

Izvorni naučni rad

UDK 82.09

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COMIC BOOK ESTHETICS AS A LITERARY FORM IN THE CIRCULAR CREATIVITY PROCESS

The aim of the paper is to investigate the esthetics of comic book as a literary form which has found and confirmed its application in the procedure of circular creativity. Circular creativity is an expression associated with the new age, and is a result of cross-sectoral cooperation which is tied together within the same narrative topic, and all of it happening within the creative industry. As the comic book is the production result of one of creative industry's sectors (publishing sector), the paper first explores previous theoretical findings on comic book, and then it goes on to find out if the narrative abilities of comic book are sufficient for full application of the circular creativity procedure. By insight in theoretical findings of McLuhan, McCloud, Harey, McLaughlin and other authors, the development of theoretical thought on comic book in the past sixty years is presented. The particular attention is given to McLuhan's separation of media, classifying them as *cool* and *hot* ones, as well as the comic book's cool media characteristics. Based on the insight taken from collected and analyzed creative products and services, research method applied in the analysis of *Spider-Man* comic book has confirmed the assumed hypothesis, which is the one that states that comic book narrative indeed has the potential for circular creativity. Through analysis, it is displayed how the *Spider-Man* comic book has established a creative product or service in every sector of creative industry: architecture, audiovisual art, heritage, design, music, performance arts, book/publishing, media, advertising and market communication, applied art, video game/new media and visual arts. The paper also does research

on the esthetics of the *Spider-Man* comic, and the reasons for the lasting popularity of the titular protagonist, from which the flow of the narrative base into the the diversified creative industry products came about.

Keywords: *comic book, narrative, popular culture, creative industry, communication, Spider-Man, circular creativity, cool media*

1. Introduction

Pop culture can be as forbidding as it is inviting, particularly in areas that invite geeky obsession: The more devotion a genre or series or subculture inspires, the easier it is for the uninitiated to feel like they're on the outside looking in. But geeks aren't born; they're made.

Will Eisner¹

Comic book's position in popular culture is warranted with its long existence, and its genesis is associated with the year 1895 and *The World* magazine, in which Richard Felton Outcault has published the first comic book.² This paper examines the comic book phenomenon from viewpoints of different disciplines, starting with culture theory, creative industry and anthropology, across the visual arts and the interpretation of visual narration, all the way to literary and theoretical analyses. Through transfer of comic books to other media, such as for example films inspired by the comic books, but also other products of creative industry (performance arts, photography, music, etc.), comic books gain additional cultural significance. The role of technology is exceptional in this matter, because as McLuhan states „The structural qualities of the print and woodcut obtain, also, in the cartoon, all of which share a participational and do-it-yourself character that pervades a wide variety of media experiences today. The print is clue to the comic cartoon, just as the cartoon is clue to understanding the TV image“ (McLuhan, 2008: 147).

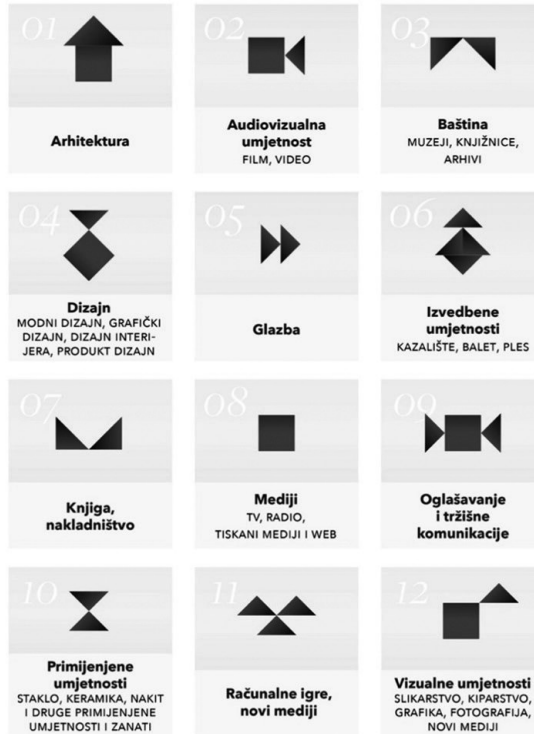
This paper analyzes the comic book as a literary form, assuming its originatory role in the model of circular creativity (Horvat, 2019) according to which the elaborated narrative form has the potential to spill over (that is, to be interpreted) across the creative industry. It is a project based industry which

¹ Heller, J. (2011). Will Eisner. Available at <https://www.avclub.com/will-eisner-1798223641>. Accessed on February 22, 2022.

² Usp. strip. *Croatian encyclopedia, online edition*. Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography /Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2021 Available at <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=58410>. Accessed on February 18, 2022.

is also based on copyright, and whose origin point for the production of diversified products rests upon an idea-based narrative, while the diversification is done by production of related, thematically connected products in all of the twelve sectors of creative industry (Schematic 1).

Schematic 1: Creative industry sectors



Sources: Horvat, Mijoč and Zrnić (2018: 15)

Considering that the comic book is also a narrative template, and its superheroes (such as Superman, Batman and others) had their reinterpretations in nearly all sectors of creative industry, the paper analyzes the feature of a comic book narrative exemplified by Spider-Man and the potentials of its use within the sectors of creative industry.

2. An overview of previous theoretical findings on comic book as a narrative form

Picasso has long been a fan of American comics. The highbrow, from Joyce to Picasso, has long been devoted to American popular art because he finds in it an authentic imaginative reaction to official action. Genteel art, on the other hand, tends merely to evade and disapprove of the blatant modes of action in a powerful high definition, or „square“, society. Genteel art is a kind of repeat of the specialized acrobatic feats of an industrialized world. Popular art is the clown reminding us of all the life and faculty that we have omitted from our daily routines.

(McLuhan, 2008: 149)

The definition of comic book since the end of 19th century up until today knows different levels of interpretation, and the development of theoretical thought on art and culture has enriched the insights related to comic books, especially insights in its stylistic and narrative characteristics it has as a literary form. Šuvaković defines the comic book as a story in pictures, narrative-visual form whose structure is made of: (1) lines of pictures or vignettes with drawings which display phases (sequences) of the story (2) text lines of commentary and dialogue. The relationship of comic book and art shows three tendencies: (1) art of comic book or the artistic in the comic book (the expression of autonomous artistic quality of comic book) – the approach typical for the modernist comic book of the fifties and the sixties; (2) creation of artistic comic book by breaking the conventions of the modernist comic book through breakdown of narrative logic in the story and sequences in the anti-comic book and underground comic book – typical of late modernism and postmodernism; (3) application of comic book drawing techniques in painting, using existing comic books as collage materials in painting, graphics, assemblage, and collages, thus creating the comic book as a piece of art (Šuvaković, 2005: 590).

Unlike Šuvaković who does not question the phenomena of the link between the picture lines in a story, Mikkonen states authors (such as Groensten, 2007) who noticed that the fundamental characteristic of comic book is „a line of separate pictures or the succession of mutually dependant pictures“ (2017: 12). The principal question here is the issue of „iconic solidarity“, that is, „When does one picture becomes a series of pictures or when can the group of pictures be perceived as one picture?“ (Mikkonen, 2017: 12).

Table 1 brings an overview of theoretical findings on comic book with distinctive contributions of the most distinguished theorists, which begins in

1964 with McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. McLuhan has suggested the classification of media, separating them into *high definition* and *low definition*, that is, on *hot* and *cool* media. Within the overview of media communication abilities and media strategies development up to the emergence of the global culture, McLuhan has incorporated the spoken and written word, paths and trails of paper, the role of number when shaping the mass format, clothes, living space, money, watches, print, printed word, the invention and evolution of wheel (wheel, bicycle and airplane), comic book, photography, news, automobile, commercials, games, telegraph, typing machine, telephone, phonograph, films, radio, television, weapons and automatization. With the phrase „medium is the message“ McLuhan has changed the views towards the written and visual communication culture, and by singling out comic book as one of the self-contained communication media, he has opened the space for interdisciplinary analysis of comic book as a medium. The research paper by McCloud (1993) is unique in view of merging research and scientific discourse with comic book narratology. He wrote his way of understanding comic book in the form of a comic book, through which he established the semiotics for understanding of the genre, which in a unique way brings forth the view on the historical development and formal elements of comic book. It directly refers to McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, which directs to an attempt of multidisciplinary insight in comic book characteristics. Meanning (1998) brings the critical review on McCloud's comic book semiotics based on the general iconic theory, applied to understanding of comic book. Harvey (1996) offered the evolution of comic book as a pop culture genre with an emphasis on the analysis of narrative characteristics of comic book. Based on the analysis that encompasses the period starting with 1930 up to mid 90s of the 20th century, there was an established methodology for evaluation of art. A wider view on the esthetics of comic book brings forth the collection of essays titled *Comics as Philosophy*, which was editorially formed by McLaughlin (2005). The collection presents discussions on comic book esthetics and the ability of the genre to offer the metaphysics of contemporary narration through the use of visual narration. This essay collection questions genre variety of the comic book and it encompasses the analysis of superhero comic books, graphic novels and illustrated adventure classics. *Glossary of Contemporary Art* (Šuvaković, 2005) is also published in the same year, and it also discusses comic books, among other art forms. The concept of comic book is determined in the structure, artistic role and genesis of the developmental forms – starting with comic book's first appearance at the end of 19th century, going towards the comic book being shown in galleries and participating in other art forms.

A practitioner within the field of comic book, Will Eisner, has in 2008 published a book *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist*. In the stated text, comic book is viewed as sequential art, and the stated text describes the ways in which the author has taught the students attending his course organized in the School of Visual Arts New York City. The book presents basic principles of comic book, as well as the rules of graphic storytelling and visual narration.

Meskin (2009) researches the comic book as a hybrid art form with a particular emphasis on the research of narrative ability and functions in comic book as a narrative medium. Meskin and Cook (2012) hypothesize philosophy and metaphysics of comic book, and put specific emphasis on development history of the genre.

Beaty (2012) looks into the relationship of comic book with the sector of creative industry that is titled Heritage. Author is attempting to determine the reasons why comic book was not the object of art history research and the reasons that led to change of this pattern.

Wandtke (2014) compares comic book narrations with a classical epic narration, and sets the model of linking between traditional esthetics and postmodern theory.

Garcia (2015) establishes the analysis of graphic novel's development from its conceptions up to a more recent time. Alongside the study of esthetics, a study of entrepreneurial phenomena which followed the comic book in its path as a narrative form is also presented.

Mikkonen (2017) explains the application of narratology in the comic book media, critically analyzes selected examples and corrects the existing understandings of narratology.

Grewe (2021) investigates the subversive nature of comic book and links it with the historical life of scrollwork as the main illustrative element in books, poetry publications and printed scores. Analysis is focused on 18th and 19th century, with example analysis, as well as the history of avant-garde theories on written and visual culture.

As can be seen from what is stated above, the overview of researched relevant theoretical findings relies on fourteen bibliographic units published during the timespan from 1964 up to 2021. The scope of the topics included, as well as the difference in the approach, leads to the conclusion that in a bit more than a half of century, comic book has turned into an attractive form, within humanities, as well as in social sciences.

2.1. Comic book as *cool* medium

*The print is clue to the comic cartoon, just as
the cartoon is clue to understanding
the TV image.*

(McLuhan, 2008: 147)

McLuhan's media research has introduced comic books into information sciences, and the phenomenon of comic book narratology and its far-reaching consequences have spread from the research of artistic expression to research of cultural reach. Through separation of media into *cool* and *hot*, McLuhan has described the media as high definition and low definition media, and in which their level of definition depends on how saturated they are with data. Hot media is the one that is saturated with data, while the cool ones are the ones that are low saturated.

„[...] photograph is, visually, „high definition“. A cartoon is „low definition“, simply because very little visual information is provided. [...] Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience. Any hot medium allows of less participation than a cool one, as a lecture makes for less participation than a seminar, and a book for less than dialogue. With print many earlier forms were excluded from life and art, and many were given strange new intensity. But our own time is crowded with examples of the principle that the hot form excludes, and the cool one includes“ (McLuhan, 2008: 25, 26).

When referring to the characteristics of comic books, McLuhan compares the comic book media with medieval woodcuts, specifically with Volturni's *Art of War* which was printed in Verona in 1472 and in which by the way of woodcuts, there were presentations of war, ways of warfare, weaponry and other details. The reason why McLuhan compares medieval prints and woodcuts with comic books in sequels is that neither the former nor the latter provide much data on a specific moment or space where some illustrated object is located. In other words, the reader or the viewer uses his or her own imagination to add layers on top of the received signal, and transfer it, as it became common practice with introduction of the printing press, to the space of personal piety and meditation. We should not forget that 250 years ago the woodcuts had a frequent usage and application „as an aid to

contemplation in Books of Hours, Emblems, and Shepherds' Calendars" (McLuhan, 2008: 143).

Paradoxical turnaround for comic book is brought by the TV image, also a cool medium, that asks for active engagement of the viewers in imagining the „missing“ parts of the image, while on the other hand, it ties to itself a very high number of viewers. The latter characteristic led to a decrease in the serialized comic book, as well as decrease in editions and the sold comic book issues, that is, it marks the audience turning away from one cool media (comic book) to another cool media (TV image).

„It is, perhaps, obvious enough that if a cool medium involves the viewer a great deal, a hot medium will not. It may contradict popular ideas to say that typography as a hot medium involves the reader much less than did manuscript, or to point out that the comic book and TV as cool media involve the user, as maker and participant, a great deal“ (McLuhan, 2008:144).

Level of user engagement in the final „completion“ of author's image (independent if it is woodcarving, comic book or television image) could also signify the level of artistic achievement, however, while doing that, target groups of „users“ to whom the image was meant for, adapted and finally sent should not be forgotten about.

„From the three million dots per second on TV, the viewer is able to accept, in an iconic³ grasp, only a few dozen seventy or so, from which to shape an image. The image thus made is as crude as that of the comics. It is for this reason that the print and the comics provide a useful approach to understanding the TV image, for they offer very little visual information or connected detail. Painters and sculptors, however, can easily understand TV, because they sense how very much tactile involvement is needed for the appreciation of plastic art. The structural qualities of the print and woodcut obtain, also, in the cartoon, all of which share a participational and do-it-yourself character that pervades a wide variety of media experiences today. The print is clue to the comic cartoon, just as the cartoon is clue to understanding the TV image“ (McLuhan, 2008:147).

The ability of the newly developed media to absorb the properties of all previous media is one of the key McLuhan's findings, which has, according to the established properties, repeated itself in the case of comic book.

³ When referring to „iconic grasp“ McLuhan means sculptors or tactile grasp. He also considers a mythic form of consciousness synonymous with iconic consciousness.

2.2. Comic book narratology

Just as it is the task of the literary historian to evaluate in what way and how far the term „novel“, in the nineteenth-century sense, can be applied to an example from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, so it is our task to determine how far the term „narrative“, as exemplified in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century strip, really fits a given sequence from an earlier period.

David Kunzle (1973: 5) according to Mikkonen (2017: 245)

Comics are a continuing saga, and there lies the rub: there is no point in their history where we can pick up a particular paper and proclaim it Comic Number One. This makes comics intriguing for the historian, infuriating to the collector.

Denis Gifford (1976: 6) according to Mikkonen (2017: 245)

The generalized definition of narratology states that it is a scientific discipline aimed towards the systematic analysis of the narrative text, as well as the effects they have on the users of the text. „Many early French narratologists, such as Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov and Claude Bremond figured that the same story can be realized in different forms of art and communication“ (Mikkonen, 2017: 4).

Mikkonen detects how, during 80s of the 20th century, there was a breakthrough of narratology in film studies, which caused the development of film narratology, which is in turn what pushed the development of comic book narratology, especially in terms of perspective and narrative mediation. By intensifying trans-media research, film narratology gains importance within narratology studies of visual storytelling, as well as understanding of yarn and the role of style, temporality, characterization, perspective, as well as others narratological components. When dealing with comic book narratology, Mikkonen (2017: 8) states how it is not enough to follow the suggestions of Miller and Kukkonen⁴ according to which „overall narratology of comic book should cover the questions of story/distinguish discourse, storytellers, focalization, the world of the story and representation of speech and thoughts of characters (or their ‘minds’)“. He states that alongside what is stated, it is obligatory to consider the capacity and limitations of the media, especially the way in which space and time are presented within dependency on demands

⁴ Kukkonen, Karin. 2013a. *Contemporary Comics Storytelling*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press; 2013b. *Comics and Graphic Novels*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell; Miller, Ann. 2007. *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

for transferring the basic message of the story. Variety in illustrated transfer of narrative message presents a challenge of interpretation for comic book narratology in terms of visual expression, with regards to graphic styles as forms of narratology which are not as relevant in literary narratology as they are relevant in film narratology and analyses established in visual and multimedial studies. Beaty (2012) starts from the assumption that the approach of sociology of art allows, and even demands, questioning of the role of comic book in cultural industry and that it is time for an additional analysis of visuality as a key element of comic book. Equally so, he believes that it is important to find out why comic books have been excluded from the domain of art history of the twentieth century, as well as from the institutions that shape art history, such as galleries, auction houses, museums and universities.

3. Comic book – source of circular creativity

The comic strip and the ad, then, both belong to the world of games, to the world of models and extensions of situations elsewhere.

(McLuhan, 2008: 151)

With the technological development, twenty first century has brought about the development of creative industry as an industry which organizes its activities in a project-based manner and creates „prototypes“ fit for multiplication which is expected in mass culture markets, protected by copyrights (Horvat, Mijoč, Zrnić, 2018). Creative industry is in its part essential for culture because – besides it comes about from culture forms – with its products and services it brings forth new cultural patterns and conducts business with them throughout global market. It is an industry that within itself contains many sectors (see Table 1), and culture is the key component in all of its sectors, while the sector of Heritage in its basic description has culture as the very basic component and it is financed with state funds on a regular basis. Through research of creative industry (Johnson, 2019; Horvat, 2019; Horvat, Mijoč and Zrnić, 2018) an ability of cross-sector cooperation has been determined, and through this cooperation the circular creativity, that is, manufacture of diversified products or services linked through the same narrative, while adapted to the demands of media which is dominant in the specific sector of creative industry is also enabled.

„Circularity in creative industry is an upgrade of the phenomena of creative industry, and it rests on the cooperation of creative industry sectors. Starting with the assumption that there are fundamental cultural expressions (literary text, music, audio and visual art), the questioning

of the theory of concentric circular model (Throsby, 2008) confirms the possibility of cross sectoral and harmonized cooperation, that is, circular cooperation. The circularity of creative project is realized through the strategic definition of the aim, vision and mission of a ‘circular project’ and including all (or a significant number) of creative industry sectors“ (Horvat, 2019: 25).

It is a model which, in its core, rests on Throsby’s model of concentric circles (2008), and after the modifications, it relies on basic cultural expression as the central principle of circular creativity. According to that, the basic cultural expression encompass text, music, performance and visual arts, as the types of content created in the creative industry which possess the most significant part of artistic, and the least part of commercial value. Such a basic cultural expression has potentials which are appropriate for transformation into products or services of all other sectors of creative industry. If a production inspired by such a basic cultural expression in remaining sectors of creative industry is realized, it is the author’s (narrative) idea in cross sectoral surrounding, that is, the basis for the production of cultural and creative products/services based on the same narrative. Through „circulation“ of basic cultural expression (e.g. literary text) across other sectors of creative industry, the „circular“, that is, „complete“ products (thematically identical, although with multiplied communication ability, as they are realized with various expressive techniques and means“ (Horvat, 2019: 12).

To verify the thesis according to which the comic book and comic book narration are points of departure for other sectors of creative industry⁵, Table 2 was assembled (Chapter 4) and the products and services realized in 12 sectors of creative industry are listed (see Schematic 1), all of this based on an idea provided by comic book *Spider-Man*:

1. **Architecture** sector „borrowed“ the building known as *Flatiron*, which was built in 1902, for location of Daily Bugle newspaper offices on film in *Spider-Man* movies. It is a building located in Flatiron district which is a part of Manhattan and is one of the symbols of New York.

⁵ An excellent example of comic book as a source of circular creativity across sectors of creative industry is also an exhibition *Nastavit će se ... Strip i vizualna kultura u Hrvatskoj* (engl. *To be continued... Comic book and visual culture in Croatia*) that opened in December of 2020 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, and then continued to be shown across other Croatian cities during 2021. Usp. Irena Jukić-Pranjić, *Što je sve nama dala kultura stripa*: <https://www.zvono.eu/sto-je-sve-nama-dala-kultura-stripa-828>

2. In terms of **Audiovisual arts**, the ideas coming from *Spider-Man* comic books has found its most productive grounds in the field of film.⁶ The name of the mentioned comic book protagonist appears in all movie titles spanning from 2002 up to 2021, through which the comic book in sequels has imperceptibly become a feature-length film, with sequels spawned. First of the films based on *Spider-Man* narrative was made in 2002. (directed by Sam Raimi), followed by *Spider-Man 2* in 2004. (directed by Sam Raimi), while *Spider-Man 3* was made in 2007. (directed by Sam Raimi). With the change of the director, the titles of films also changed, so in 2012, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, directed by Marc Webb, was filmed, and the spawned sequel *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* was made in 2014. by the same director. New change of the director in 2017. brought about another change of the title into *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (directed by Jon Watts). Watts has made two more sequels: *Spider-Man: Far from Home* (2019.) and *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021.) Alongside the live action films listed above, an animated film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* was made in 2018., done by an ensemble group of directors (Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, Rodney Rothman).

When it comes to video, the Spider-Man comic book story has its most successful products listed in Singer's art book about visual art, quotations and Spider-Man's visual identity titled *Marvel's Spider-Man: From Amazing to Spectacular*, published in 2019. To the results of this sector an enormous mural graffiti in Birmingham should also be listed. The aim of the graffiti is open and transparent advertising and marketing for the PlayStation 4 video game *Marvel's Spider-Man* (2018).

3. **Heritage (archives, libraries, museums)** includes the preserved memory of Spider-Man in *Madame Tussaud's Sydney* wax figure museum. It is a museum which alongside the British royal family, movie stars and famous persons from Australia and all around the world also has an entire museum section dedicated to Marvel characters and Spider-Man.

4. Within **Design** sector, many products inspired by Spider-Man are to be found, and only some of them include Spider-Man's suit, clothes and mask. Spider-Man's mural in the rented location *Avenger's Campus* was set up as a promotional part of franchise attractions *Downtown Disney*.

5. The **Music** sector has created songs for the original film soundtrack (OST) titled *Sunflower* (Post Malone and Swae Lee, 2018) for the animated film *Into the Spider-Verse*. There is also a song for the original film soundtrack (OST) *We Are* by Ana Johnsson from the film *Spider-Man 2* (2004).

⁶ It is a stand-alone series of high budget Hollywood films. Usp. https://marvel-movies.fandom.com/wiki/Spider-Man_film_series, accessed on February 22, 2022.

6. Sector **Performance Arts** has recorded a significant number of stage performances, among which stands out a theatre play *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* (directed by Julie Taymor, music written by Bono and The Edge from the band *U2*). The theatre play had its premiere in 2011, on Broadway in New York.

7. **Publishing** sector is the originating sector for the comic book production. An exceptionally wealthy publishing activity of Marvel deals in publishing of the comic book series from the year 1962. up to today. That production endeavor includes numerous titles of comic-book magazines in which Spider-Man is the main protagonist, and some of them are *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Spectacular Spider-Man*, *Miles Morales: Spider-Man*, among others.

8. Electronic media within the **Media** sector are presented online, in terms of content such as websites, platforms and/or other forms of electronic reporting. When the word „Spider-Man“ is typed into Google’s search bar, in less than a minute the user receives 3.010.000.000 results, and that is still not the total number of all available content. The analyzed comic book also has its own Wiki page dedicated to Marvel’s characters, which contains many information on Spider-Man within many Marvel comic books.

9. **Advertising and market communication** has actively promoted the comic book, but other diversified products associated with it. Already in 1987 there was a highly unconventional marketing communication done regarding the ads and invitations to Spider-Man’s wedding, which was actually organized with stand-ins and actors, done in real time as a „real“ event. The simulated wedding occurred in the *Shea* stadium in New York, and its organization was also a commercial for the upcoming special Spider-Man issue, in which Peter Parker/Spider-Man married his girlfriend Mary Jane. One other unconventional marketing communication is of more recent date. Pope Francis has recently, on June 23 in 2021, met a man dressed in the costume of Spider-Man in Vatican. The event was covered by many media around the world, as a form of promotion and popularization of Roman Catholic Church and the pope to younger generations.

10. **Applied art** sector is loaded with souvenirs, action figures and toys modelled after Spider-Man, made from different materials. Often bought, sold or collected as artistic collections, some objects from this sector achieve very high monetary value.

11. Sector of **Computer games and new media** has produced over 40 video games inspired by *Spider-Man* comic book, among which is also a game for PlayStation 4 titled *Marvel’s Spider-Man* (2018). Video games are played across 15 different platforms.

12. Within **Visual arts** sector, photography stands out – specifically, the ones made on movie sets or for the needs of advertising. Photography has also encouraged the development of costume photography, that is, *cosplay*, where professionals (or amateurs) photograph the fans of Spider-Man dressed in professionally done imitations of Spider-Man suit. Furthermore, this sector has its most successful products written down in Singer's 2019 book *Marvel's Spider-Man: From Amazing to Spectacular*. Within this sector we could also place the abovementioned mural graffiti art of Spider-Man in Birmingham and other examples, alongside the sector of audiovisual arts in which they also belong.

Based on everything stated, it is obvious that the narrative of *Spider-Man* comic book has, through circular creativity, realized and established itself through twelve sectors of creative industry, that is, in architecture, audiovisual art, heritage, design, music, performance art, publishing, media, advertising and market communication, applied art, video game/new media, visual arts.

Through this, the thesis how the narration, as well as the comic book narration, is a starting point in the concept of circular creativity and that the comic book as the artistic form has the potential of circular creativity. It should also be noted that the concept of circular creativity does not bring only associated products/services through which the culture patterns are shaped, but also contains other, anthropologically significant traits. „Circularly creative products/services are of intensified communication potential, attractive for export and appropriate for branding“ (Horvat, 2019: 25). On branding via circular creativity there are studies, among which particularly stand out *Ars Eugenium* (Horvat and Gotovac, 2019) and *Ars Meandrum* (Horvat and Gotovac, 2021), and the mentioned studies' forewords (Mijoč, 2018 and Mijoč, 2021) where the procedure of branding via circular creativity is discussed and explained.

4. Case Study: *Spider-Man*

To live and experience anything is to translate its direct impact into many indirect forms of awareness.

(McLuhan, 2008: 151)

Considering that the potential of circular creativity of the comic book narrative *Spider-Man* has been confirmed, the following task is to determine the esthetic and stylistic choices of the comic book *Spider-Man*. The attention is directed to the mutant genesis, as well as human problems of the protago-

nist – Spider-Man, whose name the comic book shares. This also includes the attempt to interpret the unwavering popularity of Spider-Man, highly associated with „esthetics of eternal youth“.

4.1. Mutant genesis and human issues of Spider-Man

Numerous translations of the comic book *Spider-Man* have made its titular hero a globally recognizable cultural icon and a part of a large brand, that is, he has become a brand himself. In Croatian language, he is also known as Čovjek-pauk (engl. Spider-Man), with his civilian identity being Peter Parker, and to the most of the world, he is known simply as unforgettable, friendly neighborhood crime fighter Spider-Man. He is known both by younger and more senior generations, and this is notable, considering that this is a character that was created in 1962 (thus he is somewhat younger than DC comic book characters such as Superman and Batman, however, he is not any less known). He was created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, and his first appearance was in the 15th issue of anthology comic book *Amazing Fantasy*. Since then, Spider-Man was illustrated in many styles and different dimensions, and his character was shaped by many script writers, pencillers and illustrators. Perhaps the planetary popularity of the character can be explained by the fact that the character is so unassuming, plain and average, which is indeed the true nature of Spider-Man's civilian alter ego, Peter Benjamin Parker, a shy young man who by (un)fortunate circumstances got bitten by an experimental radioactive spider while still in high school, during a school field trip to a laboratory. Mutation has manifested as a significant muscle increase and physical power, sharpened reflexes, regenerative metabolism, „spider's“ sixth sense that warns him of danger, while his body had started to create a sticky protein-based substance, similar to the webbing of a spider. Peter Parker has spent years learning more about his new found abilities, perfecting himself and gaining knowledge about his mutated DNA, and after the first shocks related to his powers, he decided to use them in the fight against crime. His final decision to become a crimefighter was cemented by the murder of his beloved uncle, Ben Parker, who was a father figure in Peter's life. The man who killed Ben Parker was a robber who Peter could have stopped because he witnessed the robbery the killer committed, however, Peter did nothing at the time, as the victim of the robbery was a man who conned Peter out of his earned money. One of the main emotional and intellectual motifs that is present from that moment on in the Spider-Man mythos is the one that states how *with great power, comes great responsibility*. That simple, and yet powerful idea is spread through the whole of Spider-Man's history in comics, as a comic book and literary character, most often through

Peter's internal monologues, as Peter never lets himself to forget about that. The same motif is present in a *transgenre* manner, through films, series and video games in which Spider-Man appears. Spider-Man's world is rich with many characters from his civilian life, whose number increases in the sixties of the 20th century, such as aunt May, in who Peter sees a maternal figure (she has, alongside the deceased uncle Ben, started to take care of Peter after his parents died while he was still a child). In a large number of comic book and film incarnations, Peter keeps his crime fighting alter-ego and his abilities from his aunt May as a secret. His few, but memorable friends and love interests are present as well – friends such as Harry Osborn, a wealthy son of a well known scientist, then Gwen Stacy, Peter's first serious girlfriend, as well as Mary Jane – a girl who becomes his wife later on in the comics. Present are also Joseph „Robbie“ Robertson, editor at *Daily Bugle* newspaper and a man of integrity, as well as Kurt Connors, a disabled research scientist. In his world, Spider-Man also has many enemies, among which are rogue scientists, mercenaries, criminals and megalomaniacs of all kinds.

4.2. Enduring popularity and the esthetics of „eternal youth“

Peter Parker/Spider-Man is one of the most popular and enduring Marvel's characters. The causes of this universal popularity should be looked for in a few sources: fantastic powers which the character has, personal courage and an (over)active sense of personal responsibility, as well as in Peter Parker's personality, who is a young man with a tough family history, but who still manages to get through life with a warm, happy-go-lucky and boyish sense of humor and an aptitude for punchlines (he uses them even while engaged in open combat and when his life is hanging by a (spider's) thread). Almost universally, Peter Parker is presented as the *underdog*⁷, *a man who gets through life with modest means and coming from humble beginnings. Peter is an exceptionally intelligent young man, very interested in natural sciences and studies, especially biology, chemistry and physics. He is also very interested in photojournalism, so he often works as a freelance photographer for Daily Bugle newspaper.* His youth and childhood he spends mostly as a loner, misunderstood and rejected from his peers, and he does not have many friends later in life, neither. With all his amazing and unusual (newfound) physical abilities, Peter Parker is still a dreamer and a somewhat clumsy young person, whose life often does not go according to plan in terms of his career nor when it comes to relationships. It is probably this contrast something that attracts the average

⁷ Someone who has poor chances of success.

reader to Spider-Man. Barris (2012) detects that the main protagonist of the comic book *Spider-Man* is turned to an introspective insight in himself and that his core principle is the motto of Socrates, which states „Know thyself“. He compares Plato’s dialogues with dialogues established in the comic book *The Amazing Spider-Man*, authored by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, first published in 1962. Barris also states that Spider-Man owes his popularity to his everyday issues which are relatable to most people. This can be read from thought clouds and bubbles in which the main protagonist even while engaged in combat with supervillains keeps revealing his internal conflicts or punchlines. Barris views him as a superhero who is obsessed with the most well known anxiety inducing question: „Who am I, and what is my purpose in this world?“

Even though Spider-Man’s visual identity has been through several modifications through time, he is still most recognizable for his striking red and blue costume variant, which is neutral enough and universal enough, so it can be widely accepted. Within visual identity of this comic book superhero, the key element is the symbolism of spider and spider’s webbing. Most of people in the world dislikes spiders, but also considers them harmless enough, which also enables the acceptance of someone who has spiderlike powers, but still appears to be human on the outside. Stan Lee, who named Spider-Man and came up with the concept of his character, describes the creative journey which resulted in the birth of the character in the following way:

„[...] So we were on a roll and we said let’s get another hero. But, the thing with the superheroes is that they need to have a unique super power. Well we already had someone who was the strongest guy in the world, some of them that could fly, etc. So I was thinking – what do we have left? [...] But I remember I saw a fly crawling on the wall. And I thought, suppose that the person could stick to a wall like an insect? So I was often running and thought what can I call him... Mosquito-Man? That didn’t have any glamour. Insect-Man? That was even worse. And then I came to Spider-Man! And it sounded mysterious and dramatic... And a legend was born. [...] I’ll tell you something else. Nobody wanted me to do it! My publisher said that it was the worst idea he ever heard – people hate spiders! When I told him that I wanted him to be a teenager, he said to me – Stan, you don’t understand. A teenager can only be a sidekick, he can’t be the hero. And when I said that I wanted him to have a lot of personal problems, he said – Stan do you even know what a hero is?“⁸

⁸ Stan Lee had this interview with the host Larry King on CNN in 2000, in the show *Larry King Live* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75HonYg6dts&ab_channel=CNN)

Peter Parker is an *everyman* in the full sense of the word. Fate has given him incredible powers, as many of us would like to have, while on the other hand, behind the mask he is still a young man named Peter Parker who has enough vulnerability, humanity, warmth and emotion to enter hearts and minds of audiences all around the world.

On the enduring popularity of Spiderman's character there is also a great marketing success and his presence in popular culture on world-class level, as well as him being lodged into a huge part of creative industry. An example of this universal acceptance is the recent audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican (see Table 2), when a man dressed in a Spider-Man suit met Pope Francis. We could hardly expect other superheroes, with a more macabre and frightening appearance, on such an occasion – considering that some of them more or less openly, allude to devils or demonic beings from Christian tradition or mythology. Good examples of this are Batman and Daredevil.

This image of Spider-Man as a character comes with an age restriction – it is indeed rare to find comic books, series or films in which Spider-Man is not a teenager, or at the very least, quite young. Given that media theorists define comic book as *cool media* or media which includes a lot of audience participation, it is obvious that Spider-Man's „eternal“ youth gives a constant incentive for the younger audiences to return, especially children and teenagers, who through Spider-Man's eternal growing up process channel their own growing up and maturing process. Furthermore, the readers are active participants in Spider-Man's fictional life, in which he is perpetually learning, maturing and growing up. Of course, this does not exclude older audiences. In that sense, it should be mentioned that in more recent incarnation of the comic book Spider-Man is somewhat older, and married to Mary Jane, however, the visual design of the character is still incredibly youthful (he is very rarely shown with beard, wrinkles or longer hair), which only strengthens the impression that even though Peter has grown up somewhat, he hasn't really aged at all. Spider-Man's suit has also gone through several metamorphoses, even though the main series of the comic book always inevitably comes back to the original red-blue tights and the original costume. It is interesting to notice how the „notorious“ black version of Spider-Man's costume has become reserved for „darker“, „adult“ and – perhaps most importantly, somewhat more introspective stories. The character wears it again on certain occasions, and one of them also includes the moment when he finally proposed to his girlfriend, Mary Jane.



Picture 1. Peter Parker in his black outfit contemplates will he really go through with the wedding to his girlfriend Mary Jane, remembering his former love Gwen Stacy, who was killed by one of his enemies⁹

Spider-Man's costume is a kind of a method for communication with the audience, very classical and typical for a *cool* media, such as a comic book. The original costume has also in more recent times, perhaps due to the wish to shock the audience and defy expectations, been used in some darker stories, however, the black costume has become almost a trademark for an „atypical“ Spider-Man story. Spider-Man's suit was to an extent changed in both the films and the comic books, considering that Peter Parker is a mechanical genius and a scientist that can adapt his suit considering the context of the story. However, the more radical transformation of the suit within the scripted stories is always a clear internal indicator within the comic book that there is something very „special“ that is going on with Spider-Man.



Slika 2. Spider-Man's classical outfit¹⁰

⁹ Michelinie, David, *The Amazing Spider-Man Annual 21, The Wedding!*, Marvel Comics, 1987.

¹⁰ Loeb, Jeph, *Spider-Man:Blue*, Marvel Comics, 2002–2003.

(Source: Loeb, Jeph; Sale, Tim (2003), Spider-Man: Blue, Marvel Comics)

In the comic books, as well as in films, Peter Parker always in the end returns to his original costume, that perhaps best reflects the warmth, empathy and *the child within* of that comic book hero. It is very likely that while he is in the classical suit he remains ideal for branding and marketing, which also push him towards being attractive and interesting to new generations of readers.



Slika 3. Spider-Man's contextual black costume which was brought into continuity by the artist Mike Zeck¹¹

4.3. Spider-Man as a layered literary character

As stated before, as a comic book and literary character, Spider-Man owes his popularity above all to his vulnerability, humanity and averageness of his civilian identity. As such, he can be viewed not only as a comic book character, but as a serious and layered literary character. With the already mentioned principle which mentions great power and responsibility, Spider-Man can be viewed as a character who in a unique way discovers a moral concept of his own highly intensified action, within the bounds of his imaginary world in which he resides in and in which his actions, thoughts and feelings have consequences. It is all further intensified by the fact that the character of Peter Parker is „eternally“ young, as well as that a very large number of stories portray him as a teenager or a student. On Spider-Man and the generational moral system in America which support this conception of Spider-Man, there were numerous and various scientific papers from many areas, such as an article in criminology titled *The Amazing Spider-Man and the Evolution of the Comics Code: A Case Study in Cultural Criminology*, written by Cary D. Adkinson, which states the following: „One such hero, which was introduced to the au-

¹¹ De Matteis, J. M., *Spider-Man: Kraven's Last Hunt*, Marvel Comics, 1987.

diences in 1962, helped revitalize a struggling genre and bring legitimacy to the medium itself. Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man, revolutionized how superhero stories were told by confronting authority and the social ills that characterized the American cultural landscape during the Civil Rights Era. (...) In their insightful account of Spider-Man's influence and continuing popularity, Jones and Jacobs (1997) conclude that (...) For the first time in superhero comic book history, „[h]ere was a solo hero, not a kid sidekick or a team member, who was really a teenager, and a teenager who wasn't happy-go-lucky or goofily cute but truly complex and tormented“, one who „must find his own morality through the agony of subjective experience“ (p. 60). Wright (2001) suggests Spider-Man's immediate and unprecedented popularity resulted from the way these themes resonated with baby boomers struggling to find moral certitudes within an increasingly ambivalent and tumultuous historical period...¹²

Spider-Man's moral influence on culture and civilization is confirmed by the existence of articles which discuss Spider-Man and that also discuss legal theory, within framework of the legal science journals and databases. One such article claims the following: „Spider-Man was neurotic, compulsive and profoundly skeptical about the whole idea of being a costumed saviour' (Daniels, 1991: 95), something that provided him with both 'tremendous street cred' (Saffel, 2007: 286) and a new approach to what it meant to be a superhero.“¹³ It should not be forgotten that Spider-Man as a masked hero – though perhaps a more fitting name would be masked vigilante – usually acts *outside* the law or at least outside of the law as we conceive it in our everyday lives. All of this certainly opens an interesting space for many ethical and legal thoughts on exceptions, individualism, necessary defense, self-defense, etc.

It should also be noted that Spiderman truly remains an organic part of society, both in his civilian everyday life, and when he has his vigilante mask on. This is also stated by author Ibtisam Ahmed, when he compares him with several other most well known costumed heroes: „The latter is significant because Peter is the mainstream superhero who is closest to being an 'ordinary' person. This is opposed to Superman, who is an alien, Batman, whose economic standing places him in a unique position, and the X-Men, who spend their lives isolated amongst other superhumans, interacting with the world only when they save it.“¹⁴

¹² Adkinson, C. D. (2008). The Amazing Spider-Man and the evolution of the comics code: A case study in cultural criminology. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 15(3), 241–261.

¹³ Bainbridge, J. (2012). Spider-man, the Question and the Meta-Zone: Exception, Objectivism and the Comics of Steve Ditko. *Law Text Culture*, 16, [i]-242.

¹⁴ Ahmed, I. (2013). How do Superheroes Problematiser Morality? How do Superheroes Prob-

5. Discussion

And it is only on those terms, standing aside from any structure or medium, that its principles and lines of force can be discerned. For any medium has the power of imposing its own assumption on the unwary. Prediction and control consist in avoiding this subliminal state of Narcissus trance. But the greatest aid to this end is simply in knowing that the spell can occur immediately upon contact, as in the first bars of a melody.

(McLuhan, 2008: 19)

Aside from the fact that the comic book is the media of more recent production date and usually associated with the start of the 20th century, the attractiveness of scientific approach to comic book is directly linked to its successful survival among other media. The fact that comic book is getting interesting to the growing number of areas in research is confirmed by research done by McLuhan (1964), Manning (1998), Šuvaković (2008), Beati (2012), Mikkonen (2017) and Grewe (2021). The findings of Mikkonen (2017) have shown how the narratological processes or organizing, presenting and mediation in transfer of narrative message can not transfer from one media to another, but that every media must adapt the narration to its qualities and specifics. Mikkonen (2017) also warns of the existence of transmedia studies as a new field of research whose research aim is to establish narrative rules in various areas of research. In narratology of comic book – narrative form which joins both literary and visual expression – it is obligatory to apply narratological analysis based on transmedia research.

When observed from the viewpoint of circular creativity, according to which in the center of the circle is the basic and fundamental cultural content, the research done in this paper shows how the selected comic book example has completed the full form of circular creativity, because it was a basis for the production of cultural or creative product / service. It is important to emphasize how that kind of circulation is not a result of a project plan, but was influenced and motivated by profit of the stakeholders in creative industry, while their mutual obligations are regulated by copyrights related to the basic idea. As the comic book Spider-Man is the result of American culture, the moment in which his intense circling across sectors of creative industry is also significant, and this moment is what McLuhan calls *The Iconic Age*.

„The iconic age is upon us. We now toss to the Europeans the package

lematise Morality? (e-ir.info), accessed on February 20, 2022.

that concerned us from 1922 to 1952. They, in turn, enter their first consumer age of standardized goods. We move into our first depth-age of art-and-producer orientation. America is Europeanizing on as extensive a pattern as Europe is Americanizing“ (McLuhan, 2008: 150).

A successful circling of the Spider-Man comic book has undoubtedly attributed not only the Americanization of Europe, but the Americanization in global sense. On the other hand, processes of creative circular patterns of the comic book that is mentioned were happening sporadically, and as such, sporadic were its effects.

If the circular creativity of the mentioned comic book had been directed from one project office and if a single, unique strategy had been applied, its marketing effects would have possessed an additional social reach, because through it, the value oriented messages that are sent via branding processes also could have been sent. This paper establishes only a few answers on reasons which have enabled the comic book Spider-Man to have such a successful creative well-roundedness. Additional challenges to the future researchers of the similar phenomena could be the ones related to narrative properties of the comic book, which are especially receptive to the iconic culture of the 21st century, which also brings to moving around through all sectors of creative industry. Equally interesting is the question of societal transformation which the fully rounded creative product brings about in global society and the reasons why a certain narrative template manages to grab the attention of a significant part of target groups.

Table 1. Overview of theoretical findings on comic book

Author and the year of publishing	Publication	Scientific or professional contribution
McLuhan, M. (1964) (according to translation into Croatian language from 2008)	<i>Razumijevanje medija</i> (Understanding Media, 1964). Zagreb: Golden marketing / Tehnička knjiga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a rounded view of communication abilities and strategies in their development up until the emergence of global culture – by using the phrase „medium is the message“, McLuhan changes the view of written and visual communication culture, and singles out comic book specifically, and analyzes it as one of the self-standing communication media

<p>McCloud, S. (1993)</p>	<p><i>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art.</i> Northampton, Mass</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – publication in the form of a comic book – a semiotic for understanding comic book, its historical development, and its formal elements is established – direct referring to McLuhan's <i>Understanding Media</i> (1964)
<p>Harvey, R. C. (1996)</p>	<p><i>The Art of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History.</i> Univ. Press of Mississippi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – shows the evolution of comic book as a genre of popular culture with an emphasis on the analysis of narrative characteristics of comic book – based on the analysis spanning the timeline from the 30s up to mid 90s of the 20th century, a methodology for art estimation and rating is shown
<p>Manning, A. D. (1998)</p>	<p>Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. <i>IEEE Transactions on Professional Communications</i>, 41(1), 66–69</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a critical review on McCloud's (1993) comic book semiotics based on general iconic theory, and applied on the understanding of comic book
<p>McLaughlin, J. (Ed.). (2005)</p>	<p><i>Comics as Philosophy.</i> Univ. Press of Mississippi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a collection of essays which presents the discussions on comic book esthetics and the ability of comic books to display the metaphysics of contemporary narration through the use of visual narration – essays question the genre diversity of comic books and present an analysis of comic books on superheroes, graphic novels, as well as illustrated adventure classics

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<p>Šuvaković, M. (2005)</p>	<p><i>Glossary of Contemporary Art.</i> Horetzky</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the concept of comic book is determined in terms of structure, artistic role and genesis of developing forms – starting with the first appearance of comic books near the end of the 19th century up to transfer of comic books into galleries and other art forms
<p>Eisner, W. (2008)</p>	<p><i>Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist.</i> WW Norton & Company</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – comic book is viewed as a sequential art – described according to the method which Will Eisner applied in his course in New York School of Visual Arts – presents basic principles of comic book and the rules of graphic storytelling as well as visual narratives
<p>Meskin, A. (2009)</p>	<p>Comics as Literature? <i>The British Journal of Aesthetics</i>, 49(3), 219–239</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – comic book is examined as a hybrid art form with a special emphasis on its narrative abilities and functions
<p>Beaty, B. (2012)</p>	<p><i>Comics Versus Art.</i> University of Toronto Press</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – examines the relationship of comic book and the sector of creative industry that is titled Heritage – determines the reasons because of which comic book was not an object of research within art history, as well as reasons that led to a change of this paradigm
<p>Meskin, A., & Cook, R. T. (2012)</p>	<p><i>The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach</i> (Vol. 25). John Wiley & Sons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – presents thoughts on philosophy and metaphysics of comic book with a particular review of the development history of this genre
<p>Wandtke, T. R. (2014)</p>	<p><i>The Meaning of Superhero Comic Books.</i> McFarland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – compares comic book narration to a classical epic narration – the establishment of models for linking traditional esthetics and postmodern theory

García, S. (2015)	<i>On the Graphic Novel</i> . Univ. Press of Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the analysis of the graphic novel from its genesis up to more mature forms – esthetic study is combined with the study of entrepreneurial phenomena which followed the comic book's development as a narrative form
Mikkonen, K. (2017)	<i>The Narratology of Comic Art</i> . Taylor & Francis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the narratology method is applied in comic book analysis – critical analysis of selected examples, and the existing findings on narratology are modified
Grewe, C. (2021)	<i>The Arabesque from Kant to Comics</i> . Routledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – subversive nature of comic book is associated with the historical life of scrollwork as the chief illustrative element in books, poetry publications and printed scores – a history of avant-garde theories on written and visual culture of 18th and 19th century

Table 2. Circular creativity of diversified products whose point of origin was the Spider-Man comic

Creative industry sector	Project results / products or services	Link to website
Architecture	Building known as Flatiron was used for the offices of the imaginary New York newspaper <i>Daily Bugle</i> when filming <i>Spider-Man</i> films. It is the building that was built in 1902, located in the eponymous district of Flatiron, in Manhattan.	<p>Wiggan, Alex, <i>What Building Was Used for the Daily Bugle in the Spider-Man movies? Don't Tell Harry, Spider-Man Blog</i> (June 19, 2021) Available at https://donttellharry.com/2021/02/04/what-building-was-used-for-the-daily-bugle-in-the-spider-man-movies/, accessed on February 18, 2022</p> <p><i>Flatiron Building, History</i> (April 22, 2010) Available at https://www.history.com/topics/landmarks/flatiron-building, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>

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<p>Publishing</p>	<p>An enormously wealthy publishing activity by Marvel, from 1962 up to today, which includes many titles of comic book magazines with several of them having Spider-Man as the main protagonist. These include: <i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i>, <i>Spectacular Spider-Man</i>, <i>Miles Morales: Spider-Man</i>, etc.</p>	<p><i>Polo, Susana, Sneak Peek: Spider-Man art book gives the web-slinger star treatment, Polygon</i> (October 11, 2019) Available at Spider-Man art book showcases 50 years of comic book story and creators - Polygon, accessed on February 19, 2022</p> <p><i>Marvel, The Amazing Spider-Man</i> (2022) Available at The Amazing Spider-Man Characters Marvel, accessed on February 18, 2022</p>
<p>Design</p>	<p>Spider-Man's costume</p>	<p><i>Marvel [database], Spider-Man's Suit</i> (2022) Available at Spider-Man's Suit Marvel Database Fandom, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
	<p>Spider-Man mural on the rented location of <i>Avengers Campus</i>, set up as a promotional part of <i>Downtown Disney</i> franchise attractions.</p>	<p><i>Wow News Today</i> (June 2, 2021) Available at PHOTOS: New WEB Slingers Spider-Man Mural Swings into Downtown Disney for Avengers Campus Opening – WDW News Today (wdwnt.com)., accessed on February 18, 2022</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Song for the original movie soundtrack (OST) <i>Sunflower</i>, by Post Malone and Swae Lee, done for the animated film <i>Into the Spider Verse</i> (2018)</p>	<p><i>Malone, Post, Lee, Swae, Sunflower, YouTube</i> (October 18, 2018) Available at Post Malone, Swae Lee - Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse) – YouTube, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
	<p>Song for the original movie soundtrack (OST) <i>We Are</i> by Ana Johnsson, done for the feature film <i>Spider-Man 2</i> (2004).</p>	<p><i>Johnsson, Ana, We Are, YouTube</i> (October 25, 2006) Available at Ana Johnsson We Are – YouTube, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
<p>Performance arts</p>	<p>Theater play <i>Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark</i> from 2011, directed by Julie Taymor, with authors of music being Bono and The Edge from the band <i>U2</i>. Play was performed on Broadway in New York.</p>	<p>Taymor, Julie, <i>Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark, Broadway.com</i> (2011) Available at https://www.broadway.com/shows/spider-man-turn-off-the-dark/, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>

Film ¹⁵	<i>Spider-Man</i> (2002), directed by: Sam Raimi	<i>Raimi, Sam, Spider-Man, IMDb</i> (2002) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0145487/?ref_=nv_sr_srsrg_6 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man 2</i> (2004), directed by: Sam Raimi	<i>Raimi, Sam, Spider-Man 2, IMDb</i> (2004) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0316654/?ref_=fn_al_tt_3 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man 3</i> (2007), directed by: Sam Raimi	<i>Raimi, Sam, Spider-Man 3, IMDb</i> (2007) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0413300/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i> (2012), directed by: Marc Webb	<i>Webb, Marc, The Amazing Spider-Man, IMDb</i> (2012) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0948470/?ref_=nv_sr_srsrg_0 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>The Amazing Spider-Man 2</i> (2014), directed by: Marc Webb	<i>Webb, Marc, The Amazing Spider-Man 2, IMDb</i> (2014) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1872181/?ref_=fn_al_tt_4 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man: Homecoming</i> (2017), directed by: Jon Watts	<i>Watts, John, Spider-Man: Homecoming, IMDb</i> (2017) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2250912/?ref_=fn_al_tt_2 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man: Far from Home</i> (2019), directed by: Jon Watts	<i>Watts, John, Spider-Man: Far from Home, IMDb</i> (2019) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6320628/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man: No Way Home</i> (2021), directed by: Jon Watts	<i>Watts, John, Spider-Man: No Way Home</i> (2021), <i>IMDb</i> (2021) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10872600/?ref_=fn_al_tt_3 , accessed on February 19, 2022
	<i>Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse</i> (2018), animated film, directed by: Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, Rodney Rothman	<i>Persichetti, Bob, Ramsey, Peter, Rothman, Rodney, Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, IMDb</i> (2018) Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4633694/ , accessed on February 19, 2022

¹⁵ It is a separate series of high budget Hollywood films. See: https://marvel-movies.fandom.com/wiki/Spider-Man_film_series, accessed on February 22, 2022.

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<p>Heritage (archives, libraries, museums)</p>	<p>Wax figures museum in Sydney – <i>Madame Tussaud's Sydney Museum</i> – alongside the figures of English royal family, film stars and other celebrities from Australia and worldwide, it also has an entire museum section dedicated to Marvel characters and Spider-Man.</p>	<p><i>Spider-Man, Madame Tussaud's Sidney</i>, Available at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4633694/, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
<p>Photography</p>	<p><i>Cosplay</i> and photography of models in professionally done imitations of Spider-Man's costume.</p>	<p><i>JT Cosplays, Yogomi</i> (December 16, 2020) Available at https://www.yogomi.com/2020/12/jtcosplay-spiderman/, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
<p>Electronic media</p>	<p>Various content dedicated to Marvel's characters, which also encompass many information on Spider-Man in many comic books, located in free content web encyclopedia – Wikipedia.</p>	<p><i>Spider-Man in video games, Wikipedia</i> (February 13, 2022) Available at Spider-Man in video games – Wikipedia, accessed on February 19, 2022</p> <p><i>Marvel [database]</i> (2022) Available at Marvel Database Fandom, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>

Publishing and marketing communication	<p>Real ads and marketing campaign for Spider-Man's wedding organized in 1987, as a „real“ event with actors. Simulated wedding was done at <i>Shea</i> stadium in New York, and it was also a commercial for the upcoming, special issue of the comic book, in which Peter Parker/Spider-Man married his girlfriend Mary Jane.</p>	<p><i>Spider-Man's Wedding, YouTube</i> (June 13, 2007), Available at Spider-Man's Wedding – Shea Stadium 1987 – YouTube, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
	<p>On June 23, 2021, Pope Francis in a public and promotional event in Vatican has an audience with a man dressed in the costume of Spider-Man. The event was published by the media around the world, as a form of promotion of Roman Catholic Church and the pope to younger generations.</p>	<p><i>Goldstein, Joelle, From Marvel to the Vatican! Spider-Man Meets the Pope: „A Really Good Superhero“</i>, <i>People.com</i> (June 23, 2021) Available at Spider-Man Meets the Pope Outside the Vatican at the Papal Audience PEOPLE.com, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
Applied art	<p>Souvenirs and action figures with the character of Spider-Man made from different materials. Such objects are often bought, sold and collected, while some of them achieve significant monetary values.</p>	<p><i>Amazon.com</i>, „<i>Spider-man figurine</i>“ (2022) Available at https://www.amazon.com/spiderman-figurine/s?k=spiderman+figurine, accessed on February 19, 2022</p>
Computer games, new media	<p>Over 40 video games across more than 15 platforms.</p>	<p><i>Marvel [database]</i> (2022) Available at <i>Marvel Database</i> Fandom, accessed on February 19,2022</p>

Visual arts	Book of visual moments, quotes and Spider-Man's overall visual identity titled <i>Marvel's Spider-Man: From Amazing to Spectacular</i> (2019), written by Matt Singer.	<i>Singer, Matt, Marvel's Spider-Man: From Amazing to Spectacular: The Definitive Comic Art Collection Hardcover, Amazon.com</i> (October 15, 2019) Available at Amazon.com: Marvel's Spider-Man: From Amazing to Spectacular: The Definitive Comic Art Collection: 9781683837442: Singer, Matt, DeMatteis, J. M.: Books, accessed on February 19, 2022
	Large commercial mural graffiti portraying Spider-Man. Located in Birmingham. Open and declared aim of the graffiti is marketing for the PS4 video game <i>Marvel's Spider-Man</i> (2018).	<i>Why a huge PS4 Spider-Man graffiti mural has appeared in Birmingham, IAmBham</i> (October 5, 2018) Available at Why a huge PS4 Spider-Man graffiti mural has appeared in Birmingham I Am Birmingham, accessed on February 18, 2022

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Slaven LENDIĆ & Milica LUKIĆ

ESTETIKA STRIPA KAO KNJIŽEVNE FORME U POSTUPKU KNJIŽEVNE KREATIVNOSTI

Cilj je rada istražiti estetiku stripa kao književne forme koja je svoju primjenu pronašla i potvrdila u postupku kružne kreativnosti. Kružna kreativnost pojam je novoga doba i rezultat je međusektorske suradnje u kreativnoj industriji povezane istovjetnom narativnom temom. Kako je strip proizvodni rezultat jednoga od sektora kreativne industrije (sektora nakladništva i knjige), u radu se najprije istražuju prethodne teorijske spoznaje o stripu, a zatim se istražuje jesu li narativne sposobnosti stripa dostatne za primjenu postupka kružne kreativnosti. Uvidom u teorijske spoznaje McLuhana, McCLOUDA, HAREYA, McLaughlina i drugih autora, prikazuje se razvoj teorijske misli o stripu u posljednjih šezdeset godina. Posebna se pozornost posvećuje McLuhanovom razvrstavanju medija na *hladne* i *tope* te svojstvima stripa kao vrste hladnoga medija. Istraživački postupak primijenjen na analizi stripa *Spiderman*, a na temelju uvida u prikupljene i analizirane kreativne proizvode i usluge, potvrdio je postavljenju hipotezu kako stripovski narativ posjeduje potencijal kružne kreativnosti. Analizom je utvrđeno kako je strip *Spiderman* ostvario kreativni proizvod ili uslugu u svakom sektoru kreativne industrije: arhitekturi, audiovizualnoj umjetnosti, baštini, dizajnu, glazbi, izvedbenoj umjetnosti, knjizi/nakladništvu, medijima, oglašavanju i tržišnoj komunikaciji, primijenjenoj umjetnosti, računalnoj igri / novim medijima i vizualnim umjetnostima. U radu se istražuje i estetika stripa *Spidermana* te razlozi za trajnu popularnost glavnoga junaka iz koje je i proisteklo prelijevanje narativne podloge na diversificirane proizvode kreativne industrije.

Ključne riječi: *strip, narativ, popularna kultura, kreativna industrija, komunikacija, Spiderman, kružna kreativnost, hladni medij*