the translation of comic books can be analysed, it is necessary to determine certain features of the subject of the translation – comics themselves. In this chapter, terms "text" and "discourse" are used. Although their use might seem random and these terms might seem interchangeable, in the case of comics, they refer to two different things. Text refers to the written part of comics, like words and sentences, whereas discourse refers to the comics and all of its parts, like panels, illustrations, and also the text. Therefore, in comics, the text is a part of the discourse. In this chapter, both of the terms are used and they are referring to two different aspects of comics.

In his essay Comics in Translation Studies, Federico Zanettin states, that comics are a semiotic system and therefore the translations of comics should be seen as intercultural translation between semiotic enviroments (Zanettin 2004, 2). Zanettin suggest that the translator should not focus only on the text, but also on other parts of the discourse, even if these parts remain unaffected by the translation.

4.1 Similarities and Differences with Translating of Other Media

As was stated and analysed in the previous chapter, comics are not a genre of literature, but an independent medium. Therefore, it is necessary to take this fact into consideration while

translating a work of comics. Similarities and differences in translating comics, literature, and film are similar to the differences between comics, literature, and film. Both similarities and differences can be divided into two categories – textual (related to the text itself) and technical (related to discourse and other elements connected to the form rather than to the content). Whereas textual elements can be usually modified by translator, the technical elements are usually left untouched by the translator or are slightly modified by the publisher or producer (for example, the format of the published work can be changed).

Both translated work of literature and work of comics deal with certain stylistic features of the text, like syntax, lexical choice and sentence structure (these stylistic features are also present in the process of translating film subtitles or dubbing, but in the case of comics, these features are more apparent due to the fact that both comics and literature are written media). During the process of translation of both of these media, it is necessary to keep the coherence of the text (although it may not be so obvious in the case of comics, the text has to be kept coherent due to several reasons – the features and background of the characters, the tone of the story etc. – and therefore the translator can not assume that the text in a comic book consists of independent clusters of text captured in balloons or captions). However, literature, unlike comics, does not contain untranslatable units (for more on untranslatable units, see 4.2) and there are no limitations that would hold the translator down from modifying the text. On the other hand, translator of comics is limited by the size of the caption or word balloon (they can be modified in order to accomodate the text, but the modification can be performed only to some extent, otherwise, the balloon or the caption would blot out the images).

During the process of translation of both film and comics, the translator is limited by space. In the case of the latter, the limitation is spatial (the size of the word balloons), whereas in the case of translating film (it does not matter, whether it is for the purpose of subtitles or

dubbing), the limitation is not only spatial (the length of the subtitle in the case of subtitling or the limits caused by the movement of the lips in the case of dubbing), but also temporal (the duration of the subtitle or the length of the speech). The translator of comic books also have to take the graphic features of the text into consideration because comics, unlike film, visualize sound and the graphic form is part of the translation and needs to be transferred into target text as well. Both of these media also contain untranslatable units. The translator of film subtitles can not influence the visual part of the movie as well as the translator of comics can not influence the images in works of comics.

When comparing translations of comics and drama, the same similarities can be observed. In this case, the translator of a play is also limited by the duration (however, this problem can be eliminated during the process of adaptation of the text), but he or she also has to translate the play according to certain criteria. The most important one is formed by the requirements imposed by the adaptation, which will use the translation of the work of drama as its text.

4.2 Translating Comics

Because both translating comics and translating literature deal with translating written text, it is possible to relate the requirements imposed on the translator of comics to those imposed on the translator of literature and modify them in order to meet the requirements that translating comics demands. In her book *Translation Studies*, Susan Bassnett quotes six rules originally formulated by Hillarie Belloc. Bassnett claims that a good translator should never break these rules, which are (1) the translator should consider the text as an integral unit, not as a cluster of words and sentences, (2) the translator should render idiom by idiom and take into consideration the cultural backgrounds of the source and the target language, (3) the translator should render intention by intention and take into consideration the features and possibilities of source language

and target language, in order to provide the same effect in target language, (4) the translator should avoid "false friends" – words and phrases that sounds similar in both the languages, but their meaning is different (for example the words "actually" and "aktuálně" sound similar, but the meaning of the word "actually" in Czech is "vlastně", not "aktuálně"), (5) the translator should not be afraid of making considerable changes in the text, if he or she finds it necessary, and (6) the translator should not add stylistic features to the translation that are not present in the source text (Belloc, in Bassnett 116). Tha translator of comics should take into consideration all the rules except for the rule (5), because it is not possible to make considerable changes in the text of comics due to the limited space provided by word balloons and captions (these considerable changes could be made only if the other parts of the discourse were changed considerably, but such changes should not be made, the translator should rather find another way to transfer the text from the source language to the target language).

In his work *Toward a Science of Translating*, Eugene A. Nida lists three goals, which should be acquired by every translator:

"It is not easy to judge the relative merits of two or more translations. However, three fundamental criteria are basic to the evaluation of all translating, and in different ways help to determine the relative merit of particular translations. These are: (1) general efficiency of the communication process, (2) comprehension of intent, and (3) equivalence of response" (Nida 1964, 182).

Nida provides further explanation of this concept. The general efficiency "can be judged in terms of the maximal reception for the minimum effort of decoding" (Nida 1964, 182). The translator should not include more information, words and phrases in the target text than it is contained in the source text and than it is necessary for the reader to decode the text. Sometimes, this rule has to be broken due to diversities in linguistic features and cultural background and

therefore it is necessary to add as little information, words and phrases as possible because then the redundancy would increase the noise factor and cut down the efficiency (Nida 1964, 182). In the process of translating comics, information can be added into the balloons or captions only to some extent due to the size of these discourse features. If translator wants or needs to add some information, he or she can do so only by making an asterisk in the balloon or caption and write the information on the bottom of the page as a side note.

The second part of this concept, the comprehension of intent, introduces the terms Formal Equivalent (F-E) and Dynamic Equivalent (D-E). Nida describes the first one as a translation, where "the comprehension of intent must be judged essentially in terms of the context in which the communication was first uttered" (Nida 1964, 182) and the second one as a translation, where "this intent must be understood in the terms of the receptor culture (Nida 1964, 182)". According to him, the best translations should find a balance between F-E and D-E, otherwise the translations very close to F-E will be "exceedingly literal, containing numerous awkward expressions, and are hence 'overloaded' as far as the prospective receptors are concerned, and are obviously far below legitimate standards" (Nida 1964, 184) and the translations close to D-E "may likewise fail to come up to a valid standard, if in the translator's concern for the response of the receptors he has been unfaithful to the content of the original message" (Nida 1964, 184). The comprehension of intent is applicable also to the translation of comic books (in the case of comics, the balance between F-E and D-E is vital, due to the fact, that most of the text contained in comics is supposed to be direct speech, and therefore it is necessary to keep the text as coherent and fluent as possible). In the case of translating comics, good example to clarify this part of the concept can be found in the comic books from the series *Preacher*, which is known for its informal and expressive language. English vocabulary has less expressive words (the most used ones are "fuck" and "shit") than Czech, and therefore the translator has to use more words

balanced between F-E and D-E, which will fit into the text. The translator of this series, Štěpán Kopřiva, was aware of this fact and used various translations for the expressive words, the diversity of which was lesser in the source text (for example, it is not possible to choose one translation for the word "fuck" and use it throughout the whole translation, and therefore Kopřiva used several translations, like "sakra", "do prdele" or "kurva") and it was necessary to find more solutions in order to maintain stylistic coherence and lower the noise factor.

The third part of this concept, the equivalence of response, deals with the reaction of the readers. The quality of translation could be judged by the similarity of reactions of the readers of the text in the source language and of the readers of translated text. The more similar these reactions are the better the translation is. Nida states that the response can not be fully isolated from the intent and therefore it is necessary to analyse the response with respect to the intent (Nida 1964, 183). Literal comics (comics where the text constitutes a vital part of the particular work of comics) and comics, which use very expressive and informal language are a good material for applying this part of Nida's concept on the translations of comics. The equivalence of response can be well observed on the graphic novel *Lost Girls* by Alan Moore and artist Melinda Gebbie (this graphic novel was translated into Czech by Viktor Janiš as *Ztrancené dívky*) because its story communicates with the readers on several levels. These levels differ in their obviousness. The story is about three ladies, whose characters are based on three heroines of the famous books for children (Alice from *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll, Wendy from *Peter Pan* by James Matthew Barrie and Dorothy from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Lyman Frank Baum) who meet in a mountain resort hotel in Austria in 1914 and who talk about their sexual experiences. As mentioned before, the story has several levels. The first and the most obvious level is the fact, that this comic book is a pornographic novel not only due to the pictorial explicitness, but also due to the textual explicitness in the

lexical choice and syntax. The next level reveals that the explicitness (both pictorial and textual) does not refer to any pornographic material, but rather to a specific subgenre of pornography – novels, which were published before World War I. (in the same period when *Lost Girls* takes place). As the plot develops, the reader finds out that the stories delivered by the three main characters are allusions to the parts of the plot of the three books which feature these characters (for example, Dorothy's partners resemble the characters from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Wendy's first love has several features in common with Peter Pan and when Alice describes an orgy, it is an allusion to the tea party described in *Alice in Wonderland)*. The last and the least obvious level is a Freudian interpretation of the story describing the influence of childhood memories and subconsciousness. All these levels have to be interpreted to the target readers as well, or otherwise, the value of the Czech translation would be lowered.

During the process of translation of comics, the translator must take into account several aspects that are particularly important for translating comics. Some of them are appearing exclusively in translating comics, others appear also in the process of translating other media. The most important element, which must be taken into consideration, is the presence of untranslatable units. Untranslatable units are parts of the discourse, which are unchangeable, permanent and the translator can not modify them (however, they can be modified by the decision of the publisher or due to the censorship, but these decisions can not be influenced by the translator and therefore this thesis will not deal with them). They should remain untouched in every publication in any language or format. In the case of comics, untranslatable units are images, compositions of panels and the style of illustrations. They provide the context of the story, which has to be taken into consideration by the translator. In his essay *The Role of Contexts in Translating*, Nida states:

No translator can afford to overlook the role of contexts in translating because they are crucial for so many decisions, whether in the choice of particular words, or in the organisation of an entire discourse. The most obvious relevance of contexts occurs in the choice of words in the immediate syntagmatic context of a single sentence or in the subtle connections between different words within the same semantic field or domain, as an extension of paradigmatic contexts. (Nida 1999, 1).

In the case of comics, the context is formed not only by the single sentences or the subtle connection, but also by the untranslatable units and therefore they have to be taken into consideration by the translator and have to be incorporated into the process of decoding and recoding. He or she has to consider the means of expressions of particular characters (especially in the series which are written by several authors). Such an example can be found in the translation of the series *X-Men* in the characters of Wolverine and Nightcrawler. The first character speaks with very informal language, while the second one puts German phrases into his speech. These specific features should be preserved also in the translation.

In his essay *Thump, Whizz, Poom: A Framework for the Study of Comics under Translation*, Klaus Kaindl makes a list of different aspects of comics, from which some of them are translation-relevant and can be modified during the process of translation. Kaindl divides them into three groups: linguistic, typographic and pictorial. Linguistic signs can be further divided into several sub-categories: titles, dialogue texts, narrations, inscriptions and onomatopoeia (for more on inscriptions and onomatopoeia, see 4.2.2). Typographic signs serve to shape the characters and they also serve as an interface between language and pictures. Their proportion, size and extent can indicate the intensity of the emotion or noise. Pictorial signs are a set of all visual elements used by comics: shape and size of panels, the style of the artist, colour, perspective etc. (Kaindl 273). The author of this essay also states that all of this aspects “can be

taken over or changed in the process of translation" (Kaindl 275). While this statement is true, it should be taken into consideration, that not all of them should be changed during the process of translation. The translator should translate only the first category and leave as much of the rest of the discourse as possible untouched (sometimes, the changes in pictures, lettering or arrangement of panels is necessary, but it should be done as little as possible).

Kaindl also lists five different translation strategies, which could be used in the process of translating comics. Those strategies are *repetitio* (linguistic and typographic signs – and usually onomatopoeia as well - are taken over in their original form from the source discourse), *deletio* (removal of text or pictures), *adiectio* (adding a linguistic or pictorial material to the target discourse), *transmutatio* (change of the target discourse in order of the source discourse) and *substitutio* (replacement of one linguistic, typographic or pictorial sign with another) (Kaindl 275). Strategies used in the Czech translations are *repetitio* (in the case of onomatopoeia, see 4.2.2), *transmutatio* (in the case of discourse-related text, see 4.2.2). On the other hand, *deletio*, *substitutio* and *adiectio* are scarcely used.

4.2.1 Localization, Domesticating and Foreignizing

Localization is defined as a process of "taking a product and making it linguistically, technically, and culturally appropriate to the target locale where it will be used and sold" (Zanettin 2008, 200). Although this definition is often used in relation with software products, it could be used for comics as well. This process takes place on two levels – on the level of translating discourse (when the text is modified or panels are re-arranged or omitted) and on the level of translating formats and other related aspects. In his essay *Aspects of Adaptation: The Translation of Comics Formats*, Valerio Rota states, that two translation strategies may be used

while translating (however, more accurate term would be adapting) comics: domesticating and foreignizing (Rota 84).

Domesticating strategies often modify the original in order to approach readers in target language more easily. Some of them are connected exclusively with the changes of the format in which the comics are published and some of them also change the text (or even the images) as well. Rota provides a list of six domesticating strategies (Rota 86). Three of them deal with the modification of the format and the others affect the discourse. The format-modifying strategies are shrinking or magnification of panels and pages (this usually happens when the formats in the source language and the target language are different), publishing coloured comic book in black and white (or vice versa, black-and-white comics can be coloured), and mutilation of text (this strategy can be considered as text-modifying as well, because its effect can be observed on two levels – the text can be affected by poor lettering and also by the fact that translators often try to reduce the translated text in single balloons as much as possible by choosing the shortest equivalent in the target language and some of the translators tend to overdo it). To these three strategies, some other minor strategies can be added (for example, publishing paperback comic book in hardcover and vice versa). The other three domesticating strategies are re-arrangement of panels and pages, omission of panels and pages, and cultural or political censorship (Rota 87). These three strategies can also change the meaning and the tone of the story.

Foreignizing strategies are used less often than domesticating strategies. Their purpose is to keep cultural and editorial characteristics of the original. They are often represented by only minor changes (Rota 85). The most evident and most common foreignizing strategy is keeping the original format of the comic book (in the case of manga books, it also keeps the original way of reading). Like domesticating, foreignizing can affect not only the format, but also the content of the particular comic book. Titles of the stories, onomatopoeic words, and other textual parts of

the discourse may be left untranslated. Rota states, that in some cultures, these modifications are considered as offensive towards the original (Rota 85).

According to Rota's division of domesticating and foreignizing strategies, Czech publishers tend to use the foreignizing strategies more often. The format of the book is usually not modified (i.e. the number, size and content of issues), the discourse is not modified due to the censorship and some of the text in the background or onomatopoeic words are not translated. On the other hand, some of the comic books were published in black and white, although their originals were coloured and in some publications, onomatopoeic words and texts in the background are translated (they are translated only if they bear a message on their own, for more information, see below).

4.2.2 Onomatopoeia and Discourse-related Text

As stated in sub-chapter 2.2, onomatopoeia is a very vaguely defined set of words that imitate sounds. These words may have different graphical representation and may occur both inside and outside word balloons. In translation studies, onomatopoeia is not a frequently discussed topic, because it is considered to be "not 'serious' enough to be a subject of academic research" (Garcés, 237). However, onomatopoeia is a vital part of comics and therefore it is necessary to deal with it also during the process of translation because different languages use different sets of onomatopoeic words, which usually reflect the uniqueness of the particular language and their system of interjections. As well as in the particular onomatopoeic systems, no regular pattern regarding translation of onomatopoeic words can be observed. It is up to the translator (and sometimes up to the publisher as well) whether to translate onomatopoeic words or not and which functional equivalent to the particular onomatopoeic word to choose. According to the survey made among publishers in Germany, "onomatopoeia is almost always retained in

comics of the superhero, horror story, or adventure type, in the source language, whereas it is more likely to be replaced in funny comics" (Kaindl 275). Publishers in other countries may decide differently on various genres, but the results of the survey provide the most used solutions in the most of the countries.

In the Czech translations of comic books, onomatopoeic words are usually left untranslated. There can be several reasons for doing so. Some of them are decided by the translator (for example, when he or she does not want to translate the onomatopoeic words, because that would create an unwanted comic effect, which would be in contradiction with the mood of the story) and some of them by the publisher (for example, if he or she decides, that editing onomatopoeic words in pictures would be difficult or expensive). Onomatopoeic words are translated only in the case when the translation would strengthen the comic or other effect or in the case when the target reader could be confused about what is happening in the picture if the onomatopoeic word would not be translated. Usually, this is the case when the onomatopoeic word is formed by verb (like "miss" or "catch"). Such an example can be found in *The Amazing Spider-Man: Revelations*, where the mixed approach is used. All onomatopoeic words are not translated (this approach is also used in the preceding book of this series, *The Amazing Spider-Man: Coming Home*), except for one case when the interjection *Flusssh* is translated as *Spláááách* (Stracynzski 2005, 142). In this case, the translation is necessary, because in the context of the two tiers, the target reader might be confused if the onomatopoeic word would not be translated (see Fig 2).

Discourse-related text is a specific term, which is used exclusively in this thesis. It stands for a small part of text contained in comics, which is not discussed in translation studies, but which should be given the same attention as onomatopoeia should be (and with which they have several elements in common) because discourse-related text has similar effect on the mood of the

story as onomatopoeic words have. Discourse-related text refers to the text which is directly connected to some other elements of the discourse of comics (images, arrangement of panels etc.). Usually, it is the text, which occurs outside word balloons and captions (although there can be several exceptions, see below). It could be stated that all text contained in comic book is discourse-related, since it is connected to some other parts of the discourse of the comics, but for the purpose of this thesis, the term discourse-related text will refer to two distinctive types of text. The first one contains all types of text, that form a direct part of the picture (signs with names of the streets, timetables, advertisements etc.), whose function is to "indicate local, temporal or historical references which could alternatively be dealt with only at great expense of language and pictorial material" (Kaindl 273). The quantity and density of these parts of the picture are also dependent on the style of the artist. Some of the styles enable putting more of them in the pictures, some of them do not use it at all. The second one contains text in balloons or captions, which refers directly to the content of images and forms a pun or inside joke. Unlike in the case of onomatopoeia, additional strategy regarding discourse-related text can be used - *deletio*. Kaindl presents an example, where the text on the note is simply deleted, although the text was related to the story and not only a part of the background (Kaindl 277).

Good opportunity to analyse the first type of discourse-related text is the mini-series *TOP 10* by writer Alan Moore and artist Gene Ha. The visual style of this comic book is very detailed and allows to put many puns or "Easter eggs" (this name refers to the Easter egg hunts practiced in many countries and in this case, it stands for in-jokes bearing a hidden message, they are usually software-related, but they can also appear in movies or books) in the background of the pictures (see Fig. 3). These "Easter eggs" are formed by various signs, announcements and advertisements and help to create the mood of the story. Therefore, it is necessary to translate these puns.

The second type of the discourse-related text is much rarer and it seems impossible to find several examples in one publication therefore it is necessary to choose examples from various comic books. One group of such discourse-related signs contains various inscriptions or tags which usually refer to the names of the characters. Some of these inscriptions can be found in the series *Fables* and in *Formerly Known As The Justice League* (for more on these series, see 4.2.4), where some of the names are written on various places (doorplates, ornaments bearing the initials of particular character etc.). If these names are translated in the text of the particular comics, they have to be translated also in the pictures. For example, in *Fables*, a character named Snow White has her own initials (SW) incised on the head of her table. When the name was translated as "Sněhurka", the ornament bearing those initials has to be modified appropriately. In the Czech translation, the letter W is erased in order to correspond with the translation of the name (see Fig 4).

In some cases, the text and the image create a specific joke, which is comprehensible only for a certain cultural region. For example, in the graphic novel *From Hell* by Alan Moore and artist Eddie Campbell, the text of one frame describes the accumulating lies regarding Jack the Ripper, while the image shows a hand dropping a straw on the camel's back (see Fig 5). The image is an allusion to the English saying "the straw that broke the camel's back" which describes a situation when even a small impulse can shatter a bigger object. This joke is mainly done through the image (the text is transferrable without any problems). If the saying was written and not drawn, the translation would be easy, because a similar saying exists also in Czech ("kapka, kterou pohár přetekl"), but because the saying is suggested through the picture, the transition is difficult. In the interview with Jiří Pavlovský, the translator Viktor Janiš mentions the possibility of removing this picture and replacing it with another one, which would show a functional equivalent of this saying. The functional equivalent should be comprehensible to

Czech cultural surrounding, for example, a picture of a cup full to the brim and a drop of water falling in this cup. Nevertheless, this solution was dismissed because according to Viktor Janiš, they could not find an artist who draws in a style similar to the one of Eddie Campbell (Pavlovský 1).

4.2.3 Universals

During the process of translation, the translator sometimes has to make small modifications to the text. These modifications should not affect the meaning of the translated text, but they affect its syntax, lexical choice and length. They are called universals of translation and they are defined as "linguistic features which typically occur in translated rather than original texts and are thought to be independent of the influence of the specific language pairs involved in the process of translation" (Baker, in Laviosa-Braithwaite 288). In the case of translating comics, universals are frequently used in order to make the text shorter or more comprehensible to the target reader or to eliminate cultural gaps between source and target culture and they can be observed especially in the comic books, whose style is more complex and more demanding on the translator. This sub-chapter deals with the use of universals of translation in translating comics and provides examples from several comic books which, due to their lexical and stylistic complexity, can serve as good examples.

Universals of translation can be divided into three groups: simplification, explicitation and normalization (these groups are further divided into sub-groups according to the particular method which is used). Simplification operates on three levels: lexical, syntactic and stylistic. Lexical simplification is defined as "the process and/or result of mankind do with less words" (Blum-Kulka, Levenston, in Laviosa-Braithwaite 288) and consists of six translation strategies: use of superordinates (if no equipollent hyponym can be found in the target language),

approximation of the concepts (when certain concept can not be fully transferred into the target language), use of "common-level" words, transfer of the functions of the words, use of paraphrases (in the case, when a cultural gap exists between the source and the target culture) and use of circomlutions (Laviosa-Braithwaite 288). Syntactic simplification replaces complex sentence structures with simpler ones by breaking up long sentences, replacing and shortening elaborate and complex phrases with shorter and simpler ones, reducing or omitting repetitions and leaving out phrases and words (Laviosa-Braithwaite 289). Stylistic simplification deals with the stylistic features in the same way as lexical simplification and syntactic simplification deal with words and sentences. Explicitation is often used to eliminate parts of the text, whose content may me unclear or unfamiliar to the target reader, and further explain and expand them. This strategy, unlike simplification, usually makes target text longer than the source text. The main explicitation strategies are the use of interjections (this strategy is used in order to clarify certain parts of the text), expansion of certain passages, addition of modifiers and qualifiers, addition and repetition of information, insertion of explanations, explicit naming and precise rendering of implicit or vague information (Laviosa-Braithwaite 289). The third universal of translation, normalization, adjusts the text and standardizes it in order to make it more coherent and readable to the target audience. This is usually done by changes, modifications and shifts in punctuation (for example, it is unusual to divide clauses with semi-colons in Czech, and therefore, semi-colons are replaced with full stops or commas in translation), lexical choice and sentence structure (Laviosa-Braithwaite 289).

Like in the case of analysing style and the efficiency of translation, literal comics provides the greatest opportunity to analyse the use of universals in the process of translating comics. Many examples of using universals during the process of translation can be found in the comic book *Midnight Nation* by writer J. Michael Straczynski and artist Gary Frank (in the Czech

Republic, this comic book was published as *Krajina půlnočních stínů* and it was translated by Dana Krejčová). Examples of the usage of simplification, explicitation and normalization are listed in the chart below (the chart is not a complete list of all examples of translation universals that occur in *Midnight Nation*, these examples serve for explanation the universals usage in the translation of comics).

Simplification	
Rain fell on the open eyes and pooled there.	Do očí mu stékal déšť.
They figure everybody we have to deal with is and not driving real fast.	Ty zatracený černý havrani si myslej, že mrtví mají dost času.
He can't fight alone.	Sám to nezvládne.
No P.A. system announcing a code blue for doctor Anybody.	A nikdo o mě nejeví zájem.
Would you like me to tell you a story?	Chcete slyšet pohádku?
Because the job came first. The job came first.	Protože práce pro mě byla důležitější.
Explicitation	
Hell, some of my most cooperative witnesses have been murderers.	Sakra, ukázalo se, že mý nejlepší svědkové byli vrazi.
They figure everybody we have to deal with is and not driving real fast.	Ty zatracený černý havrani si myslej, že mrtví mají dost času.
Or until you turn.	Nebo dokud nepřejdeš na druhou stranu.
Must be one of those „eye of the beholder" things I read about in the newspaper once.	Zřejmě to bude věc vkusu. Jednou jsem o tom četla v novinách.

Everybody all right?	Nezranil se někdo?
And what did I have?	A co zbylo mně?
Normalization	
A bad death was a fifteen year old white girl caught by a stray bullet during a hold-up at 7-Eleven.	Špatná smrt podle něj byla patnáctiletá bílá dívka zasažená zbloudilou kulkou při přepadení večerky.
I told them six months ago to stop sending me the Victoria's Secrets catalogue.	Už před půl rokem jsem jim řekl, aby mi přestali posílat katalog spodního prádla.
Like i said, I give answers, not explanations.	Jak jsem říkala, já odpovídám, nevysvětluju.
Must be one of those "eye of the beholder" things I read about in the newspaper once.	Zřejmě to bude věc vkusu. Jednou jsem o tom četla v novinách.
Once upon a time, I worked making cars back in Flint, Michigan.	Byl jednou jeden dělník v automobilce, tedy já. Žil jsem ve Flintu v Michiganu.
I've had my soul stolen.	Ukradli mi duši.
And I just don't know what it will take to get through to you.	A já už prostě nevím, jak ti to mám vysvětlit.

As can be observed from the examples in the chart, simplification is often used in the translations of comics to help to fit the text in the word balloons, which provide only a limited space for the text, by reducing repetitions and simplifying particular phrases. Unlike explicitations used in the translations of the works of literature, the explicitations used in translation of comics can not be much longer than the original parts of the source text. Therefore,

these explicitations are used on the microlevel (like using hyponyms) rather than on the macrolevel (which are usually done by expanding sentences, by adding phrases or clauses). The examples of normalization can be divided into two categories. The first represents those which change one cultural-bound element to another. The second one represents those which change the sentence structure, punctuation or syntax.

Textual explicitation is not the only one that can be used during the process of translation of comics. In *Midnight Nation*, an example of pictorial explicitation can also be found. In the first chapter of this comic book, a dialogue between two characters takes place. In the source discourse, the word balloons containing the lines of the dialogue have the same shape and colour. However, in the translation, the balloons of one character were coloured in red in order to distinguish between the lines of the individual characters (see Fig. 6 and Fig 7).

4.2.4 Translation of Proper Names

The decision to translate proper names or not is up to the translator. He or she has to decide whether the proper names in the particular work are connected to the story or they are intended to make a word-play and translate them if it is necessary. Unified opinion on this topic does not exist, but in the article *K překládání osobních jmen*, Miloslava Knappová states that there are several criteria, which should be considered by the translator: the genre of the work, its intended audience, the specific features of its language and the possibility of characterizing function of some names (Knappová 172). Knappová also notes, that translation of names is done in humorous works (its purpose is to emphasize the comic effect) and in books for children rather than in tragedies (Knappová 173).

In the case of comics, this issue is more frequent, especially in the case of superhero comics, where discussed names are not proper names in their basic meaning (such as Bruce

Wayne or Clark Kent), but rather aliases, nicknames or alter egos, like Batman or Superman. Therefore, this sub-chapter deals mainly with the translation of these aliases (the only exception is the translation of names in the series *Fables*, which is also discussed in this sub-chapter). Knappová lists three possibilities, how a translator can deal with this problem. He or she can keep the names untouched, but in translation, he or she declines them as regular Czech names and sometimes modifies the spelling according to the typographical possibilities of the Czech language (in the case of comics, this is the most used approach, many superhero names are left untranslated and some of them, such as Captain America, Captain Atom and Captain Marvel are localized as Kapitán Amerika, Kapitán Atom and Kapitán Marvel). The translator can decide to translate only some of the names and leave the rest untranslated (this is the case of the comic book *Formerly Known As The Justice League* which is discussed below). The third option is to translate or localize all names (this is the case of *Watchmen* and *Sandman*, where the names have characterizing or poetic function).

In *Sandman* (written by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by various artists), a fantasy series featuring entities representing elements of human life, the names have not only characterizing or describing function, but also a metaphorical function, since all seven of the main characters are anthropomorfic personifications (Death, Dream, Desire, Despair, Destiny, Destruction and Dellirium) and therefore the translation of their names is necessary. The biggest problem of the translation is not finding of the Czech equivalents (to each of the name, a Czech version exists and all of them fit into the text perfectly, both from the point of view of functionality, but also from the stylistic point of view), but the alliteration of these names. It is obvious that it is not possible to use alliterations starting on the letter D. In the interview with Jiří Pavlovský, Viktor Janiš, the translator of *Sandman*, states that the most suitable solution would be using aliterations starting on the letter S (for example, “sen”, “smrt” or “sudba”), but this approach could not be

applied to all seven characters, and therefore, he decided to use the functional equivalents without keeping the alliteration (Pavlovský 1).

Great opportunity to analyse translation of proper names in comics published in the Czech Republic is the series *Fables* created by writer Bill Willingham and artist Lan Medina. Main characters of this series are well-known figures from various fairy tales, myths, nursery rhymes and other works of literature. Their homelands were invaded by mysterious Adversary and now they have to live in New York as ordinary people. The first five issued were published in Czech in 2008 as *Mýty: Legendy v exilu* and were translated by Viktor Janiš. Lots of these characters are known also to Czech readers and their names have Czech equivalents, but other characters are either completely unknown or their names do not have Czech equivalents. The names of the characters appearing in the first five issues of the series (which were published in Czech), their variations and Czech translations are listed in the chart below.

Proper name and its variations in the source text	Proper name and its variations in the target text
Big Bad Wolf, Bigby Wolf, Bigby	Pan Vlk, Zlý Vlk, Wolfi
Snow White, Snow	Sněhurka
Prince Charming	Krásný Princ, Pohádkový Princ
Rose Red, Rose	Šípková Růženka, Růženka, Růža
Boy Blue, Blue Boy	Modrák
Flycatcher	Mucholap
Beauty	Kráska
Beast	Zvíře
Bluebeard	Modrovous

Black Forest Witch	Čarodějnice z Černého lesa
King Cole	Král Cole

Most of these translations are not a matter of translator's choice, but rather a matter of finding an equivalent in Czech fairy tales and folklore. In some cases (Boy Blue, Flycatcher, Bigby, King Cole), it is necessary to find equivalents, that would fit stylistically and linguistically). For the name "Bigby", no Czech equivalent can be found (this is true only for the form "Bigby", since its full name "Big Bad Wolf" is "Velký zlý vlk" in Czech) and therefore it is necessary to come up with a new translation. The chosen name "Wolfi" has the same level of informativeness and familiarity as its original. The biggest problem in this comic book the name of the character Rose Red, whose origin is in a German fairy tale *Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot* (*Snow-White and Rose-Red*). In the Czech translation, this name is translated as "Šípková Růženka", which seems to be a perfect match (regardless of the connection to the fairy tales), but in the long-term perspective of publishing this series, this choice turned out to be disserviceable because in the 12th issue, a new character name Briar Rose is introduced and it turns out, that this character has more in common with the character of "Šípková Růženka" (when she pricks her finger, she falls asleep together with the other people and the place overgrows with thorn bush) than the character of Rose Red. The name of this character is often translated into Czech as "Růženka", but without the addition of the adjective "Šípková". This problem is not exclusively a matter of Czech translation, several names of fairy tale character in English translations (such as Snow White or Prince Charming) can refer to several different characters (Willingham was aware of this fact and in *Fables*, he merged these characters with different names into one). The most probable explanation is that the translator did not have enough information about the series and its development and he may also have mixed the characters of Rose Red and Briar Rose.

Probably the widest range of possibilities to analyse translation of proper names is provided by the genre of superhero comics. In some of them, the names of superheroes are translated (such as *Watchmen*) and in some of them (for example, *Ultimates* or *Spider-Man*), the names are left untranslated. In superhero comics, all names of superheroes have characterizing function, and therefore all of them should be translated. However, some of them (for example, Batman or Spider-Man) have been adapted into Czech without translation (but they are declined as Czech names or, if such declination can not be made, left out or translated by circumlocution) as translation of some of them would be too long or too inappropriate (for example, the translation of the name of the superhero Stature would be too long to fit in the conversations and in the balloons as well and the choice of a short name would sound senselessly). Usually, the names of superheroes are translated only in one-shots and in graphic novels or mini-series without any connection to other series, while the names of superheroes of long-running series are left untranslated (like *Torment* and *Long Halloween*, comic books featuring Spider-Man or Batman). Similar decisions, whether to translate some name or not, have to be taken also in the case of the names of the superhero teams. Some of them, usually the longer ones and those containing more than one word, are always translated (for example, "Justice League" is translated as "Liga spravedlnosti"), some of them, like Avengers, are left in their original form (in some of the issues of Spider-Man published by Semic-Slovart, Avengers are refered to as "Mstitelé", but in all the following Marvel comic books, this name is not translated, because "Mstitelé" feels more like supervillain team rather than superhero team and there was no serious reason to translate it).

On rare occasions, both approaches are used, such as in the case of the comic book *Formerly Known As The Justice League* (this comic book was published in the Czech Republic as *Dříve známí jako Liga spravedlnosti*), which is a parody on stories about superhero teams. The

humorous tone of the story and the fact that it could be considered as a mini-series (it consists of only six issues and another six issues, which form a sequel named *I Can't Believe It's Not the Justice League*), strengthen the feeling, that the names in this comic book should be translated. On the other hand, both main and supporting characters appear also in other series and translating some of these names would confuse the readers. The translator of this comic book, Michael Bronec, decided to translate the names of the main superheroes (which are lesser known and second-rate superheroes) and keep the names of all other characters in their original form. The list of the names that were translated or localized is in the chart below.

Blue Beetle	Modrý Brouk
Booster Gold	Zlatej Frája
Elongated Man	Prodlužovací Muž, Natahovací Muž
Captain Atom	Kapitán Atom
Fire	Ohnivka
Captain Marvel	Kapitán Marvel
Manga Khan	Manga Chán
Roulette	Ruleta

As shown in the chart, some of the names (Captain Atom, Manga Khan etc.) have only been localized into Czech without any further modifications. However, four of them were also translated in order to provide a humorous element. Whereas in the case of Blue Beetle and Fire, the translation is accurate, the translation of the other two names is problematic. In the Czech translation, Elongated Man can be referred to in two ways, from which the variant "Natahovací Muž" is stylistically better (although the second one, "Prodlužovací Muž", is more faithful to the

original). Although these two names are functional equivalents to the original and keep the pulp tone of the name, the main problem is on the level of discourse and accordance of text and image. Elongated Man has the initials of his alter ego depicted on his costume, which is in contradiction with both Czech translations (see Fig. 8). In the Czech translation, these initials were not altered in the pictures, but the best solution would be different translation of the name (for example, "Elastický Muž" would be a functional equivalent both at the level of text and discourse). The translation of the name 'Booster Gold" is good from the stylistic point of view (considering the options, which can be used), but it is different from the original, which is related to the mythology of this character, which may be unknown to the translator, and also diverges from the descriptive purpose of superhero's name. According to the mythology of this character, Booster Gold acquired his powers by stealing several artifacts in the future. These two facts are incorporated in the word "Booster", which means both assistance or support and also thief (in American English).

As stated above, names of superheroes in graphic novels or mini-series are often translated. In the Czech Republic, several of such mini-series and graphic novels were published. In some of them (for example, *Rising Stars*), the names are not translated, although some of them (Sanctuary, Ravenshadow) could be transferred into Czech, but in this series, the names do not have such a strong characterizing and referential function. In the other two examples, *Watchmen* and *TOP 10*, the names have bigger role in the storyline and therefore the names should be treated differently than the names in other series. In *TOP 10*, a series taking place in a megalopolis built exclusively for superhumans, gods and space entities, the real names of the characters and their alter-egos often merge and overlap (sometimes, the characters are referred to by their alter-egos more than by their real names), and so it is necessary to translate or otherwise

transfer the names of the characters in order to keep the text coherent. The names of the characters and their Czech translations are listed in the chart below.

Toybox	Toybox
King Peacock	Král Páv
Shockheaded Peter	Šokový Petr
Dust Devil	Solný Sloup
Girl One	Jednička
Jack Phantom	Jackie Fantom
Jetman	Jetman
Wolfspider	Slíďák
Peregrine	Peregrina

Translations of some names (King Peacock, Wolfspider, Girl One) are accurate and adequate (and the translated names are shorter than the names in the source text, which provides more space in the word balloons), but some translations are not functional equivalents to the source text. As can be observed from the chart, two of the names (Toybox, Jetman) were left untranslated, although the Czech translations could be made even for these names. The translation of the name "Jetman" is more difficult. This name could be translated as "Stíhač" or "Tryskáč". There are two reasons why the translator Richard Podaný decided not to translate this name. The first reason is linguistic because the name Jetman can be easily declined and used in Czech text and therefore he may not feel the need to translate the name. The second reason is connected to the context of the story. It is mentioned there in the comic book, that the character of Steve "Jetman" Traynor used to be known under another alter-ego called "Jetlad". In order to

preserve coherency in the use of names, it is necessary to translate this name as well, but the similarity to the alter-ego "Jetman" (and its potential translation) has to be taken into consideration. Podaný could not translate these names because he was not able to find a satisfying translation of this pair of names. On the other hand, the name "Toybox" could have been translated easily. Podaný could have translated her name as "Krabička", which would stylistically fit into the text and it would also fulfil the characterizing function of the name. Minor flaws can be observed in the translations of the names "Dust Devil" and "Shockheaded Peter", usually connected with the referential function of these names (in the case of Dust Devil, some problems can be observed with the characterizing function as well). The character of Duane "Dust Devil" Bodine is combining an outfit of a cowboy with several technical gadgets. Whereas in the source text, this name refers to the whirlwinds of dust or sand (which could be connected with the atmosphere of the Wild West and the look of Bodine's character), in the Czech translation, the name "Solný Sloup" refers to the biblical story of Lot and his daughters and therefore, the translation of the name is both inaccurate and misleading, because the name does not have any connection with the character or his attributes. The name "Shockheaded Peter" bears a cultural reference, which is untransferrable into Czech for two reasons. The first one is a problem of cultural differences because the book to which the name is referring to is almost unknown in the Czech Republic, unlike in the Anglo-Saxon cultural surrounding (the book is named *Shockheaded Peter* and it is a collection of rhymed cautionary tales for children written and illustrated by German psychologist Heinrich Hoffman in 1845). The characters of Shockheaded Peter from the original book (a small boy who refuses to comb his hair which looks like wires sticking out) and Shockheaded Peter from *TOP 10* (a young man who can create electrical discharges and when he uses his powers, his head turns into a glowing skull) have nothing in common except the name (which creates a wordplay on Peter's abilities). The second

problem with the translation of this name is the inability to find a suitable replacement for the wordplay, although the used solution, "Šokový Petr", is good from the characterizing point of view, it does not contain the wordplay.

In *Watchmen*, a dystopian superhero comics, the names have also referential function, but the translation is not as necessary as in the case of *TOP 10* because they can be treated like names from a regular superhero comic book or series (the only exception could be made in the case of Comedian and Captian Metropolis, whose names should be domesticated in order to decline them and use them in the target text more easily). The names of the characters and their Czech translations are listed in the chart below.

Comedian	Komediant
Nite Owl	Sůva
Dollar Bill	Dolarový Bill
Silk Spectre	Hedvábný Přízrak
Hooded Justice	Soudce v kápi
Captain Metropolis	Kapitán Metropolis
Mothman	Lišaj
Silhoulette	Silueta

As can be seen in the chart above, some names (Mothman, Nite Owl) could be left untranslated because they could be used in the translation in their English versions without any stylistic complications. However, some of them (Hooded Justice, Silk Spectre) have to be translated, so that the translator can work with them like with the Czech names. Translator of *Watchmen*, Viktor Janiš, decided to translate and transfer all of the names in order to avoid a

stylistic contradiction, which would occur, if he translated or localized only some of the names. As in the case of *TOP 10*, the translations of names are shorter than their originals, and therefore the translator has more space in the balloons.

Two other ways of translating names can be found in the translations of comic books published in the Czech Republic (these ways are connected with the explanations discussed in 4.2.3). In *Batman: Hush*, names of several characters were translated by adding an asterisk to the particular name and adding a caption with explanation on the bottom of the page. Sometimes, the translation of the name is expanded by short information about the character. The translator, Jiří Pavlovský, decided to translate names of those characters, who might be unknown to Czech readers (Huntress, Icicle etc.). This solution seems better than translating the names directly in the text, which would seem disturbing due to the fact, that other names were not translated. This solution also enables the translator to introduce the character in a few words, which may help the reader to pinpoint the particular character within the particular discourse (especially if it is an advanced discourse like the *Batman* universe, which contains lots of connections both to the past events and to the other series published by DC Comics). The second way of translating is connected more with the publication itself than with the text. In *Comicsové legendy*, a series of comic books featuring Marvel superheroes, a few pages of text are added. On these pages, minor and less-known characters are introduced and their names are translated. This solution is better than the previous one because it allows to introduce the characters more deeply and it does not require any extra captions in the pages of the comics.

5. Conclusion

As presented in the previous chapters, comics can be subject of translation studies in the same way as literature or film. It is necessary to understand that comics are not a genre of literature (as is sometimes suggested), but an independent medium (such as literature or film) with their own set of linguistic and pictorial signs, narrative strategies and other features, which combination forms a unique discourse. The first chapter of this thesis defined comics as a medium, described their features and the history of comics. The second chapter connected comics with Czech cultural surrounding by describing their history, the current state and the policy of Czech publishers. The fact, that comics are a medium and not a genre of literature, has to be taken into consideration also in the process of translating comics. Translation theories regarding literature or film translation can not be fully applied and therefore it was necessary to modify these theories in order to meet the demands and needs of translating comics. This problem was described and discussed in the third chapter. Third chapter also introduced several new terms to the translation studies, like “discourse of comics”, “discourse-related text” or “untranslatable units”.

Works cited

Source Texts

- Ennis, Garth. *Preacher: Gone to Texas.* New York: DC Comics, 1996.
- ---. *Kazatel: Jako pára nad Texasem.* Trans. Štěpán Kopřiva. Praha: Crew, 2004.
- Gaiman, Neil. *The Sandman: Season of Mists.* New York: Vertigo, 1994.
- ---. *Sandman: Údobí mlh.* Trans. Viktor Janiš. Praha: Crew, 2005.
- Giffen, Keith and DeMatteis, John. *Formerly Known As The Justice League*. New York: DC Comics, 1996.
- ---. *Dříve známí jako Liga Spravedlnosti*. Trans. Michael Bronec. Praha: Crew, 2006.
- Loeb, Jeph. *Batman: Hush, Vol. 1*. New York: DC Comics, 2004.
- ---. *Batman: Ticho – Kniha první.* Trans. Jiří Pavlovský. Praha: BB Art, 2004.
- Moore, Alan. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics, 1995.
- ---. *Strážci.* Trans. Viktor Janiš. Praha: Crew, 2005.
- ---. *From Hell*, Portland: Top Shelf Productions, 2000.
- ---. *Z pekla.* Trans. Viktor Janiš. Praha: BB Art, 2003.
- ---. *TOP 10*, *Vol. 1*. New York: America's Best Comics, 2000.
- ---. *TOP 10 - Kniha první.* Trans. Richard Podaný. Praha: BB Art, 2003.
- ---. *TOP 10*, *Vol. 2*. New York: America's Best Comics, 2002.
- ---. *TOP 10 - Kniha druhá.* Trans. Richard Podaný. Praha: BB Art, 2003.
- ---. *Lost Girls*. Marietta: Top Shelf Productions, 2006.
- ---. *Ztracené dívky.* Trans. Viktor Janiš. Praha: ARGO, 2008.
- Straczynski, Michael J. *Amazing Spider-Man Vol. 2: Revelations*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2002.

- ---. *Spider-Man : Odhalení*. Trans. Jiří Pavlovský. Praha: Seqoy, 2005.
- ---. *Midnight Nation*. Los Angeles: Top Cow Productions, 2003.
- ---. *Krajina půlnočních stínů*. Trans. Dana Krejčová. Praha: Comics Centrum, 2004.
- Willingham, Bill. *Fables: Legends in Exile*. New York: Vertigo, 2002.
- ---. *Mýty: Legendy v exilu.* Trans. Viktor Janiš. Praha: Crew, 2008.

Secondary Sources

- Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Blumberg, Arnold T. *The Night Gwen Stacy Died: The End of Innocence and the Birth of the Bronze Age*. http://reconstruction.eserver.org/034/blumberg.htm
- Eco, Umberto. *Skeptikové a těšitelé*. Trans. Zdeněk Frýbort. Praha: Argo, 2007.
- Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art*. Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 2000.
- Garcéz, Carmen Valero. Onomatopoeia and Unarticulated Language in the Translation of Comic Books. The Case of Comics in Spanish. In *Comics in Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008.
- Harvey, Robert C. Comedy At The Juncture Of Word And Image. In *The Language of Comics: Word and Image*. Jackson: University Press Mississippi, 2001.
- Kaindl, Klaus. Thump, Whizz, Boom: A Framework for the Study of Comics under Translation. In *Target*, vol. 11:2 (1999), 263 - 288
- Knappová, Miloslava. "K překládání osobních jmen." In *Naše řeč*, vol. 4 (1983), 169-173

- Laviosa-Braithwaite, Sara. Universals of Translation. In *Routledge Encyclopedia*. London and New York: Routlege, 1998.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: Harper Paperback, 1994.
- Nida, Eugene Albert. The Role of Contexts in Translating. In *Word, Text, Translation: Liber Amicorum for Peter Newmark*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999.
- ---. *Towards a Science of Translating*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964.
- Pavlovský, Jiří. Viktor Janiš. Překladatelské peklo. *Občanské sdružení pro iliteraturu*, 21 May 2006. Iliteratura, 2004. http://www.iliteratura.cz/clanek.asp?polozkaID=15299
- Rota, Valerio. Aspects of Adaptation. The Translation of Comics Formats. In *Comics in Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008.
- Saraceni, Mario. *The Language of Comics*. London and New York: Routlege, 2003.
- Zanettin, Federico. "Comics in translation studies. An overview and suggestions for research". In *Traduction et Interculturalisme. VIIe Seminaire de Traduction Scientifique et Technique en Langue Portugaise, Lisbonne, 15 novembre 2004*, 93 – 98
- ---. The Translation of Comics as Localization. On Three Italian Translations of La piste des Navajos. In *Comics in Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008.

Framing Resources

- Alánová, Martina. *Komiks a jeho modelový čtenář*. Brno: Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, 2005.

- Betlachová, Nikola. *Comics Between Two Cultural Environments: Analysis of the Genre and Options for Translation*. Brno: Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, 2007.
- Millar, Mark. *Ultimate Fantastic Four #1*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2006.

Appendix

Fig. 1

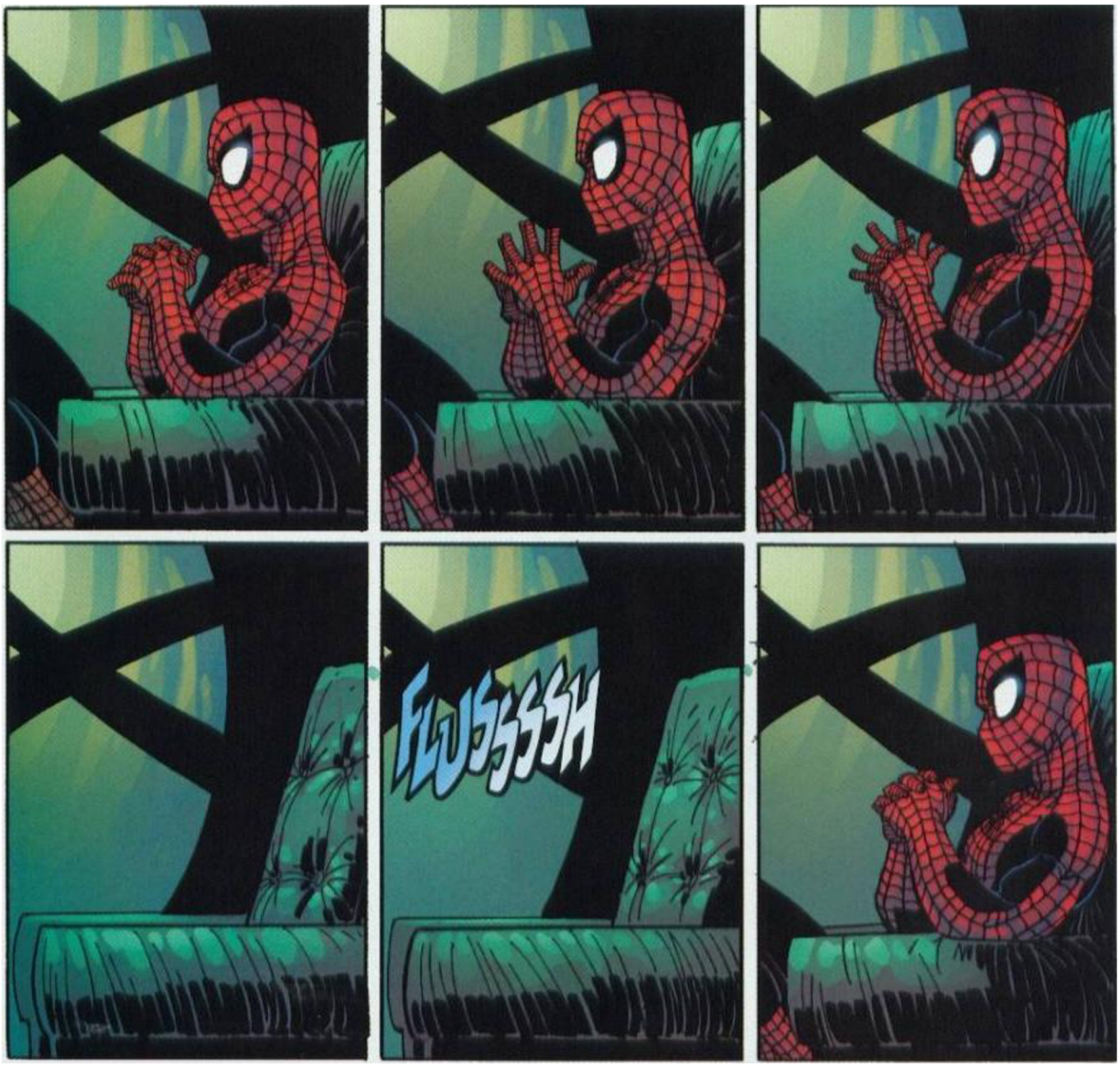

Fig. 2

HYSTERKY Z KRYPTY
ŽELEZNÝ TÁGOŠ
a KAPITÁN PUMEL
CESTA DO STŘEDU SVĚRAČE
PŘÍMO X-TATICKÝ VÝHLED, JAKÝ SVĚT NEVIDĚL
PEEP SHOW!
DUANE? ŽE MĚNÍM TÉMA... JE TO PRAVDA, ŽE TA LIBRA... ŽE MOŽNÁ VYJDE VEN?
RYCHLÉ ŽÍLY:
DO KAPITÁNA S
NÍ NAVÁŽEJ T
PRACHATÝ KAMA
STARÝ VĚDECKÝ
ATOMAN A
ATOMAN? TO JAKO TEN Z TELKY? JÁ MYSLEL, ŽE JE PO SMRTI!
DEPAK. UKÁZALO SE, ŽE TO BYL JENOM MARKETINGOVEJ TAH...
S JAKOU FIRMOU MÁ TEĎ PODEPSANOU SMLOUVU, HA? S MULTIVERSALEM, NE?
ROBOKAPS
TO MYSLÍŠ, ŽE BY HO NECHAL! JEN TAK UMŘÍT?

Fig. 3

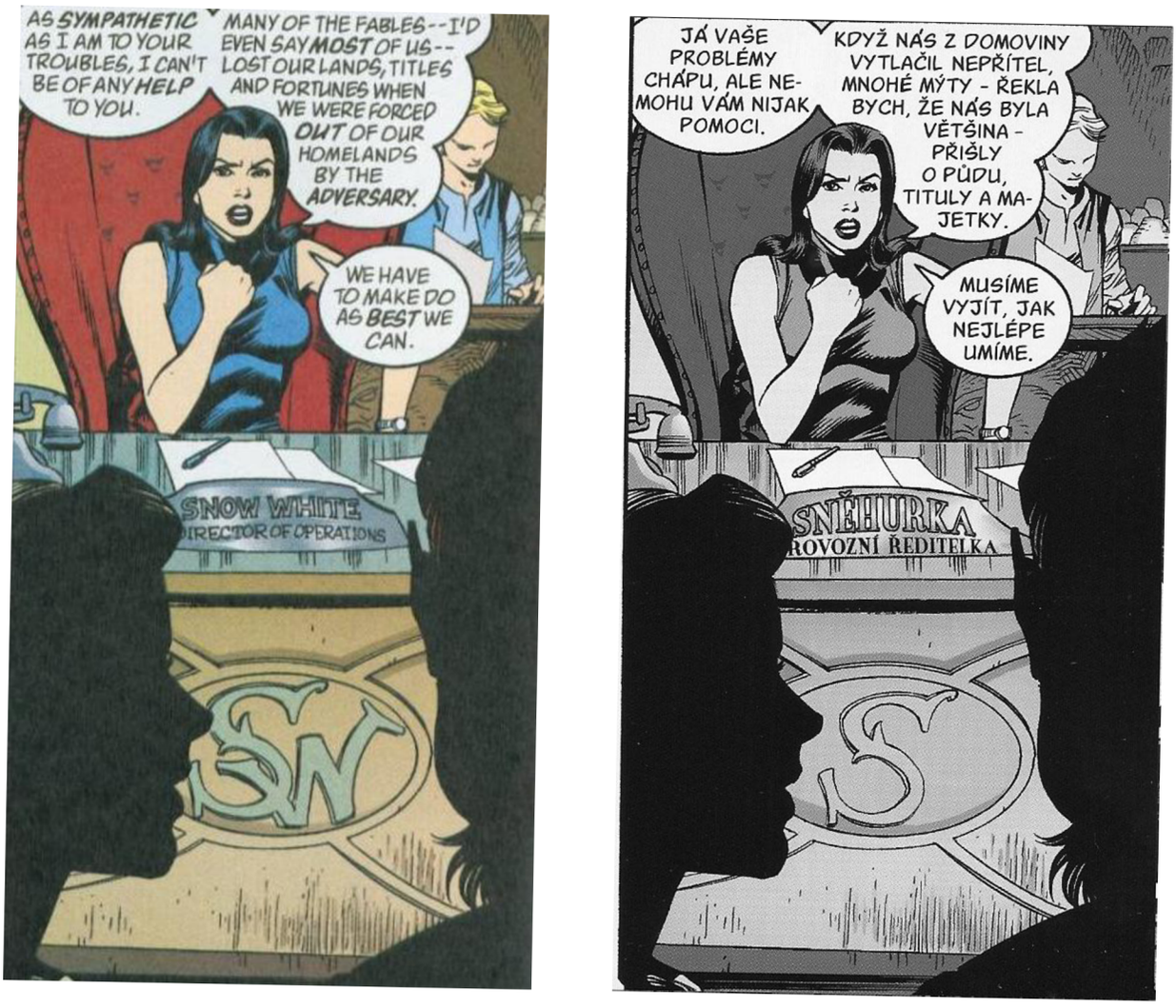
AS SYMPATHETIC AS I AM TO YOUR TROUBLES, I CAN'T BE OF ANY HELP TO YOU.
MANY OF THE FABLES--I'D EVEN SAY MOST OF US--LOST OUR LANDS, TITLES AND FORTUNES WHEN WE WERE FORCED OUT OF OUR HOMELANDS BY THE ADVERSARY.
WE HAVE TO MAKE DO AS BEST WE CAN.
SNOW WHITE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
JÁ VAŠE PROBLÉMY CHÁPU, ALE NEMOHU VÁM NIJAK POMOCI.
KDYŽ NÁS Z DOMOVINY VYTLAČIL NEPŘÍTEL, MNOHÉ MÝTY - ŘEKLA BYCH, ŽE NÁS BYLA VĚTŠINA - PŘIŠLY O PŮDU, TITULY A MAJETKY.
MUSÍME VYJÍT, JAK NEJLÉPE UMÍME.
SNĚHURKA
ROVOZNÍ ŘEDITELKA

Fig. 4

Joe's tales, transparently ridiculous, begin to strain even the credulity of Whitechapel fandom.
Jean Overton Fuller's Sickert and the Ripper Crimes, therefore, presents a problem.

Fig. 5

HE CAN'T FIGHT ALONE.
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS. I CAN'T FACE THE PAIN AGAIN.
SÁM TO NEZVLÁD-NE.
TOHLE UŽ NECHCI. NEDOKÁŽU ZNOVU SNÁŠET TU BOLEST.

Fig. 6

THEN YOU SUBSTITUTE ONE KIND OF PAIN FOR ANOTHER.
I DON'T WANT TO DIE.
PAK JENOM NAHRADÍŠ JEDEN DRUH BOLESTI DRUHÝM.
JÁ NECHCI ZEMŘÍT.

Fig. 7

VŽDYŤ PŘECE NEMÁME ŽÁDNÉ AKVÁRIUM.
TAK HO BĚŽ OPATŘIT.
„ČTYŘKA", PANE?
VY JSTE ČLOVĚK...?
OVŠEMŽE JSEM ČLOVĚK!
LIDÉ JAKO DRUH JSOU NATAHOVACÍ...?
TO ZNÍ PĚKNĚ IDIOTSKY, NE?
JEN KDYŽ SE NAD TÍM ZAMYSLÍTE, PANE.
NO, JO... HM...
KOUSLA MĚ RADIOAKTIVNÍ GUMIČKA! JASNÝ...?!

Fig. 8