They used to call me...
- illustrations of childhood nicknames.
Humorous text and image relationship.

Tina Siuda
Advisor:
Prof. Rui Vitorino Santos

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ABSTRACT

This paper has its objective in researching humor as a 'third value' emerging from the relationship of image and text in illustration. We approach humor as a comment on human nature and creative response to reality. We make insight into the nature of interactions between images and text and the complementary properties of each. We discuss the divergent cognitive experience responsible for the "conceptual blend" of image and text's message.

The theoretical research is confronted with the outcomes of our practical work and examples of chosen artists. This discussion is dedicated to a better understanding of image and text's relationships in humorous visual/verbal narratives.

KEY WORDS

humor, image/text relationship, visual/verbal narrative, illustration

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1.   INTRODUCTION

"They used to call me…" was a project that launched in October 2012. The idea was to collect stories about childhood nicknames from people all over the world, and use them as inspiration to create illustrations. The project resulted in a collection of 10 little books, each containing an illustrated story of a different nickname. The objective was to make the stories humoristic, using the properties of image and text's relationship.

The main question was: "How humor appears in an illustration combining image and text?" Drawings with captions that would cause a smile not because they were humoristic drawings *per se*, but for some "invisible" reason, were the source of curiosity. We wanted to have a better understanding of the relationships between image and text; and the presence of humor as a "third value". The question referred to artworks, and illustrated book, where the words and drawings were of the same importance. Discovering the capabilities of each, allowed understanding their symbiosis, and ironic relation where the words would say more than the pictures show and *vice versa*.

The project was based on interpretation of nickname-stories, and creating visual/verbal narratives about them. The core of the work was sketches made under the inspiration of stories. The process of drawing/thinking was very important, sketches allowed demonstrating the developing of ideas on paper. We say "drawing" but it also involved writing. The sequence of appearance of image or text, was another subject to explore. It would lead to new questions. Which comes first? What is more important – image or text? How this process looks like in

other author's cases?

The sketches would undergo a process of selection. Finally, the number of stories was narrowed to 10 and put into a form of a book. The form of a book as a final object was essential to the idea of the project. A book welcomes the reader to browse through the drawings and look for humor.

We have set a criteria for the artist's work that we used as our field of research. Our objective was to find examples of visual/verbal narratives edited into a form of a book. We authors, who were responsible for both images and text. We were determined to show an example, where one artist has manipulated image and text into a humorous relationship. We were looking for a creative process similar to ours.

1.1. Objectives

This project's objective is to explore the relations between image and text in the context of humor. We intend to understand better the question of humor being a "third value" of the relationship between image and text. In order to do so, we will look at the nature of each: humor, image and text. The reflections on our theoretical research will serve as a reference in looking for the "third value" in examples of artist's work, as well us in our own practice. We would like to be able to put the theory into practice, and create our books with more awareness of the image and text relationships.

1.2. Methodology

In order to develop our project, we have designed a methodology that would help us though the practical part. The rules we have established were flexible, according to the necessities of the development of project. We have divided the creative process into stages, with deadlines – which shortened the time of developing the project.

The first stage was dedicated to inviting participants and providing material for the project's development. In the second stage was collecting the responses and making selection of the most inspiring nicknames. From this point we searched for the best interpretation – by sketching. In the final stage, was dedicated to producing the final work.

Our investigation tools were as follows:

- an invitation letter sent via internet – we wrote a personal letter, explaining the idea of

our project, our intentions and plans for further development;

- "Facebook event" and blog – a platform to communicate with the participant, share received stories, inform about the progress of work;

- sketches were the most important tool of research and source of information; the creative process of drawing and writing in a free, open-minded manner reflected the mechanisms in which we intended to manipulate the image and text, we put all the value to sketches, maintaining most of their original form. All the process of work was focused at creating narratives that could be present it in a form of a book.

1.3. Structure of report

This paper is divided into five parts; opening with an introduction. Here, the idea of the project is presented together the body of work, conceptual framework, objectives, methodology and a brief on the report's structure.

The second chapter is about humor. This part discusses the nature of comic/laughter/ humor from a philosophical point of view, its origins and functions. The observations are compared to our practical work, in search for similarities. What is more, it talks about humor and laughter as a way to discover the world. Finally discusses the creative and aesthetic frame of mind.

The third chapter is an insight into the nature of image and text. We research the differences between the two, and their properties in transmitting information. First they are

put on opposite sides and examined separately. The separation leads to a conclusion that they best work together. The discussion continues then, in search for a "conceptual blend" of image and text. In this part also, the theory is being supported by examples of works of artist's from the area of image/text illustration. The choice of authors was based on two criteria: one must be an author of both image and text, and his work should be in form of a book.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the course of our practical work. Here we describe all the stages of the development of our project. We justify and explain our choices of materials and tools as well. We explain, why the form of a book was important for us.

The last, fifth paragraph is a conclusion of the project. Here we make reflections on the issues addressed along the text and make questions for further research. We make an observation about the role of receiver in the process of coding/decoding information. Finally, we contemplate our future work, and make a proposition of a new approach.

2. HUMOR

2.1. Introduction

> We are not at all short of theories of humor and laughter, coming as they do from a breadth of disciplines: philosophy and linguistics, physiology and psychology, anthropology and literature. And yet all these theories usually start by warning their readers that 'the joke explained is the joke misunderstood (…).
>
> (MURAWSKA-MUTHESIUS, 2000: ENUM)

In the first chapter of our report we talk about the comic / laughter and humor. These elements play an important role in our project; therefore we will try to take a closer look at them, try to specify their nature, mechanisms and response to the comic in society. Our approach will be supported by John Morreall's observation, that '(…) humor is a cognitive phenomenon – it involves perceptions, thoughts, mental patterns, and expectations.' (MORREALL, 2010: ENUM) Deducing from this argument, we can assume that humor, as well as the comic and laughter, is a very subjective phenomenon, hence the difficulty of defining it:

> (…) already in 1956 [Edmund] Bergler listed more than 80 theories of laughter. Although philosophical theories of laughter may explain different and complimentary aspects of laughter, and despite this list having become much longer by now, none of these theories really manages to comprehensively explain the phenomenon of laughter (HORLACHER, 2009:20).

We are not intending to extend this list or study all of them. Our choice of themes and approach is dedicated to support our practical work. We shall begin with introducing very

briefly the three traditional theories of laughter and humor developed through centuries; which are approached from a contemporary point of view. This will set a background for further discussion.

From amongst the authors related to the subject, we choose to concentrate on two, whose observations are closest to our interests. We will be discussing two essays on the nature of laughter and the comic - *The essence of laughter* by Charles Baudelaire (1956) and *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* by Henri Bergson (1914). The choice of these works is based on their insight into society and human nature, finding the sources of the comic in human beings themselves. What is more, these two authors do not strive to define the comic: '(…) we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition' (BERGSON,2008:9); which is also unnecessary for our investigation. The discussion will be supported by insights into philosophy of humor of John Morreall in his articles *The Philosophy of Humor* (2013) and *Humor as a Cognitive Play* (2010); and he will help us understand the source of laughter coming from The Incongruity Theory of Humor, which arose in 18th century.

2.2. Observations on the comic/laughter/humor. Baudelaire, Bergson, Morreall.

It is important to explain in these first sentences why we do not separate the three subjects. After multiple attempts to find definition of each one of them, we need to accept that they coexist. In a Stefan Horlacher's article *A Short Introduction to Theories of Humor, the Comic, and Laughter* (2009) we read:

(…) one of the problems seems to be 'nature' of the object of analysis itself, another problem is that in scholary literature about humor, the comic, and laughter these terms are either used without clear definitions or the definitions given are contradictory. It seems that what one scholar calls humor, another defines as belonging to the comic (HORLACHER, 2009: 20).

In fact, Morreall uses these terms alternately. Therefore, in our discussion we will use them carefully.

Firstly we want to settle a brief theoretical background to our research and talk about traditional theories of humor. To do so, we will use the introduction to Morreall's article *Humor as a Cognitive Play* (2010). Here he not only characterizes them, but also challenges their content from time's perspective.

There are three traditional theories of laughter and humor: the Superiority Theory, the Relief Theory, and the Incongruity Theory. The first one is the oldest one and refers to Plato's and Aristotle's belief that 'laughter is an emotion involving scorn for people thought of as inferior' (MORREALL, 2010: ENUM). The Superiority Theory requires two conditions to be satisfied: we must compare ourselves with someone else or with our former selves, and in that comparison we must judge our current selves superior (OP.CIT. MORREALL, 2010: ENUM). Morreall contradicts immediately to the exclusivity of "a person" being the only subject of laughter, and mitigates the relation between the persons involved into a situation, only to "being surprised' at each other.

The Relief Theory and the Incongruity Theory emerged in 18th century. In the Relief

Theory, 'laughter operates like a safety valve in a steam pipe, releasing built-up nervous energy. Herbert Spencer had a simple version of the theory in which laughter stimulus evokes emotions but then shows them to be inappropriate'(OP.CIT. MORREALL, 2010: ENUM). Morreall questions the allegedly continuous presence of emotions in responding to factors causing laughter.

The last traditional theory on humor is The Incongruity Theory, which was interpreted among others by James Beattie (1776), Immanuel Kant (1790), Arthur Schopenhauer (1819), William Hazlitt (1903) and Søren Kierkegaard (1970); '(...) in the 20th century it became the most widely accepted theory of humor'(OP.CIT. MORREALL, 2010: ENUM). In the center of this theory lies an assumption, that 'the humorous amusement is a reaction to something that violates our mental patterns and expectations. It is necessary for us not to simply experience incongruity but enjoy it'(OP.CIT. MORREALL, 2010: ENUM).

What we have learned from the classification of humor theories is that the authors we will quote in our discussion come from the age of Superiority Theory, the most ancient on the list. We can justify our choice by arguing the nature of laughter that brought us here - it is a mean laughter, enrooted in the feeling of superiority of those who are giving nicknames to the others. Moreover, our interest in the subject of humor concerns its presence and role in society. We begin with an idea on the source of the comic:

> (…) the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human. A landscape can be beautiful, charming and sublime, or insignificant and ugly; it will never be laughable. You may laugh at an animal, but only because you have

detected in it some human attitude or expression (BERGSON, 2008: 10).

This statement indicates that we are our own source of comic. Moreover, Bergson goes on by saying we are the only animal being laughed at, and that is, by our own kind. We may assume then, that human being considers himself superior not only to nature, but also an individual considers himself superior within his own kind. For Baudelaire, the source of comic is laughter – 'The comic and the capacity for laughter are situated in the laugher and by no means in the object of his laughter' (BAUDELAIRE, 1956: 140).

Moving further on, Baudelaire continues the superiority plot, giving a hint on the source of laughter which continues Bergson's idea:

> It is the consequence in man [laughter] of the idea of his own superiority. And since laughter is essentially human, it is, in fact, essentially contradictory; that is to say that it is at once a token of an infinite grandeur and an infinite misery – the latter in relation to the absolute Being of whom man has an inkling, the former in relation to the beasts (OP.CIT. BAUDELAIRE, 1956: 140).

This insight from the Superiority Theory may cast light on the question, why some of the nicknames had references to objects and animals. One of the examples being a story of a bird – nickname:

> 'Pisco' this nickname started when I was like 6 or 7 years old by twin brothers that went to my school. They started to call me that because I was very small and thin. 'Pisco' actually is a bird that is very small. They called me that because I was very small and I could get into every place I wanted (…)
>
> PEDRO, AGE 24, PORTUGUESE (BLOG:# 53)[1]

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1   The quotation comes from our project's blog http://theyusedtocallme.blogspot.pt/2012/11/54.html

There we posted stories of nicknames collected for our work. We will be making references to the blog's content, all

From the above- mentioned examples we can say, that the nature of laughter and the comic lies in being human and refers to human's reflection in reality.

Moreover, according to Bergson, laughter requires 'absence of feeling'(BERGSON, 2008:10), which enables us to see the other persons flaws and laugh about them. This emotional numbness is best accompanied by intelligence, which allows us to watch reality from a distant perspective, to pause in participating in life and watch it 'without sound on'. 'To produce the whole effect, then, the comic demands something like a momentary anesthesia of the heart. Its appeal is to intelligence, pure and simple'(OP.CIT. BERGSON, 2008: 11).

Speaking of intelligence, Baudelaire puts the problem in a more harsh way, classifying those, who lack it, to the animal category. However, in the same phrase he makes a reference to those of great wisdom, lacking in humor; the laughter being below 'contemplative innocence of their minds'(OP.CIT. BAUDELAIRE, 1956: 140). The possibility of innocence depriving of sense of humor was an observation we made during our work. It seemed that all of the cute nicknames were a struggle to work with, and eventually were left behind in the selection process.

Laughter is also a social experience – 'Our laughter is always the laughter of a group.' (OP.CIT. BERGSON, 2008: 11). It maintains all its members in a proper shape, avoiding eccentricity and deviation; '(…) laughter "corrects men's manners." It makes us at once endeavor to appear what we ought to be, what some day we shall perhaps end in being.' (OP.CIT. BERGSON, 2008: 16). Society is laughters natural environment.

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of them signed by the number of the post and the 'owner' of the nickname.

Along with laughter, also the comic depends on society – 'many comic effects are incapable of translation from one language to another, because they refer to the customs and idea of a particular social group!'(OP.CIT. BERGSON, 2008: 11). Therefore, the nature of understanding specific the comic and laughter lies within its environment, this explains difficulties in 'translating' nicknames, which were losing their comic nature along the process. Some of the word-puns and jokes did not have a translation, or gained a different meaning in the other language; luckily some of them were internationally funny:

> When I was young (and some of my friends still do it), they use to call me 'Bide' as a short version of David. It's funny, because if you add an accent in the last letter, it gains a whole new meaning (…). DAVID, AGE 26, PORTUGUESE (BLOG: #20)

2.3. Humor and laughter as a cognitive process and aesthetic experience.

> In examining laughter and amusement, it is best to start not with laughter at humor, which is the most sophisticated kind of laughter, but with simpler kinds of laughter (MORREALL; 1981: 62).

In this chapter we would like to reflect on why we begin to laugh in our early years. Humor, the comic and laughter are a very subjective phenomenon; we would like to look at them as on a cognitive relation of an individual with reality. On the other hand, we would like to reflect on an argument, that humor and art take place in a similar "mind frame" and require similar approach. We will base our discussion on an article by John Morreall – *Humor and Aesthetic Education* (1981).

So far we have made observations about humor, reactions to the comic and laughter of

an adult. We would like to make an insight into the first appearance of laughter in human's life, since it is said, that an 'infant laughs long before he has a sense of humor' (OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981: 62). Our reflections can bring a new insight into our project, considering the fact, that the nicknames we are working with are mostly inventions of children's mind.

The first laughter of a human being occurs already at the age of three, four months. At this moment, infant does not yet recognize anything from the outside world, nevertheless, his senses function. A simple way to make an infant laugh is by tickling. '(…) the on-and-off stimulation of tickling is a shift in sensory input that is pleasurable to the infant, and his laughter is the expression of his pleasure.'[2] (OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981: 63).

At the time when an infant perceives, identifies and re-identifies objects, a new level of surprise is allowed. An example is a peekaboo game, when the familiar face is being covered and uncovered in the front of the baby. The source of laughter in this situation derives from the baby's incapability of understanding that the objects disappearing from his vision pole, continue to exist outside of it. '(…) peekaboo involves (…) alternate existence and nonexistence of the face.' (OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:63).

Morreall talks about collecting experiences as a way of advancing the level of laughter. The more a child understands from the world: language, mechanisms, concepts, the more stimuli is available for his developing humor.

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2   The expression "shift" is often used by Morreall describing a surprising sudden change in stimuli, context, meaning etc, different from expected, which provokes laughter; just as incongruity.

> By the age of three (…) child does more than just acquire a group of labels for naming things in his experience; he also come to see certain patterns among those things, and so he associates certain concepts with each other.
>
> <div align="right">(OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:64)</div>

In our work we had an example of a nickname given by a child to her older sister:

> When I was just a small kid, my two years older sister had the brilliant idea of splitting up my name "Pia" in its two syllables (Pi - a), and to duplicate each one of them afterwards. The result was "Pipi Aa". In German child´s language Pipi means wee-wee, and Aa stands for doo-doo. That would make me "wee-wee-doo-doo". As a child I thought that this was quite a mean nickname... nowadays I think it´s fantastic! PIA, AGE 26, GERMAN (BLOG:#16)

We may consider this example as a humor resulting in the child's experiments with crossing the boundaries of language. Our observation may be followed by Morreall's statement:

> To appreciate humor, (...), the child has to have some picture of the way things are. The humorous object or situation, whether experienced or imagined, will jolt him conceptually, not simply because it is something which he has not experienced before, but because it is something which he would not expect to experience at all.
>
> <div align="right">(OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:64)</div>

With time, the child already understands the systems and rules and by experimenting with its conceptual boundaries, exercises its sense of humor. Humor is being described by Morreall as a fruit of the evolution of laughter, as the highest form of laughter.

The idea of "evolution" of humor allows us to observe the changes in the sophistication of nicknames, depending on the age of those by whom they were given. The example above

is a creation of a child's mind but we also have collected nicknames given by parents to their children. These represent the sophisticated form of humor, for example: "Iron Man" (blog: #42) inspired by an icon of pop-culture, making fun of a girl's braces; "Terrorist" (blog: #32) given by a parent to her son's tormentor in primary school.

At this moment we would like to make an observation, namely: giving nicknames is a creative process with a main objective to provoke laughter. Here we would like to discuss the similarities between humor and aesthetic experience, our argumentation being that the two require imagination and capability of manipulating with the state of things.

> In the aesthetic or the humorous frame of mind, we are not locked into looking at things in just one way, but are free to shift our perspective, several times if we choose, to see things as other things and even to build fictional worlds.
>
> (OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:58)

The idea of our project was to invent: situations, characters and jokes about the chosen nicknames. Using imagination and "twisting" facts was the engine of our creative process. It is also interesting to notice, that giving nicknames is quite a popular activity amongst people. May it be for the pleasure of humor, which '(…) takes us out of the role of mere passive observers of a world already given and lets us become, like the artist, creators of a new kind of reality.' (OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:65).

The element of imagination brings out another common feature of the two – distance. This element was already mentioned in Bergson's conception of perceiving reality. 'It is enough for us to stop our ears to the sound of music, in a room where dancing is going on, for the

dancers at once to appear ridiculous.'(OP.CIT. BERGSON, 2008: 11). Morreall uses an argument,

that: 'We are all familiar with the notion that to appreciate something aesthetically, our

attitude must be disinterested. We must be sufficiently "distant" from the aesthetic object

(…)'(OP.CIT. MORREALL; 1981:60). In other words, we need to maintain distance in order to let

the humor in. Morreall gives also an example of a dangerous situation, which seems comic

for an outside observer, but not for the participants; however, with time, the participants,

while looking at the past event are able to consider it humorous, because their emotions have

recovered.

We talk about the distance, because all of the nicknames came from the past, and all

of the stories about them, were told from time's perspective. Some confessions were very

emotional, yet most participants enjoyed reflecting on their past, and noticing the humorous

aspects of their nicknames. For many, they were a nightmare at the time, but today became a

humorous memory.

2.4. Final notes

Resuming what we have learned so far and what is important to our project, we can say

that humor, laughter and the comic are a very subjective phenomenon, which is the reason of

problems in defining and categorizing them.

Nevertheless, we found out that laughter is a strictly human response to other humans,

deriving from observations, comparisons and coexistence. Nicknames, being a result of

humoristic comment on others' features; have much in common with the exemplified approaches to laughter; representing the Superiority Theory. We can also agree that intelligence and distance are necessary to see the comic in reality. The role of laughter in society, being a correcting tool, also applies to our idea of nicknames being a response to some sort of deviation. Having experience from our practical work, we agree that within a particular society, exists a particular sense of humor, or laughter; which is why it is difficult to translate humorous content.

Developing sense of humor is a long-time process of gathering information about the world by experiencing different stimuli. The knowledge of our sense of humor matures from an infant into an adult, helped us understand better the inspirations of nicknames according to their author's age.

What we found important for our project are the elements shared by a humorous and artistic/creative mind. It is an important observation which casts light on the process of creating nicknames with the objective of making them funny; as well as on our creative process of re-creating our own stories about them.

3.   IMAGE AND TEXT IN ILLUSTRATION.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the relations between the two fundamental elements of our practical work – image and text. In the first part we will look at each one of them separately. We will discuss the characteristics of information each one of them communicates, as well as the mechanisms in which we perceive them. Starting with the differences, we will be getting closer to the point, at which '(…) the two disparate lines converge, the cognitive result is a new and unique experience neither present in the verbal nor the visual narrative line. When two elements come together in a productive way in cognition, it creates a conceptual blend.'(EIGHAN, 2010: 24). The second part will be dedicated to that 'conceptual blend'. We will support our argumentation with Eighan's thesis (2010) *The Silent Partner*, who analyses text and image in narrative. Eighan lists out three types of the visual and verbal narrative cognitive experience: illustrative, convergent and divergent; and from these three we will try to find the one referring to our project. The discussion will be accompanied by Roland Barthes's essay – *Rhetoric of the Image from The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (1985).

At this point we feel a necessity to explain the choice of the above-mentioned publications. We consider our work to be narrative, using images and text to build small narrations; following the words of David Shrigley – 'A single sentence is a narrative. It has a

beginning and an end.'(MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 109). We tell stories using illustrations – 'Even the most abstract of pictures becomes an illustration when its artist provides it with a title (…)'. (OP.CIT. NODELMAN, 1988: 216). 'An illustration is also a drawing, but it is a drawing that fulfils an intention' (QUENTAL, J., POMBO, F., & MODESTO, A.; 2003: 12). The drawings in our project are illustrations which cannot be approached separately from the text.

Finally we will search for humor, as a by-product of the image and text relation or 'irony', as Nodelman calls it in his study on the narrative in children's picture book - *Words About Pictures* (1988). This part of the discussion will be based on examples of work of Bohdan Butenko – a Polish master of children picture-books; as well as Hipopotam Studio – a contemporary design studio from Poland, heirs of the Polish tradition in illustration. We will also use examples of work of Paul Davis and David Shrigley to search for the conceptual blend of image and text in the book-projects they made.

3.2. Characteristics of image and text.

> (…) the differences between words and images seem so fundamental. They are not
> merely different kinds of creatures, but opposite kinds (MITCHELL, 2007: 47).

As we respond to picture books, the words of the texts so permeate our experience of the pictures that the two seem to mirror each other (NODELMAN, 1988: 193).

We choose to begin with those two citations to show the nature of our discussion. Like with humor and laughter – where one derives from another and the two cannot be separated with a clear line; like 'word and image live in a symbiotic relationship with each other'(OP.

CIT.EIGHAN, 2010:7). In this chapter we will first try to show the differences between the two, because later on, we will discuss a value emerging from conjunction of these differences.

> 'It has been fashionable in recent years to suggest, on the basis of research into the activity of the human brain, that the two [words and pictures] might even require perception by two different organs.'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 197).

This statement gives us a start point in discussing the different ways in which image and text communicate information. It is stated that human brain is divided into two hemispheres, joined by interconnecting fibres. Each hemisphere is responsible for a different way of thinking and each corresponds either to image or text – '(…) the left hemisphere seems to handle analytical, sequential thinking and thus to control language functioning; the right seems to manage holistic thinking, simultaneous rather than sequential operations, and thus to control visual and spatial capacities'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 197). This categorization implies that words communicate with the left hemisphere and images with the right. This also tells us the characteristics of the information the two give: words – analytical and sequential; images – holistic and simultaneous. Nodelman goes on by saying that words tell stories, and those stories are composed by sequences of causes and effects, that take place in time. '(…) pictures tend to be diffuse, words explicit.'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 198). Words focus our attention on a detail of a picture, they guide our visual cognition through the image; whereas pictures alone distract us – '(…) every image is polysemous; it implies, subjacent to its signifier, a "floating chain" of signifieds of which the reader can select some and ignore the rest.' (BARTHES, 1985:28), by giving all the information at once and leaving the choice of perception to the viewer,

images can easily be misunderstood.

In our work **[F1]** we used the properties of the words to switch the focus of the viewer between the drawings and captions, and even more than that, because by using two different colours of the text, we could manipulate the focus between the text itself, which resulted in multiple meanings of one phrase.

The words are necessary to focus our attention on the image and make sense out of it. 'The pictures themselves can show us (…) details in ways that words could not, but without words to explain that they are doing that, we could not know what the details represent. We need to be told what we are being shown'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 211). Barthes calls this an "anchoring" function of the text, this way the author of the text draws attention to chosen elements of the image.

> Language helps identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself. (…) text directs the reader among the various signifieds of the image, causes him to avoid some and to accept others; through an often subtle dispatching, it teleguides him towards a meaning selected in advance (OP.CIT.BARTHES, 1985:29).

Nodelman explains, that although we are watching a picture, we are translating it into language. There is no other way to describe an image than in words. 'Reading a picture for narrative meaning is a matter of applying our understanding of words (…)' and 'it takes words to point out the emotional content of visible gestures'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988:214).

Returning to pictures, they are what attract us in the first place and we are naturally more interested in image than in text.

Ellen Spolsky (a cognitive theorist) argues that human beings have a cognitive hunger for images—that it is our primordial affectation to hunt and gather visual stimuli in order to survive. Our overwhelming desire to feed our visual sense modality is iconotropism (OP.CIT.EIGHAN, 2010:9).

Pictures tend to reach for the viewer's memories and experiences in order to gain meaning.

In our project we have decided to leave the front cover without the title, only with a drawing of the nickname, we've put the title on the back instead…**[F2]** We wanted to leave the interpretation of each book to its viewer, without focusing his attention on the word of nickname and narrowing his perception. Some of the responses after 'the first read' were, that the content of the book is absurd. The story started to make sense, or rather – unify, only after reading the title and going through all the illustrations one more time. What we have learned is that pictures alone can be confusing. 'Pictures themselves can imply narrative information only in relationship to a verbal context, if none is actually provided, we tend to find one in our memories' (OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 195). Text changes the meaning of pictures.

A story told with words also brings out our experiences. Nodelman gives example of the children's book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) by Maurice Sendak, and an experiment he made by telling the story to people who have never heard it, nor seen the illustrations made by author of the story himself. The story's main characters are monsters and a little boy, which most of the people imagine as a horrific combination, because they relate to their own idea of a terrified child amongst beasts. This impression changes after seeing the illustrations of the book - depicting friendly monsters and an arrogant child. Nodelman makes an observation,

F1. Fragment of a page from our book: 'Hugote Pote' (blog #29)

F2. Example of a spread cover from our book 'Bushi' (blog#48)

F3. Examples of two covers of our books: on the left - 'Ari of the hair' (blog#28); on the right 'Sofala' (blog#10)

that '(…) it is the pictures and not the words that tell us there is nothing to worry about'(OP.CIT. NODELMAN, 1988: 197). Pictures change the meaning of text.

Moreover, pictures are functional in terms of showing how types of things look like and what particular image the words talk about. Pictures represent a "floating chain" of signifieds (BARTHES,1985) and give us a whole spectrum of visual ideas, which could be described in many words but never represented vividly. The information about the image is not only in what it represents, but also in how it represents. Barthes talks about the image never being only a representation, never being ultimately innocent (OP.CIT. BARTHES, 1985:28). He compares a drawing and a photograph, saying that a photograph is the only possible image transmitting information as it is, therefore it is a message without a code; what is important for us is the way he talks about the drawing.

First of all, to reproduce an object or a scene by drawing necessitates a set of regulated transformations (…). Secondly, the operation of the drawing (the coding) immediately necessitates a certain division between what signifies and what does not: 'the drawing does not reproduce everything (…) there is never a drawing without style. Third, like all codes, drawing requires apprenticeship (…)'(OP.CIT. BARTHES, 1985: 32).

Looking at the drawings in our work [F3],we can notice the formal characteristics of the pictures, some of them are very sketch-like and some are more elaborated. In both cases it is a code that implies the mood of the story, a hint for the viewer of the approach with which he should look at the image. Of course, as Barthes mentions, to notice the intentions of the style

of drawings, one must be acquainted with this type of images and with the transformations allowed by the style. Pictures are precise.

'The picture easily communicates information about personality that writers must work hard at expressing in words'(OP.CIT.NODELMAN, 1988: 206). This observation refers to characters in illustrations but we think it could be also applied to the character of drawings. Moreover, in illustrations we can use gestures and appearance of the characters to add information to the context.

Let us go back to the beginning of this discussion and once more take a look at how we perceive pictures and words. It has been said that we understand words in a linear order, collecting word after word; and putting them together to form a sentence. Images on the other hand are a completed whole, and we dismantle the whole into pieces. 'Consequently, words are best at describing relationships of details, pictures best at giving a sense of the whole. But each can eventually do both, and they can certainly help each other to do both' (OP.CIT. NODELMAN, 1988: 211).

This symbiosis of pictures and words is the base for our work. We cannot say everything with words, as well as cannot show everything in a drawing, therefore the success of our project is dependent on the cooperation of the two. Moreover, if we separate them, they become meaningless; together they give new meaning to each other.

3.3. Image and text relationship – searching for humor.

> (…) text and image each play a different role in the narrative process; when the two come together in varying degrees; it results in distinctive cognitive experiences neither present in visual narration nor verbal narration alone. A productive friction between the two lines of narration results in new kinds of reading-viewing experiences (OP.CIT.EIGHAN, 2010:12).

It is time for us to concentrate on the symbiosis of pictures and words. In her thesis, Eighan (2010) lists three types of cognitive experiences of the visual/verbal narrative line: illustrative, convergent and divergent. It is important to state which kind of cognitive experience interests us.

From Nodelman's work we learn that '[words and pictures] come together best and most interestingly not when writers and illustrators attempt to have them mirror and duplicate each other but when writers and illustrators use the different qualities of their different arts to communicate different information' (NODELMAN; 1988: 222). We agree with this statement, therefore we can eliminate the 'illustrative cognitive experience', where: 'One line of narration illustrates the other, producing one continuous, integrated experience, like an illustrated instruction manual for instance' (OP.CIT.EIGHAN, 2010:13).

What we are looking for is a blend that Barthes talks about, calling it 'relaying': 'Here language (…) and image are in complementary relation; the words are then fragments of a more general syntagm, as are the images, and the message's unity occurs on a higher level: that of the story (…)'(BARTHES, 1985:30).

We are left then with the convergent and divergent type of cognitive experience, which derive from the 'conceptual blend theory' by Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier's form their book *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (2002), that Eighan (2010) mentions in her thesis. Both experiences refer to differences in information transmitted by pictures and images; however they represent opposite mechanisms. Let us make a brief characterization of the two.

'The convergent experience synthesizes disparate visual and verbal narrative lines into a complementary presentation' (OP.CIT.EIGHAN, 2010:24. In this experience, the prior knowledge we have about the elements we see – visual and verbal – serves as a database from which we derive information adequate to the context. The juxtaposition takes place on various levels of association. What we have in result is a third value, a result of two databases (visual and verbal) overlying each other in the area of context. This is a cognitive experience, which occurs when we approach, for example, a metaphor. It can also explain the power of symbols, which trigger associations without necessary introductions.

Although this type of conceptual blend already results in a third value, it does not exactly refer to the '"unity on a higher level" [that] emerges from pictures and texts which are noticeably fragmentary – whose differences from each other are a significant part of the effect and meaning of the whole' (NODELMAN; 1988: 200). We are left then with third type of cognitive experience - the divergent.

Divergent experience has its roots in the evolutionary development of diffuse

information processing. In order to gather sufficient information to survive, we are able to overlap cognition modes:

> (…) if one mode fails to provide critical data or fails to accurately interpret that data, the other modes act as "back-up." (…) When competing, sense modalities present different streams of information, the synthesis of and interference between the two streams can save a life, and thus is biologically beneficial to our species.
>
> (EIGHAN,2010: 32)

From this survival function of collecting information we move on to the context, in which this ability is confronted with image and text. We are talking about a situation where the visual and verbal content do not overlap each other; on the contrary – 'the words tell us what the pictures do not show, and the pictures show us what the words do not tell' (NODELMAN; 1988: 222). According to Nodelman (1988) this is an example of an ironic relationship of images and text and this is where we will be looking for humor.

There are different types of irony deriving from the divergent cognitive experience and they are all a result of the differences between information transmitted by images and text. We would like to search for them in the chosen artworks. The key to our choice of authors is their works containing humor and presented in a form of a book. We chose examples of books, where one author was responsible for both: text and drawings, and had control over the whole book as an object. The importance of this choice lies in the process of creating. A book designed in whole by one author, is an expression of his thinking process. It is more likely to believe that every element of such book has its purpose; as for the text and illustrations – they are fruits of one imagination. It is important for us to make these restrictions, so that we can

share the same platform of self-designed, written and drawn publications.

We will start with an example of a book by a Polish master of picture books – Bohdan Butenko (1931-). He has been working since 1955 and is still "in business". His graphic style and humor have raised three generations; he has illustrated over 200 titles. Here we chose to show a picture book entitled: *Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!*[3] which tells a story about a king and his three sons.

According to Nodelman, irony occurs when we know more than we are being told by words, or shown by pictures. 'When words and pictures combine, irony emerges from the way in which the incompleteness of each is revealed by the differing incompleteness of the other.' (NODELMAN; 1988: 223). We give an example of a book where the amount of text is balanced with the elaboration of drawings. We cannot say that the details in pictures overwhelm us with information. Nevertheless, as modest as they are, we can deduct a lot of data, which the text doesn't mention.

For example, in the first spread **[F4]**, in the left top corner, we see the words *'Pierwszy!', 'Drugi!!', 'Trzeci!!!'* – which are the names of king's sons. We also see the three princes in front of their father, the illustration tells us that each colour of the name responds to the colour of the prince in the drawing, thus we can tell which one is which. We can also mention the graphic symbiosis of text and image – we can easily see that words are in fact symbols/images that we look at first, and then decipher; moreover the author plays with interrogation marks – placing one exclamation mark after 'The First!', and so on – treating them as part of

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3   author's translation: "The First! The Second!! The Third!!!"

F4. First spread from the book 'Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!' by Bohdan Butenko, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza RSW „Prasa-Książka-Ruch", Warsaw 1975, 245 x 165 mm, first edition.
Author's translation: 'The first! The second! The Third! that is how the old king called. And when he finally became hoarse, the three sones came to him and asked what was his wish. - I wish (spoke the King with a very hoarsed voice) for You all, like every year, to go for a knight's escapade...kill some dragon, free a beautifull princess, discover new lands or bring me a daughter-in-law - I don't care, and if You won't accomplish none of those things, at least go get some fresh air... Remember however, that each one of You needs to return in 10 days and report to me, what You've accomplished or what You haven't... (cross out when not applicable) That is how he called.


F5. Second spread from the book 'Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!' Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza RSW „Prasa-Książka-Ruch", Warsaw 1975, 245 x 165 mm, first edition.
Author's translation: And only the old King walked in a circle, thinking something through, muttering

F6. First spread from the book 'Kto kogo zjada' by Hipopotam Studio, Wydawnictwo Znak, Warsaw 2010. Author's translation: 'The plant lice ate the flower'.
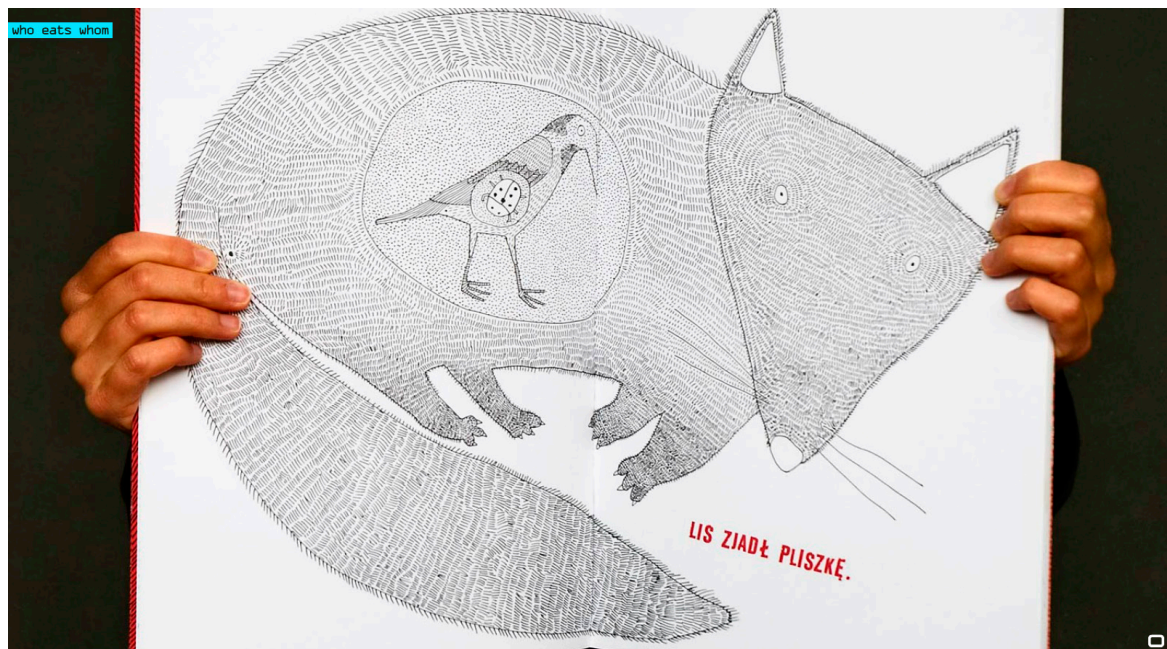
F7. Second spread from the book 'Kto kogo zjada'. by Hipopotam Studio, Wydawnictwo Znak, Warsaw 2010. Author's translation: 'The fox ate the wagtail'.

illustration. The author lets us discover his playful approach towards text.

The second spread **[F5]** shows the king walking in circles, releasing "text bubbles". We read: 'Only the old king walked around in a circle, thinking something through and muttering[4]'. We can see that the words describe abstract actions like thinking and sounds, which are difficult to draw. They tell us what is happening in the king's head. The "text bubbles" are empty, which makes the kings thoughts secret for us. The text is simple, as well as the drawing, but together they form an abstract and humorous depiction of someone in a deep state of thinking – 'not only is the combination of the two of them far more complex and rewarding than the individual components, but the symbiotic relationship between them makes each of the individual components seem more complex and rewarding' (NODELMAN; 1988: 226). However we do not agree that the "individual components" of the presented illustration are not "rewarding" enough, but we must admit that together they gain a subtle sense of humor.

After presenting the master Butenko's work, we would like to show a contemporary example of a Polish picture book written and illustrated by Daniel and Aleksandra Miezielińskich, known also as Hipopotam Studio . They graduated in 2007 from the same Warsaw Fine Arts Academy as Bohdan Butenko and they continue the tradition of good Polish illustration.

We chose to present spreads from their book *Kto kogo zjada[5]* (2010), which is about

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4   author's translation

5   author's translation: "Who eats whom."

the circle of life and animals eating each other. However drastic this may sound, the book

is dedicated for children to educate them with humor. The text and illustration are very

balanced, and very "modest" in terms of technique.

In *Kto kogo zjada* text plays the stronger role. It explains how to interpret the drawings

and also has the function of transmitting knowledge about the food-chain. It is an example of

words "anchoring" the attention of the reader to chosen details of the picture.

Let us look at the first picture **[F6]** and list our observations: we see a lot of insects

covering the page; the drawing is not a scientific illustration; the bugs have a very simple

design and without a hint we are unable to say, what species they are. In one word, we see bugs

– the image doesn't reveal any other information. We can also make a list of ideas about what

are those insect doing; what kind of insects they are; where they are… the image has limitless

interpretation, it needs words to frame it in the context.

We chose to look at the image first, but it is not what we would have done if we were

leafing through the book. The power of the text reveals itself before we analyse the image.

The words are written in red and it attracts attention before we see the insects. It is also a

part, which this book shares with our project – there is only one colour; and black and the

colour is used to navigate the perception of the reader. The text gives the answer to how we are

supposed to understand the image.

We read: "Mszyce zjadły kwiat"[6]. And when we go back to the image we know, that what

we are looking at are lice – this is how they might look in a very simplified way. They can have

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6 author's transaltion 'The lice ate the flower'

this particular shape and three pairs of legs; what the two pages depict in the background is the place left after the eaten flower – the sentence states past tense "lice ate the flower". We can guess that the insects are small, if so many were necessary to eat one flower and that they consume flowers in large groups. After reading the sentence, we can go back to lice and try to look for personality in them. The irony of the relation of text and image derives from the simplicity of both the sentence and the drawing, together becoming a simple but on the other hand lively narrative.

In the second illustration **[F7]** we have already four representatives of the food-chain with a ladybug inside of a bird and a bird inside of some kind of predator. From the drawing we can't really tell the species – besides the ladybug, which is easy to identify because it is has all its characteristics. We can assume that the plant lice are also in the drawing, in the ladybug's belly – since ladybugs eat plant lice.

We don't know however, what happened in the picture and what the names of the other two animals are. Of course, we can assume, but to be certain, we have to read the sentence underneath the drawing. We find out that: 'Lis zjadł pliszkę'[7]. But the text doesn't mention anything about the animals that also are inside the fox's belly.

> Irony occurs in literature when we know something more and something different from what we are being told. We are aware that the words we are reading are incomplete. Something similar happens when we interpret a picture ironically; we believe we know more and different information from what the picture shows us.
>
> (NODELMAN; 1988: 223)

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7 author's translation 'The fox ate the wagtail'

After reading the text we can clearly understand the idea within the illustration, as well as admire the drawing and look for more details pleasurable for the eye. The laconic tone of the sentence suggests the educational role of the image, concentrating only on the most important information.

To make a short conclusion about the above-mentioned books, we can say that some illustrators transform the text itself into illustrations, by changing its shape, changing its color, as we can see in *Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!* Regardless the form, text continues transmitting information. When the illustration is black and white, and color appears only in one specific place (*Kto kogo zjada*) it can indicate what is most important in the page. Even if there is only one sentence narrating the illustration, it is enough to put action into it and direct our visual cognitive experience.

Now we would like to move on to an example of a book made by Paul Davis – a British artist and illustrator. The book is entitled *Us and Them: What Do the Americans Think of the British? What Do the British Think of the Americans?* (2004). It is a compilation of drawings made during Davis's journeys across United States and Britain. The drawings depict people from both countries who were asked for their opinion about the others. Every drawing is a composition of the written answer they gave and their portrait.

The reason why we choose this book as an example is because the idea behind it has something in common with our project. Similarly to our work, it is based on "stories" collected from other people, and registered on paper in a fast, intuitive manner. The whole

book is a continuous narrative built by the drawings and comments catalogued by the artist.

> The intrigue is in what he chooses to show us, and what he chooses to leave out. Every drawing is layered with stories, starting with the random pieces of paper that are Paul's canvases. They remain like a journal, spontaneous and urgent. It's the world seen through the eyes of someone incessant, diabolical and pure.
>
> JUDITH KRANT (DAVIS, 2004: INTRODUCTION)

The book has two covers – therefore the way to look through it is to look at one side and then turn it upside down. Unlike the examples of picture books for children, in Davis's illustrations the text doesn't have the explanatory function; it doesn't explain what we are seeing. It tells us what the character in the picture is saying. However, we only know that the words belong to the drawn character after we read the introduction to the book. If it wasn't what we were told, the captions in the illustrations could be as well about the characters in the picture.

Let us show two examples from the book. The first illustration **[F8]** shows an American citizen asked by Davis about what he thinks of the British. The drawing is just as mysterious as the answer. For Davis humor is an important element in his work. We can find that out from an interview posted on the artist's website, made by Mat Philiiips:

> M.P: In regards to humor, there is a strong vein running through your work. Do you just like to be funny, or is it the world just seems humorous to you? (…)
>
> P.D.: Yes, definitely. The world baffles and inspires and annoys and enlightens me all at the same time. And it all exists in our heads…even though there is the eternal argument about that: idealism and realism (PHILIIIPS: ENUM).

The humor in this illustration derives from the gap between the things we know about the context – which the picture doesn't reveal; and what we are being shown. We know that the man is talking about the British, but what he is saying doesn't make sense. He looks like a strange person, only in his t-shirt and underwear next to something that looks like a pond. What makes it humoristic is that we trust words to explain the image, but in this case, they explain nothing. 'Words tend always to imply one subjective way of seeing things that might be seen otherwise' (OP.CIT.NODELMAN; 1988: 229). The words indicate the picture to be an abstract scene and the picture emphasizes the meaning of the words.

> (…) the fact that visual images do actually resemble the objects they represent means that they cannot force a subjective attitude toward the objects depicted as directly and as efficiently as verbal imagery does. Visual images cannot directly assert attitudes; they can only imply them by creating images which evoke contexts that suggest the attitudes, and those images might covey unintended attitudes to those who view them in terms of different context.
>
> (OP.CIT.NODELMAN; 1988: 229)

The humor is therefore within the formal characteristics of the drawing. We are invited to smile at the drawing, because it was drawn in this way. It is in the intention of the author to make us see the man the way he is shown.

> His drawings [Davis's] may be reduced to a few simple elements, offering the viewer a deceptively quick hit, but he has an unerring ability to delineate – and flay – a personality with just a few incisive strokes. (…) These faces are both characters and types. We feel we know people like this (POYNOR; 2005:ENUM).
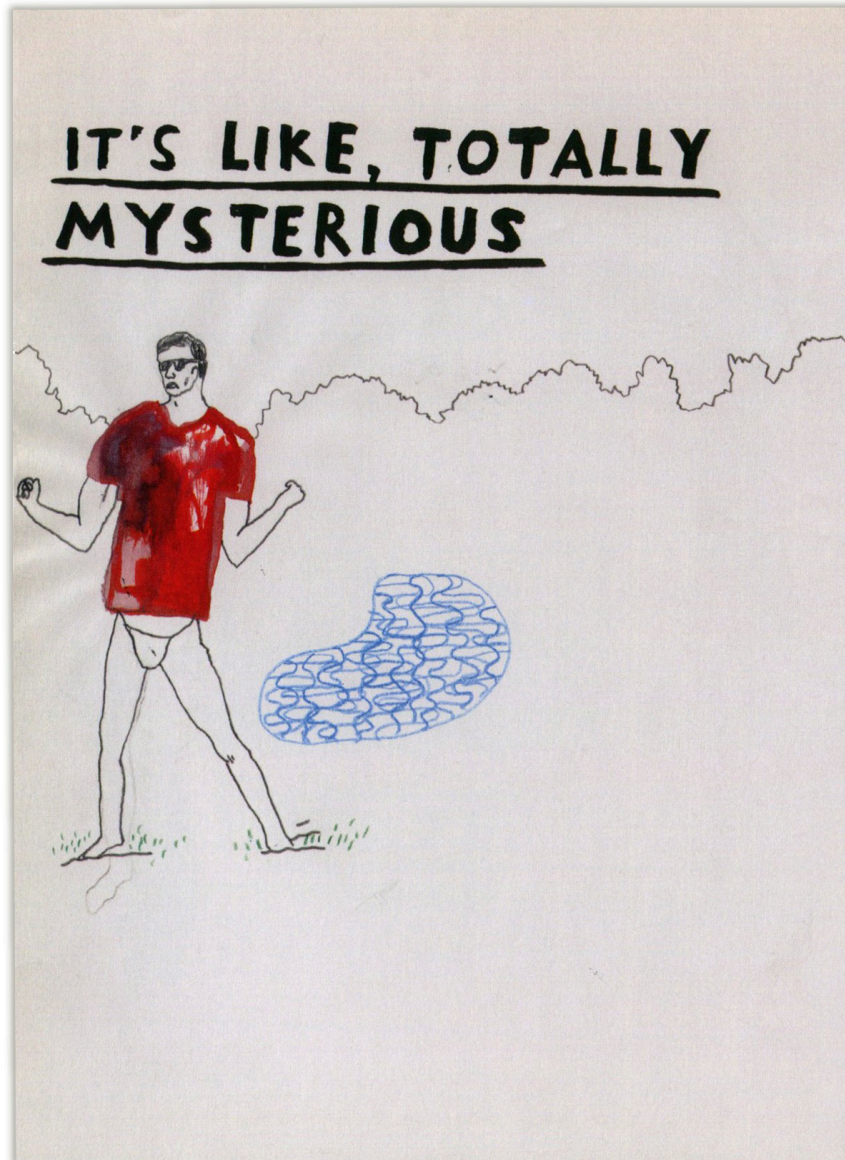
F8. Paul Davis, from "Us and Them", Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London 2004

F9. Paul Davis, from 'Us and Them", Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London 2004

As an example, where the words are very subjective about the images is an illustration from the middle of this book, where the British and American sides 'meet'.

The second illustration **[F9]** depicts two squirrels. The grey is North American, and the red is European. Hence, one represents the Americans, the second the British. Both of them are answering Davis's question. Here the text immediately gives us the idea of their approach towards each other. Where the red squirrel seems to express grudge saying "bastards"; the grey one is clearly aggressive and arrogant calling the others "suckers". The first one is shedding a tear; the second is frowning and sitting in its own droppings. The words are very subjective and reveal the personality of each squirrel; they imply what approach we should have towards them; and make us notice details in the image that emphasize what the words indicate.

These examples of Davis's illustrations show how words can guide us towards understanding of the image, without explaining it. The formal characteristics and the specific words used make us interpret the illustration; whereas the illustration, telling its own story makes the words stronger. 'Once again, the additional information offered by the pictures changes not only the meaning but the tone and purpose of the text and vice versa' (NODELMAN; 1988: 225).

The last artist which work we will discuss is David Shrigley. We will concentrate on drawings from his book entitled *The book of Shrigley* (2005), a compilation of his works arranged in 12 chapters.

Shrigley is a contemporary British artist known for his funny drawings about the dark side of humanity. He considers his work as both: fine art and cartooning.

> The odd thing for me is that I am kind of a real cartoonist, as well as being a real fine artist, in the sense that my work is filed under humor in the bookshop, sometimes as well as being filed under art. And also a lot of people who look at the work think I'm just one of those comic-book type dudes. Which is nice, but I've got a foot in either camp, as it were. To be honest, in terms of the way my work is received, I feel like I'm taken far more seriously than I should be anyway.
>
> (EGGERS, DAVE; TIME OUT LONDON:ENUM)

Humor is a persistent element in his work, when asked about being funny he says: 'I think being funny is important. Everyone has the capacity to be funny, and everyone should use it' (OP.CIT. MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 107).

With the example of his work we will talk about another kind of irony between image and text. 'A more subtle form of irony occurs when the tone of the words (…) does not seem to match the situation the pictures show us' (NODELMAN; 1988: 226).

In case of Shrigley, the formal characteristics of his drawings are enough for the drawing to be considered humoristic. The humor in his works often derives from the contrast between the seriousness of the text and the absurdity of the image. Shrigley explains: 'Sometimes I find pieces of text that seem profound when you use them in a different context. It seems sometimes almost any text can appear profound when you think about it (…)' (MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 107). We chose two illustrations form the above-mentioned book to show this distance between the mood of image and text.

F10. David Shrigley, 'What God Looks Like', Private Collection, 2004;
from "The Book of Shrigley", Chronicle Books LLC, San Francisco 2005, p.51
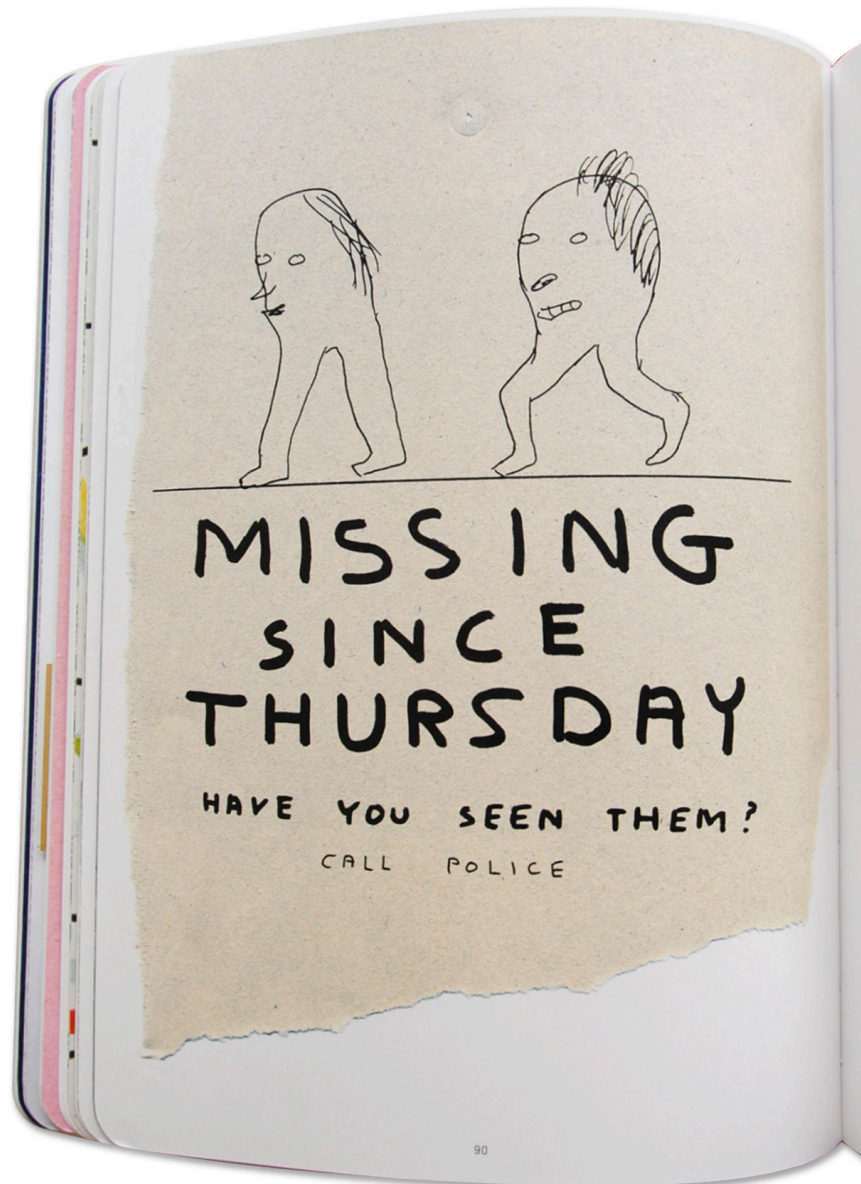
F11. 'Missing Since Thursday', *Blocked Path*, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Denmark, 2004; from "The Book of Shrigley", Chronicle Books LLC, San Francisco 2005, p.90

The first illustration **[F10]** we would like to discuss comes from the chapter: *Rough Beasts* and is depicting God. For many serious people, this image can be offensive. Not only because it claims to depict god, but also the way it does it. The character in the picture seems to be very sure of its identity – its body language tells us it is very comfortable. It is smiling at us, it is distorted, it doesn't look very intelligent and isn't handsome. It's a very funny creature and we smile at it. Then we read the words, the serious statement about a serious fact. From the contrast between the information we get: the visual and the verbal, the irony and humor derives. The humor here lies also in how God has been already described and depicted and how we would like to imagine the divine 'being' as something beautiful and graceful.

The second drawing **[F11]** comes from the chapter: *The interpretation of dreams.* Here we see a note saying that somebody went missing. It is serious; there is no joke between the lines. Only when we look at the depiction of "the missing" we realize that it is humoristic. The distance between the plain, normal message and the abstract weird characters is the source of irony. The text seems to take for granted the appearance of the creatures, and doesn't mention their special features. It is a note with a matter-of-fact tone, but the drawing above is almost the opposite. This type of irony is indeed very subtle and we sense it, but it is not obvious. It surprises us, how such contrasting contents can be joined together. It is important to notice, that if we eliminate either the text or the drawing, the humor doesn't have such a strong impact, or has none at all.

The above-mentioned examples show us humor mainly for adults. It has been constructed by both the irony in the gap between the visual and verbal cognitive experience; by the formal characteristics of the images and the different tones of each element. In the examples above, the words which we trust to provide us with explanation, are used to provoke ridiculous associations. They bring out contexts and put them in correspondence with unrelated images. The mood of one doesn't match the other, and we get surprised by the combination.

3.4. Final notes

In the end of this chapter we would like to make a short resume of what we have learned about the relationship of image and text. Taking a look at their symbiosis has allowed us to understand better the circumstances of irony which allows humor into illustrations.

We have begun by concentrating on the differences between the two. We found out that each one responds better to each of our brain's hemispheres because they have opposite natures: words – analytical and sequential, images – holistic and simultaneous.

Therefore the way in which they communicate information is different, hence the interesting symbiosis.

Analysing the properties of image and text, we can say that each has their own specific function – words guide the visual cognition, draw to detail, explain the meaning of image, tell us about feelings of characters. As for images, show how specific objects mentioned by

text look like, they present the character's features, facial expressions, body language. Pictures also bare a code of formal characteristics ,that adds information to the context. What is most important though it that, one can change the meaning of the other and that they complement each other creating a "conceptual blend".

Image and text create a symbiosis based on our visual and verbal cognitive experience. Depending on the differences between the information each one of them provides, Eighan (2010) distinguishes three types: illustrative, divergent and convergent. Having in mind the purpose of our research, we have concentrated on the one, where the "conceptual blend" results in a third value – humor. The type which corresponded with our interests was the divergent cognitive experience, where the there is a gap between the visual content and the verbal content – that is where the irony occurs.

Based on examples of illustrations we discussed the ways in which the gap between the two resulted in humor, and how the incompleteness of each was an advantage to the whole. We recognized some types of irony, deriving from the simplicity of both text and image, formal characteristics of the drawings and the differences in mood between the elements. We end up with a conclusion that the symbiosis between the two can be manipulated and shaped into many forms, depending on the intentions of the artist. The more the author understands the properties of the complementation of the two and the type of information each one provides best, the more he can make the relationship ironic.

4. **REPORT ON THE PROJECT: "THEY USED TO CALL ME…"**

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to the practical part of our work. As we have mentioned before, while discussing Paul Davis's book, "They used to call me…" was a project based on stories of childhood nicknames collected from volunteers. We were interested in reaching a wide group of people, of various age and nationality in order to have examples of nicknames from different decades and cultures. We have received a very positive response to our idea, and ended up with 64 stories from different countries, 10 of them formed the final body of our work.

In the first part we will be talking about the methods and tools we used in order to invite participants from different countries and communicate with them. Next we will describe the stages in which we divided the processing of the collected nicknames: translating, organizing and sharing; so that all the participants could see the development of the project.

Selection and Creation is a part where we will talk about working with the nicknames. Creating illustrations with image and text and searching for humorous symbiosis. We will explain the methodology we applied to work with the selected nicknames, which also leaded to narrowing their final number. The sketching part was the most important stage of our work. It is important to say, that our objective was to put most of the drawings as they appeared at first draft in the final body work. Redrawing and correcting was not our interest.

We will support our discussion with researches on sketching by Goldschmidt: *The dialectics of sketching* (1991) and *The backtalk of self-generated sketches* (2003); Fish and Scrivener *Amplifying the Mind's Eye: Sketching and Visual Cognition* (1990); Arnheim *Sketching and the Psychology of Design* (1993) and also by interviews with artists from *More Things Like This* (2009). Moreover, we will talk about the sequence of appearance of image and text in the creating process, sharing our own experience and quoting interviews with artists from the above-mentioned book - *More Things Like This* (2009).

The last paragraph is dedicated to the very process of executing the final form of our work. Here we will discuss the choice of making a small book about each of the nicknames and creating a collection of 10. We will also discuss the digital processing of the images and final decisions about their appearance. We will talk about the choice of technique and materials.

4.2. Methods and tools.

In the introduction we have mentioned that the start-point for our project were stories of collected childhood nicknames. In order to receive a sufficient number of those, we had to inform a large group of people about our project. The most convenient way, was to use e-mail, social networks and blog as a tools to transmit our message online. Our method was to write an open letter of invitation explaining our objective. We would ask to respond to the letter by sending a nickname and a short description of its origins. The letter was distributed by means

of above-mentioned social networks and e-mail.

On 7th of October 2012, we have started a blog dedicated to our project. Next day, we have created an event on Facebook to inform about our initiative and invite participants. There, we were making updates about the progress and communicating with the people. We were receiving messages and e-mails asking about details of the project, sharing nicknames and opinions.

4.3. Gathering and processing material.

The response to our invitation letter was very lively. There were many people who enjoyed the idea of refreshing their childhood memories. On the other hand, for some of the participant it was a painful experience, because of the nature of their nicknames and the bad memories associated with them. Nevertheless, every story sent to us was posted on the blog. Some posts requested details, such as age, nationality and name of the author; some authors preferred to stay anonymous or without their age posted on the blog.

Since the invitation was distributed through internet, and according to our request, some of the stories were in other language than English. We would post our own translation into English and the original version underneath. Each post had a number – we were organizing them according to the sequence at which they arrived in our mailbox. The nickname was the title, each story was signed with the name, nationality and age of the participant – the age was interesting for use, because the variety of humor was noticeable

between nicknames from different decades. In the end we have made 64 posts, which was a satisfying number of nicknames to choose from.

4.4. Selection and Creation.

All of the above – mentioned activities were performed online. This paragraph will discuss the most important part of our work, which was drawing images and text. After engaging into creating narratives about the nicknames we could understand better, which ones we would like to keep, and which ones needed to be left behind.

We have developed a methodology to make the creation process faster and functional. It helped to narrow the number of nicknames, but it also made the creative process a bit tiresome. Shrigley, when asked about having a method of working said: "I suppose a way of working becomes a tired method if you do it more than once. I try to do things that will be different from the last thing I did, which I suppose in itself is a kind of method or strategy" (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 107).

Our creative process started by choosing 25 nicknames which best corresponded with the idea of the project. We decided to work on a paper of format of a larger A3, first using Chinese ink and a pen, and pencil, later deciding to use pencil only – it gave a warmer and softer touch to the sketches. We made 25 sessions, each a few hours long, sketching down the ideas about each nickname. During this process we could see, which nickname allows us to create more narratives, and which one is narrowed by only few connotations.

The session would start with us reading the story of the nickname and imagining how it could be depicted. After a while we would start drawing. Our objective was to maintain the sketch-like nature of the drawings, and not treat them as studies for a more elaborate illustration - 'Because a drawing doesn't get any better if you do it twice' Shrigley (OP.CIT. MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 107). We would maintain the drafts intact and move on with sketching to another place on the paper. If we thought some idea was good, but didn't like how it came out in the first attempt, we would think of another approach to show it, not redraw it. '(…) an idea for a drawing can actually take different forms. It can kind of graduate until it finds a proper mode, particularly drawings with text' (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 47) – artist working with image and text – Tucker Nichols.

It was important for us to continue drawing without stopping, this way one sketch was triggering a new idea and we continued to register them down on paper until we've exhausted the topic. According to FISH and SCRIVENER (1990) who researched artist's sketches; the activity allows the mind to find new solutions to analyze problems:

We posit that sketches have the important function of assisting the mind to translate descriptive propositional information into depiction. This depictive information may then be scanned by attentional processes to extract new and perhaps original descriptive information, which in turn can lead to new depiction (FISH, J., SCRIVENER, S.; 1990: 118).Another artist from the image/word illustration world - Quenton Miller said that in his work he is "(…) interested in drawing thinking rather than drawing things" (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 68) and we could share

his approach.

We would work both with images and text, being inspired by one or the other. Goldschmidt's in her research The dialectics of sketching (1991) said: 'Through sketching one prepares an array of displays of shapes and relationships among shapes that enrich the designer's search-space because they harbor both expected and unexpected images' (GOLDSCHMIDT; 1991:130). Instead of "displays and shapes" we used words and images, shifting between them and trying various combinations, sketching them down.

From Arnheim's paper on *Sketching and the Psychology of Design* (1993), we've learnt that: 'Drawings from mental images, (…), rely on generalities, on the simplification that remain in memory as abstractions from the multiplicity of individual experiences' (ARNHEIM; 1993: 16). We were allowing the sketch to represent our idea of how things can look like but we didn't intend to develop the sketch into a more elaborated form. The images we were drawing were spontaneous and intuitive; responding to the story we've read, depicting our own interpretations, enrooted in our memories and experiences.

Another aspect of our practical work worth mentioning was the sequence of the appearance of words and images during the sketching. At some moments an idea of a phrase would come first and then the drawing would be inspired by it; in other cases the image would trigger a comment.

We became interested in this sequence of appearance of image and text in different artist's work. Paul Davis when asked whether he considers comments and written observations
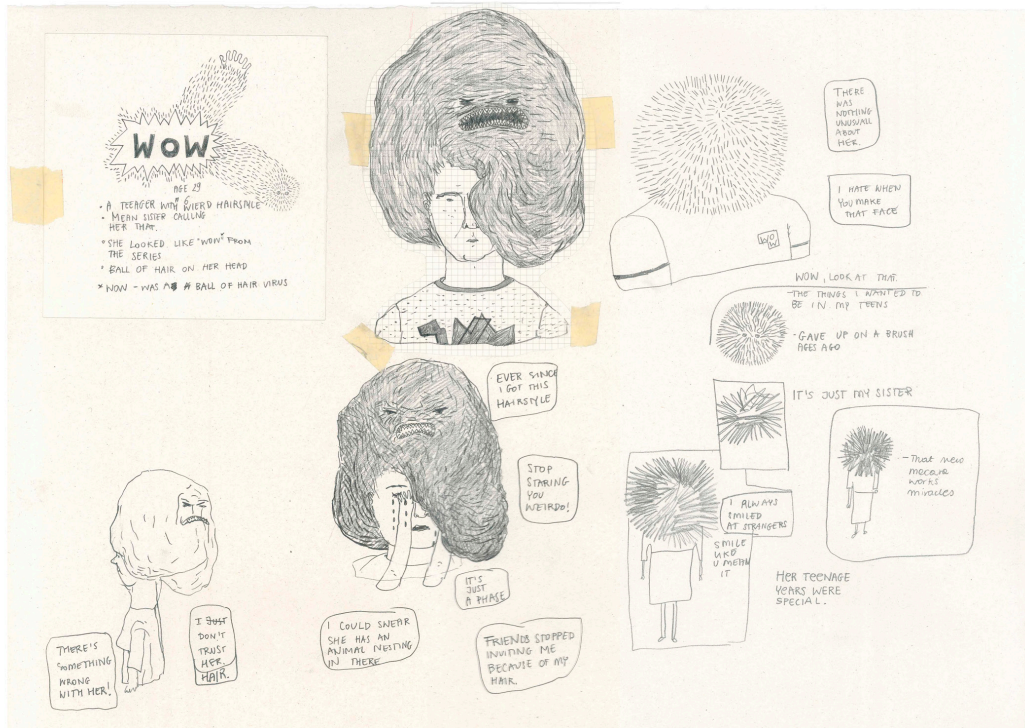
F12. sketch sheet for the nickname 'WOW'(blog #6)

F13. sketch sheet for the nickname 'Terrorist'(blog #32)

more important than images, answers: 'No, but I work more within the former, because that is what interests me more than the construction of the image. It's the way my brain works' (FISHER JENNIFER: ENUM).

David Shrigley, when asked which comes first, says: 'Ideally it alternates for each drawing, but I think it's more often the image. It bothers me a little, so I have been deliberately trying to do the opposite recently' (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 107). Quenton Miller says: 'It changes all the time. Seeing them separately makes you end up with more traditional cartoon' (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 70), and finally Tucker Nichols when asked, if text usually comes first to him answers: 'Well, I've been separating the text out from the images, so they don't actually exist in the same drawing very often anymore. Now it's in the editing process that the text will end up next to something else. (…) I want to build just enough of a bridge to encourage people to walk between the two [image and text] but at the same time not say for sure why these things are together' (OP.CIT.MCSWEENEY'S; 2009: 49). We can see that each artist has a different experience, but all of them put emphasis on the symbiosis of the two and don't think of them as separate elements.

In our experience, it was also alternated. Usually we would start by drawing a portrait of the nickname – by this we can say that the image was always first. It often shifted in the middle of the session. Once we got engaged into imagining visual/verbal narratives, phrases would appear first and then we would think of a drawing to combine with it. Sometimes we would write a phrase only, and it would be an independent illustration.

4.5. Producing the final work.

The decision of editing our work into a form of little books was driven by the intention of making an object that people would like to become acquainted with.

> 'Everybody knows how to read a book, but not everybody knows how to walk around an art gallery. (…) if you take a book off of a bookshelf in a bookstore then obviously you know what to do with it. You're not really sure whether you should smile or laugh in the art gallery, or whether you're allowed to rub your chin, or scratch your head, or whatever (…) books are accessible.' D. SHRIGLEY,(EGGERS;ENUM)

As Shrigley says, when talking about the approach of people to work in art galleries, which are considered "high art" (ibid.); it is easier to encourage a viewer to interact with a book, than with a piece hanging on a wall. Moreover, humorous work is more accessible when put inside of a book. We wanted to produce a work, which would approach the viewer in an intimate, personal way, because the stories of the nicknames were just like that.

> (…) the book is seen as an object, going to the basis of its structure and giving equal ability to communicate to all its elements. It is not only the text and image the ones who can pass a message, communicate something to the senses and imagination. Also the paper and other material and techniques possible to include in a book, printing ink, different bindings, formats, sizes, all the variety of elements in a book can enhance the perceptual and narrative experience of it.
>
> (FIGUEIREDO; 2012: 138)

Our objective of making a "friendly object" determined the format of the books. A smaller A5 was a size that allowed browsing through the pages easily, while holding. We chose a type of recycled paper which was pleasant in touch and of elegant, warm-grayish color. For

the cover we used the same type of paper, only heavier; so that the inside of the books had a neat binding. The texture of the paper and its shade, combined with the vibrant silkscreened inks, gave a very refined look to our books.

The process of selection left us with a collection of 10 illustrated nicknames. It was a reasonable number, considering having everything to be done by hand. Amount of 10 was just enough to have a lot of work to do, maintaining at the same time attention to detail in preparing the material and silkscreen printing.

During digital preparation, we decided to make some of the elements of the images and text colorful, leaving the rest black. The color had a purpose of stressing the moments which we found important to the narration, the word pun, or detail of drawing. Sometimes the colored elements created a parallel narration to the one originally intended. The choice of colors was based on personal connotations with each nickname.

As we already mentioned above, that the books were printed on silkscreen. We chose this technique instead of digital printing for several reasons. Firstly, it corresponds very well with the idea of making a collection. We printed the books in a limited edition of 3 copies; numbered and signed, which makes each one a unique artefact. Secondly, since we were printing the pages, we could control the color of inks and final outcome; we could make some adjustments in the last moment. What is also a result of hand-printing, are the little errors that appeared during the process and made each copy a bit different from the rest. Finally, there's the hand-made overall process of preparation, printing, cutting and binding each book

5.   CONCLUSION

This project started with a question: "Where does humor come from in illustrations combining image and text?" We were interested in books with drawings which weren't humorous in a very obvious way; where the element of visual/verbal joke would appear as a third value. Our objective was not to find a unique answer to the question, but to have a better understanding of the relationships between images and text, as well as the nature of humor/laughter/comic. The reflections and observations helped us to understand the source of the third value, in works of chosen artists as well as in our practical work.

5.1. Reflections

While discussing the philosophical aspects of humor, with the help of Baudelarie, Bergson and Morreall, we have developed new questions. It was interesting to find out that humor/laughter/comic are living in symbiosis; that they have a function of correcting deviations and that they always belong with a certain society. The difficulty in translating jokes to another language would be an interesting topic for further exploration. Morreall's comparison of aesthetic and humorous frame of mind also triggered new questions: What is the creative process of a humorous mind? How much the success of a joke depends on the aesthetic experience of the reader? What happens if the receiver doesn't have a creative frame of mind?

We believe, that with the help of Nodelman, Eighan and Barthes, we gathered knowledge that provided us with new questions to explore.

What if the reader doesn't recognize the code of irony? What is the significance of the reader's sense of humor? How can the humor in a image/text relationship be interpreted by a foreigner?

Another aspect worth mentioning, is the reader's/viewer's role in the creative process of interpretation. After the artist completes his task, the reader/viewer starts playing the active role. By making his own interpretation, he becomes the coauthor of the work.

In future projects, we would like to experiment in getting the reader to interact with our work, to emphasis his presence in the process of decoding an image/text illustration.

6.   LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

F1 Tina Siuda, fragment of page from book: 'Hugote Pote' (blog #29), 2013

F2 Tina Siuda, cover from our book 'Bushi' (blog#48), 2013

F3 Tina Siuda, two covers of books:

on the left - 'Ari of the hair' (blog#28); on the right 'Sofala' (blog#10), 2013

F4 Bohdan Butenko, 'Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!', spread from the book, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza RSW „Prasa-Książka-Ruch", Warsaw 1975, 245 x 165 mm, first edition; available on: http://www.book.hipopotamstudio.pl/?cat=16&paged=2

F5 Bohdan Butenko, 'Pierwszy! Drugi!! Trzeci!!!', spread from the book, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza RSW „Prasa-Książka-Ruch", Warsaw 1975, 245 x 165 mm, first edition; available on: http://www.book.hipopotamstudio.pl/?cat=16&paged=2

F6 Hipopotam Studio, 'Kto kogo zjada', illustration: 'The plant lice ate the flower', Wydawnictwo Znak, Warsaw 2010; available on: http://www.hipopotamstudio.pl/#/en/portfolio/books/who_eats_whom/

F7 Hipopotam Studio, 'Kto kogo zjada', illustration: 'The fox ate the wagtail', Wydawnictwo Znak, Warsaw 2010; available on: http://www.hipopotamstudio.pl/#/en/portfolio/books/who_eats_whom/

F8 Paul Davis, illustration from "Us and Them", Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London 2004

F9 Paul Davis, illustration from 'Us and Them', Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London 2004;

F10 David Shrigley, 'What God Looks Like', Private Collection, 2004; from "The Book of Shrigley", Chronicle Books LLC, San Francisco 2005, p.51

F11 David Shrilgey, 'Missing Since Thursday', Blocked Path, Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Denmark, 2004; from "The Book of Shrigley", Chronicle Books LLC, San Francisco 2005, p.90

F12 Tina Siuda, sketch sheet for the nickname 'WOW'(blog #6)

F13 Tina Siuda, sketch sheet for the nickname 'Terrorista'(blog #32)

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Hipopotam Studio http://www.hipopotamstudio.pl/

Paul Davis http://www.copyrightdavis.com/

"They used to call me..." project's blog http://theyusedtocallme.blogspot.pt/

9. Appendices

1   a booklet with '64 stories of nicknames' from the project's blog
2   CD with: digital version of report, photographs of the printed 10 books
3   1 copy of a book from the project's limited edition, numbered and signed