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Coherence in Comics

An Interdisciplinary Approach

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The 16th annual conference of the German Society for Comics Studies (ComFor), which took place from 14 to 16 October 2021 as an online event organized by the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Salzburg, was dedicated to an exploration of coherence in comics from various theoretical perspectives. Due to the fragmentation of comics into distinct units and the co-presence and interdependence of various modes, all scholars – no matter their academic affiliation – face the challenge of providing a theory of continuity and connectivity that transcends the particularities of the single constitutive element.

In the following, I use Scott McCloud's classic *Understanding Comics* and Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading* as two related starting points that allow me to introduce basic concepts, voice some criticism and branch out into more recent theories. McCloud popularized the Gestalt principle of »closure«, which he describes as the »phenomenon of *observing the parts but perceiving the whole*« (63). At first, he introduces closure as a universal cognitive principle that applies to numerous contexts (»In an *incomplete world*, we must *depend* on closure for our very *survival*«, 63; original emphasis), offering his readers several examples of how »a mere *shape* or *outline* is enough to trigger closure« (64). However, he promptly limits the scope of his enquiry to just one context by exclusively associating this cognitive feat with the gutter: »human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea« (66). Since both Gestalt psychology and McCloud's understanding of meaning-making rely on holistic perception, »mentally completing that which is *incomplete* based on *past experience*« (63; see Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala, 305–306, 309), an affinity to core principles of reader-response criticism and constructivist notions of human cognition is self-evident.

Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that Wolfgang Iser has been quite influential in those fields of comics studies that do not find his complete lack of empirical evidence disconcerting. Two seminal publications, Charles Hatfield's *Alternative Comics: An Emerging*

Literature and Thierry Groensteen's *The System of Comics* barely acknowledge their indebtedness to Iser (Hatfield, xiii–xiv; Groensteen 2007, 114), despite the fact that Hatfield's notion of ›tensions‹ and Groensteen's ›iconic solidarity‹ take their inspiration from key concepts in Iser's theory of aesthetic response. Some monographs embrace Iser's interaction between the literary work and its readers as a starting point and basic foundation (Postema; Oppolzer), while other publications signal, at least, a certain relevance (e.g. Bateman and Wildfeuer 2014a, 185; Bateman and Wildfeuer 2014b, 377; Stein, 128–130), usually in view of his definition of blanks/gaps as central narrative devices and the acknowledgement of the readers' active construction of the narrative's meaning. Bateman and Wildfeuer describe the transaction between text and reader in the following way: »discourse structures require no pre-given ›grammar‹ or set of phrase-structure rules to determine their acceptability or to guide semantic interpretation – they arise dynamically during discourse interpretation as part of a negotiation process between the formal clues an artefact gives and an interpreter's construal of that artefact as meaningful« (2014b, 377).

In *The Act of Reading* Iser explains how, as »blanks mark the suspension of connectability between textual segments, they simultaneously form a condition for the connection to be established« (195). Readers can make sense of this »heterogeneous material«, as »each textual segment does not carry its own determinacy [meaning potential] within itself, but will gain this in relation to other segments. Here literature may join hands with other media, such as the cinema« (195). Iser draws an explicit analogy to the editing techniques of film: »Between segments and cuts there is an empty space, giving rise to a whole network of possible connections which will endow each segment or picture with its determinate meaning« (196). Iser's ›blank‹ is not just an empty space between two segments, but a functional structure or »signifying absence« (Stein, 127) that guides the imagination of readers and predetermines – at least to a certain extent – the meaning of the text. While it is tempting to compare this to Groensteen's concept of ›iconic solidarity‹ (2007, 17–20), there are noticeable differences that Daniel Stein points out:

the gutter differs substantially both in its frequency and its functions from Iser's notion of gaps, or blanks, as systematic spaces (*Systemstellen*) in that its systematicity is always directly visible on the level of the signifier (a spatial absence) and inevitably meaningful on the level of the signified through the narrative progression from panel to panel as well as among panels across the entire narrative. (129; see Postema, xiv)

However, despite this literalization of Iser's metaphorical gaps on the comics page in the form of blank spaces in between panels, »they also indicate the gaps contained in the next level of the system« (Postema, xiii). Accordingly, Barbara Postema »takes the concept of the gap as a signifying unit in the sequence and theorizes how its function can be expanded upon, how it can be understood to operate at all levels of comics signification« (xviii). This move beyond the simplistic linearity of panel transitions requires a different type of closure:

»The reader’s task, however, is not so much to fill in the missing parts in order to complete the narrative as it is to negotiate different possibilities of combining the existing elements of a text« (Stein, 129; see Iser, 97–99, 116). In contrast to McCloud, Iser’s gaps are not exclusively concerned with the microlevel of narration. He explicitly describes the »act of image-building« as »polysynthetic« (148), thus potentially involving the entire narrative.

This is why Thierry Groensteen struggles with McCloud’s lack of interest in translinear storytelling, his disregard for narrative coherence (2013, 17, 181) and especially the complete absence of the page as a narrative unit from his *Understanding Comics*, which Groensteen calls »the major blind spot of his theory« (2013, 74). McCloud attaches little importance to any form of iconic solidarity beyond his six types of panel transitions:

Comics readers are [...] conditioned by other media and the ›real time‹ of everyday life to expect a very linear progression. Just a straight line from point A to point B. But is that necessary? / For now, these questions are the territory of games and strange little experiments. (106)

In Iser’s theory, the reading path is bidirectional and new insights »have a retroactive effect on what has already been read, which now appears quite different«, so that the latest *gestalten* »instigate a restructuring of past syntheses« (111; see Postema, 50, 66, 113).

Apart from this fixation on a linear progression, McCloud also abandons the central idea that any text is incomplete, merely a »blueprint« (Rosenblatt, 86, 88) or ›construction manual‹, whose meaning the reader »has to assemble« (Iser, ix). Since he claims that all signs are iconic (26) he believes that »[p]ictures are received information« for which »[w]e need no formal education to ›get the message‹. The message is instantaneuous« (49). Justifiably Neil Cohn finds these »assumptions of universality« (2021, 2) problematic in McCloud (2021, 1), yet this phenomenon of confusing our western tradition of creating and reading images with some form of pictorial lingua franca is more widespread than one may think. The picture-book artist Shaun Tan, for example, makes the paradoxical claim that his wordless graphic novel *The Arrival* is not affected by the biases and subterfuge that comes with language, while emphasizing the importance of the book as a political statement against xenophobia:

It’s a subject that demanded an unusual and alternative approach, given that new immigrants are so often represented in the media, especially here in Australia, as somewhat anonymous and often dehumanized by a negative political debate. I wondered if that same anonymity could be used positively to generate empathy rather than prejudice by simply narrowing the focus to intimate details of a migrant’s life and allowing the reader to really see things from a perspective that’s at once personal and general, to walk in the shoes of a nameless person entering an unfamiliar country. And, most importantly, avoid conventional language in order to allow a very open interpretation: just a quiet stream of intimate pictures devoid of comment, prejudice, or political noise. Like a tree, a cloud, or a shadow, the drawings just are. (Tan 2011, 6–7)

In contrast to Tan’s optimistic notion of illustration as a natural form of communication, Maureen Walsh, Maya Cranitch and Karen Maras report substantial problems with a group

of refugee students from the Sudan who were confronted with wordless picturebooks, in this case David Wiesner's *Flotsam*. They did not know how to read the highly conventionalized modes of expression that Western art relies upon. They were »unfamiliar with book handling skills« (10) in general and »had not yet acquired the ability to ›look‹ and ›see‹ for textual meanings« (12). Walsh, Cranitch and Maras summarize the students' problems in the following manner:

the question of cultural content of visual images is an important factor that needs to be considered. The students from refugee backgrounds had not been regularly exposed to the type of visual texts that are part of Western culture and therefore were not able to make intertextual links or understand the use of perspective or the overall cultural context. (12)

Cohn makes a similar point about comics and refers to this type of misconception as the Sequential Image Transparency Assumption (SITA) (2021, 3). In Iser's understanding, texts only provide »instructions for the *production* of the signified« (65), which leads to idiosyncratic readings, a »process of continual correction« (167) and the necessity to negotiate meanings with other readers. However, the ›instructions‹ themselves already rely on conventionalized, culture-specific signs.

McCloud only makes a half-hearted attempt to explain closure based on narrative competence. While some of his panel transitions do reference narratological terms, such as ›time‹, ›action‹ or ›scene‹, he simply fails to acknowledge that readers trace the »continuing presence of a character or a group of characters in a sequence of images, acting out a situation, or participating in an event, [which] is possibly the most conventional feature of narrative comics. The ability to follow an easily identifiable character, [...] in evolving action from panel to panel, maintains a sense of continuity and coherence in a narrative sequence« (Mikkonen, 90; see Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala, 308, 312, 314–315). Therefore, Kai Mikkonen asserts that the »narratological potential of McCloud's six types of transition [...] is compromised by the fact that the typology does not take the context into consideration« (41). He points out that a »change of truth-value (modality in the linguistic sense) with regard to the image content in the panels« is one of the most common types of transition, but McCloud is not interested in such narrative functions: »The modality-to-modality transition, involving a transition in the truth-value or credibility of what is seen, for instance, in a dream, fantasy, hallucination, or memory sequence, is regularly accompanied by stylistic markers, such as changes in the graphic line, lettering, and color, or alterations in verbal narration, layout, and perspective« (42). Iser takes the exact opposite approach and treats storytelling as the very foundation of human cognition and the predominant way we make sense of reality:

the final gap *can* only be closed through a fiction, since it is both the function and achievement of the literary work to bring into existence something which has no reality of its own, and which can never be finally deduced from existing realities. Now for all the given material that goes to make up a mental image,

it is only the fictive element that can establish the consistency necessary to endow it with the appearance of reality, for consistency is not a given quality of reality. And so the fictive element always comes to the fore when we realize the projective nature of our mental images. This does not mean that we then wish to exclude the fictive element from our images, for this is structurally impossible anyway – without the fictive link there can be no image. But it can mean that, through our awareness of the fictive closure, integral to our acts of ideation, we may be able to transcend our hitherto fixed positions, and at least we shall be conscious of the intriguing role which fiction plays in our ideational and conceptual activities. (225)

Mario Saraceni makes an effort to explain McCloud's six types of panel transitions as a scale of increasing cognitive effort on the readers' part: »What I find particularly valuable about McCloud's taxonomy is that it allows one to relate each category to a greater degree of reader's involvement« (177). Therefore, McCloud's sixth type is »*non-sequitur*, which offers no logical relationship between panels *whatsoever!*« (McCloud, 72). It is safe to say that a ›non-sequitur‹ is much more »the territory of *games* and *strange little experiments*« (McCloud, 106) than the idea of iconic solidarity and translinear storytelling. According to McCloud's own statistics and graphs, three of these types never appear in Kirby's work (74–75), which does make it »an *inexact science at best*« (74), considering that 50% of the analytical categories are not even relevant.

If there is one thing that most critics can agree on, it is the narrative intent of most comics: »Perhaps more than many other media, comics can be considered to be a prototypically narrative form. While there may be some examples of nonnarrative comics [...], most comics tell stories« (Thon, 99; see Cohn 2021, 1; Postema, 58). Since McCloud's interest in narrativity is not very pronounced, he also discounts language as a constitutive part of the art form in general (9; see Mikkonen, 14–15, 29; Miodrag). Despite the fact that Postema subscribes to a similar definition of comics as McCloud, prioritizing the visual over the verbal (80), she still acknowledges the latter's potential function as ›voice over‹ narration:

Text appears in comics in word balloons and in captions. One of the main ways in which text operates in comics is to smooth over interstices, to create connections that the visual representation alone does not make clear. The function of text in comics is to fill in the gaps left by the images, the layout, and the sequences. (Postema, 79)

Some autobiographical comics heavily rely on verbal narration in text-boxes, without which the sequence of panels would be quite difficult to decipher (e.g. Harvey Pekar's work or Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*). Subscribers to the concept of a visual narrative grammar (e.g. Cohn 2021, 42–51) tend to avoid the genre and limit their text selection to comic strips and to »›Kirbyan‹ American Visual Language [which] is most associated with the graphic system used in superhero comics from the United States« (2021, 5). Even if they accept the verbal as part of the medium's constitutive multimodality, which would require a significantly different approach (Tseng, Laubock and Pflaeging; Tseng and Bateman; Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiipala), the very idea of a visual narrative grammar demands different priorities:

Clearly, to account for the full architecture and comprehension of most visual narratives (like picture books or comics), we must address these multimodal interactions in full. However, without comprehensive understanding of the visual modality on its own, addressing their multimodal interaction with text will always remain limited. Thus, we here focus primarily on the comprehension of the visual modality. (Cohn 2021, 21; see 2019, 306)

Apart from visual narrative grammar, Cohn also offers a theory of narrative comprehension that is partly based on situation models (2021, 25, 38–42) and bears some resemblance to Catherine Emmott's theory of contextual frames (104, 121) and how they have to be updated by readers due to e.g. a shift in character configuration: »Narrative is usually defined as a succession of events but another important feature of narrative texts is that some or all of the events are described as they take place within a particular context. As a result, these events are ›brought to life‹ for the reader, being ›acted out‹ rather than presented in a summary form« (236). However, these clusters of narrative constituents are interpretative resources that change over time and require constant activation and testing: »My aim is to show that a context is not just there in ready-made form for the reader whenever the reader needs to draw on it, but that the reader is actively involved in constructing und updating contextual knowledge at the same time as focusing on events which are happening within that context« (18; see 36).

Instead of tracing characters across sentences by looking out for personal pronouns and other systems of reference, comics readers have to establish continuity across panels:

To construe these units as a *sequence*, a comprehender must track elements across images and observe their changes. First, a comprehender must recognize that the characters and objects in one image are the same referential entities repeated in subsequent images [...]. Thus, a continuity constraint guides a comprehender to recognize that each image does not depict different characters, but contains the same characters repeated across different images. (Cohn 2021, 16)

The significance of a change of state can only be judged in relation to the current state of affairs: »some differences in depiction may signal shifts in time, viewpoint, causal relationships, and construal of other alterations in states. Thus, an activity constraint characterizes the recognition that, insofar as elements repeat across images, differences in their depiction might cue an understanding of a change in state (temporal, causal, viewpoint, etc.)« (2021, 17). In contrast to Emmott, who limits herself to semantic processing and tracing the development of characters via their entanglements in specific contexts, Cohn adds Visual Narrative Grammar (VNG) on top of that, which I would characterize as a form of continuity editing applied to the panel sequences of comics. Certain patterns in the depiction of ongoing actions tend to be repeated across titles until a prototypical sequence of canonical functional panels can be abstracted (2021, 44).

What remains a constant across all these theories is the reader as a »co-producer of narrative meaning« and an »equal partner« (Stein, 131) in the construction of the narrative.

»Paradoxically, comics are so engaging and immersive exactly because they foreground the process of narration. In comics the implied reader is an especially strong construct due to the degree of ›involvement‹ that comics require of the reader« (Postema, 121). They »use their knowledge of actions, of causality, to fill in gaps temporarily, hermeneutically, where necessary adapting them as new information becomes available in the narrative« (107).

Postema observes that there are several layers of meaning beyond the more simplistic cause-effect structures of basic narratology: »Symbolic codes and intertextual codes add another layer of signification, building connotations on top of the purely denotational signification, and bringing in meanings that are not made visible in a straightforward way« (13). While Iser, Cohn or McCloud try to hedge in the interpretative freedom of readers by stressing the constraints that are built into the source material, Postema chooses to treat comics art as a playground without rules:

Parole, or speech, includes the idiolect of the specific style of a writer. However, the idiosyncrasies of comics artists' idiolects go further: their main medium is not language that is bound by conventions of meaning and application, semantics and syntax. Instead, images communicate largely without rules. The repetition of language elements that we see in *parole* (phonemes, morphemes, phrases) do not really exist in comics images; the smallest elements of images have no set meanings, and the way these elements are combined or even repeated are not governed by rules like grammar. (xvi; see 3, 50, 57)

Cohn would beg to differ, as many elements of comics narration rely on the highly conventionalized use of graphic signs (2021, 6, 8, 11–13; see Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala, 302). However, he does acknowledge that comics have their own idiosyncratic themes or tropes, so that familiarity with a specific work facilitates predictions and ultimately narrative comprehension (2021, 38). Based on her conviction that creators have a lot of freedom, Postema argues that comics establish their own rules and conventions at the beginning of the narrative to teach readers what to look out for: »what makes comics interesting is that their signification is often based on codes that establish their signification within the comic itself, signifying by convention according to the terms of that particular text« (22; see 120).

As has already been established, the recognition of characters across panels, based on resemblance and repetition (Mikkonen, 90; Postema, 57), is the primary way of making meaning, to which we can now add the recognition of themes, tropes, iconographies, idiosyncrasies and patterns of social interaction that readers have internalized about their favorite characters. This leads us to the final section of this introduction, which briefly looks at continuity across issues rather than panels.

According to the serial logic of superhero comics, the one element that ties them together is the protagonist, whose name, picture and iconography can be found on (almost) every cover (Stein and Etter, 129). Since these titles are created by different teams over many decades, gaps in the continuity are unavoidable. In his book chapter »Operational Seriality and

The Operation of Seriality«, Jason Mittell provides a good starting point for a discussion of a conundrum inherent to the genre, which is the tension between the promise of a single coherent saga and the reality of countless contradictions:

We can elaborate each of these two necessary ingredients: continuity suggests long-form storytelling, repetition and reiteration, consistency and accumulation, historicity and memory, and potentials for transmedia expansion. Serial continuity connotes size and scope, suggesting that there is more to any story than can be consumed in a single sitting [...]. However, ›serial‹ is not simply a synonym for vast, as the whole must be segmented into instalments broken up by gaps, leading to temporal ruptures, narrative anticipation, moments for viewer productivity, opportunities for feedback between producers and consumers, and a structured system for a shared cultural conversation. Segmentation of a continuous whole is insufficient to produce seriality – the chapters in a book are no more a product of seriality than scenes in a film. What makes those segments serialised is when readers are forced to wait for the release of subsequent chapters, or when the next scenes of a film are withheld from viewers until a sequel. Serialised gaps are structured and unavoidable fissures that force readers or viewers to disengage from the narrative before moving onward. (228)

This opens up a space for fan cultures to become part of this ongoing negotiation of who these characters are and how their universes are meant to fit together (Stein, 138–40). Mittell identifies one of these »participatory practices« as »forensic fandom« (229), in which highly engaged fans scrutinize every bit of available information, but are also quite vocal about their views. This may be motivated by nostalgia for a past, often their own childhoods, when legendary creators produced the original stories, against which the most recent iterations have to compete: »So strong is the fans' identification of a series with the work by the original maker that a continuation becomes almost impossible unless it becomes acceptable to them. It is the conflict between the need to revive and the impossibility to do so that can make continuation such a fascinating chapter in the study of narrative and comics« (Baetens and Frey, 219).

The cultural impact of such diehard fans creates an almost insoluble dilemma for media conglomerates, as »every product of popular culture has to appeal to two types of readers at the same time. The ›naïve‹ one, who does not know the series as a whole and [...] is intrigued by the novelty and what seems to be creative innovation [...]; and the ›smart‹ one, who is capable of appreciation on a different level« (Stein and Etter, 129). This balancing act of pleasing two very different types of customers has led to a »reboot culture in US superheroes comics« (Baetens and Frey, 215), »resetting all of the storylines and even restarting the numbering of the new issues, [...] to streamline overly baroque storylines and character histories of long-running serials to allow new readers an easier entry into the storyworlds while offering experienced readers a new angle on familiar material« (Stein and Etter, 124). This type of »continuity management« (Kelleter qtd. in Stein and Etter, 130; see 133) generates its own problems, as it highlights the very instability it tries to overcome.

Mittell argues that »what makes something serialised is not its form, but how it is created, distributed, circulated, and consumed. Thus, seriality is best understood as a dynamic cul-

tural practice, rather than a stable formal element« (229; see Stein and Etter, 132). Through their feedback, fans become co-creators of TV shows and comics series, as the »gaps between instalments become productive sites of change and development« (Mittell, 229). These participatory practices or »readerly projections« (Stein, 138) may themselves contribute to the »inherent unruliness of serial storytelling, its essential unpredictability« (Stein and Etter, 136), even though fans are likely to suspect production issues to be the main source of infuriating inconsistencies and mistakes. These, in turn, spark an even more intense debate via letter columns, fanzines and now websites (Stein, 143).

After this cursory overview of how continuity may be conceptualized in comics narratives, it is now time to introduce the six contributions to this special issue of *CLOSURE* in terms of how they fit into this broad spectrum of interdisciplinary approaches.

Lukas Wilde's paper on »essayistic comics« or »illustrated essays« offers a counterbalance to the concept of narrativity, which has been largely taken for granted in this introduction. This genre deviates in two significant ways from what has been presented so far: first of all, the main function of essayistic comics is *not* to tell stories (Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiipala, 296–297, 315–321) and, secondly, they heavily rely on verbal discourse, which I briefly touched upon in the context of certain autobiographical comics (Bechdel; Pekar). This has far-reaching consequences for the overall coherence of the text, as there is neither a consistent storyworld to speak of nor protagonists with their conflicts and character arcs. Wilde explores the implications of these tenets by discussing three examples, Lynda Barry's *Making Comics*, Nick Sousanis' *Unflattening* and Schlogger's online comics.

Barbara Eggert is next with a case study of Horst Stein's »Haydn Cycle«, which consists of a series of eight comics pages. In the promotional material of the Haydn birthplace in Rohrau, Lower Austria, for which it was created in close collaboration with the curator of the permanent exhibition, Werner Hanak-Lettner, it is referred to as a »graphic novel«. Here we encounter the fairly unique phenomenon that a comic was deliberately conceptualized as part of a non-linear, transmedial museum exhibition, including more or less explicit references to other exhibits, such as physical objects. The other parts of the Haydn family history in comics form are not even displayed in the same room, which means that visitors can only make sense of this storyline and encounter all the members of the family by physically transgressing the spatial »gutters« between the exhibits.

In »*Invincible: Multiscale Coherence in Comics*« **J. Scott Jordan** and **Victor Dandridge, Jr.**, look more closely at how comics creators can instrumentalize readers' expectations by luring them into a false sense of security and predictability before strategically violating this trust to make them curious and engaged with the narrative. These expectation-surprise dynamics rely on the fact that readers are primed to make sense of new experiences – in this case a superhero comic – by relying on their memories and previous encounters with similar

texts. The authors explain that there is an educational benefit to this art of misdirection, as young readers are more willing to embrace such a form of discovery learning as long as they are ›hooked‹ on the narrative.

Mark Hibbett's contribution to this issue is a fascinating look at how the artist John Byrne used ›image quotation‹ to evoke key scenes from seminal storylines of *The Fantastic Four*, only to disrupt previous continuity by adapting the material to fit his own vision. This revised history was meant to correct ›mistakes‹ by other creators, but also to claim supreme ownership of these characters and storylines. By treating his own (recent) changes as the new canon, mostly through image quotation, he attempted to ›own‹ Dr. Doom and (re)shape readers' understanding of this character. This »process of retroactive meaning-making« (Stein, 142) highlights a typical dynamic of serialized comic book publication in that the ›mistakes‹ of the past are picked up, renegotiated and offered to the readers as supposedly permanent solutions or fixes, which naturally provoke even more elaborate debates about canonicity and legitimacy.

The complex inconsistencies generated by so-called superhero cross-over narratives are the topic of **Amadeo Gandolfo's** subsequent paper. Grant Morrison's *Final Crisis* serves as the prime example of how these massive storylines may get derailed easily, not infrequently by editorial mandates, frustrating any hopes for consistency by foregrounding the fissures and contradictions they were meant to overcome. Gandolfo approaches this narrative collapse not so much from a structural point of view, but in the form of a cultural history of cross-over storylines and of *Final Crisis* in particular, acknowledging and exploring the difficult production process of such monumental endeavors that would require meticulous, long-term planning, but often have to be salvaged last-minute by seemingly haphazard rewrites or other improvised measures.

Stephan Packard gets to have the last word, as he skillfully manages to combine many of the concerns that have been addressed so far and discusses them in an integrated fashion. Jordan and Dandridge's expectation-surprise dynamics are revisited, here in the form of ›inferential revisions‹, but also Postema's idea that comics ›teach‹ their readership how they want to be interpreted, which is elaborated upon in the form of ›heautonomic rules‹. Furthermore, he addresses McCloud's theory of closure, conventions in superhero comics, reader responses, the interplay of words and images (multimodality), »Krafft's strongly hermeneutic but structurally linguistic theory of a comics grammar« etc. – it is all included in a neat package that rounds off this multifaceted exploration of coherence in comics.

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