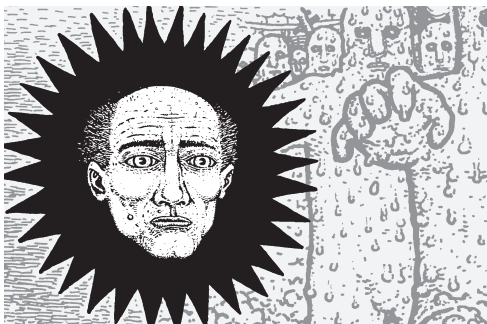


Dear Goran Dačev,
hello again on the pages of Stripburger! We were very glad you've sent us your *Mud People* story. We're always happy to read a good horror story, especially if it features exquisite narrative approaches. Now that it's published it is subject to all kinds of interpretations. If you're interested, you can read it below. Write again and thanks for the story.

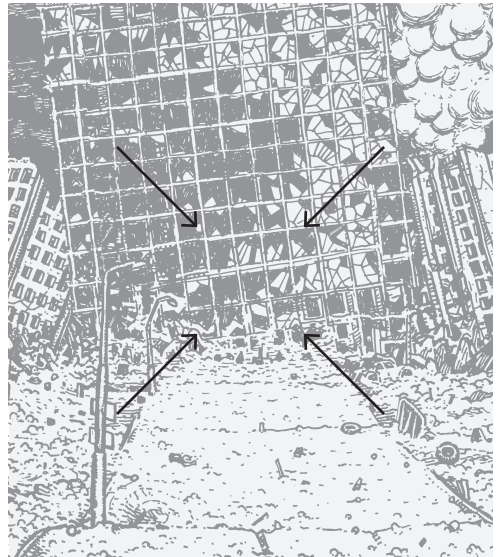
MUD PEOPLE, by Gorand, an analysis



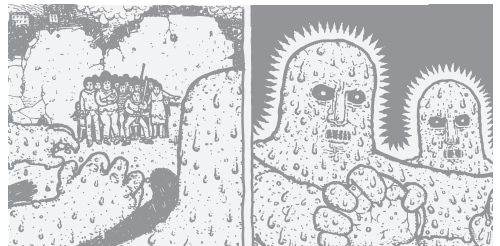
The comics story describes an apocalyptic time when the human subconscious gave birth to Mud people. Can it be read as a metaphor for the modern society or as a phantasmagoria of a lonely man? Narrator's subjective gaze that takes us by hand through this muddy cataclysm makes both interpretations plausible. Identity and partiality of the narrator can, for now, only be assumed from the portraits next to the text, while he's not being a part of course of events.



The events that seem "trapped in a B-movie cliché" point the spotlight at the Mud people. They look like zombies and terrorize the city and its inhabitants. Gorand presents the consequences of their destruction in a half-page frame of the ravaged city. The size of the picture envelops the reader in order to give him a more meaningful experience of this abomination.



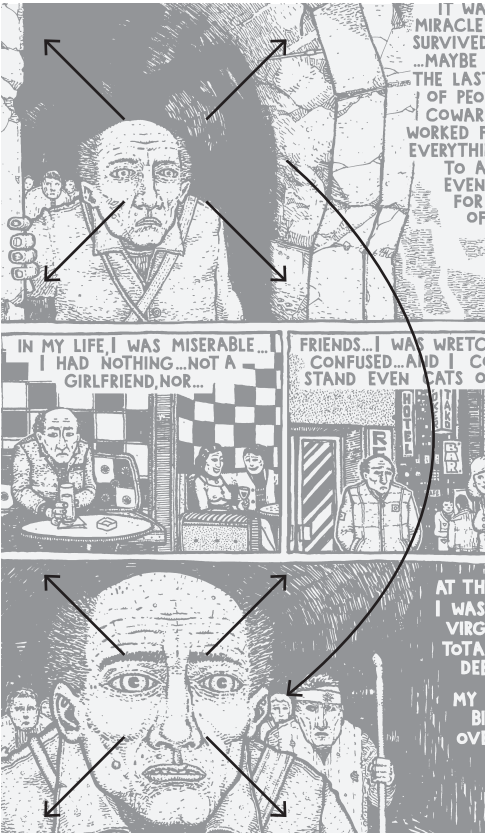
The reason for their destructive behaviour is not revealed, but the reader can instantly feel a connection between the inhabitants of the city and Mud people. Could it be that the reason lies in the city dwellers themselves ... ? Gorand writes: "*Mud people ... people's mud ... everyone in mud ... mud inside us ...*", while an image backs up these words. Thus the reader can follow the events through the eyes of Mud people from the picture on the bottom of page 3. On the next page the first-person view shifts to the view of their victims.



The next curious narrative approach can be found on page 4 where the narrator is placed into the story for the first time. In the beginning we've only been following his story in off-voice, while now it seems he decided to stop hiding and enters the story as its protagonist.



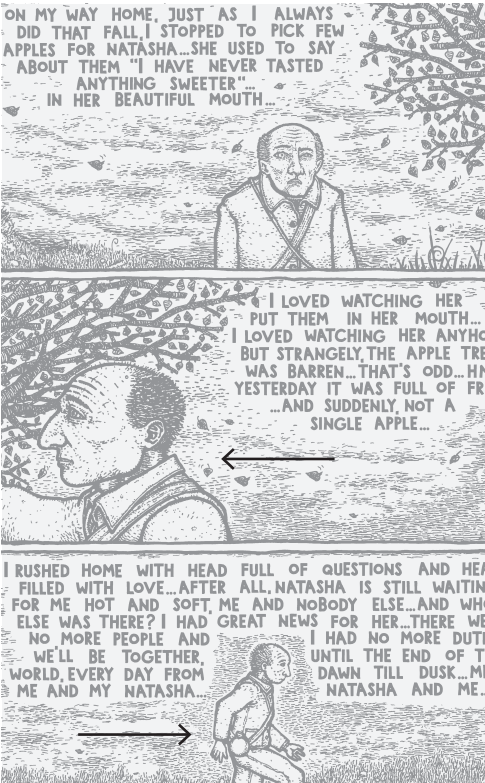
Gorand introduces him through the zoom-in sequence, where he inserts two scenes from his previous life events as well. This way we're not only pulled closer to his exterior, but also into his interior.



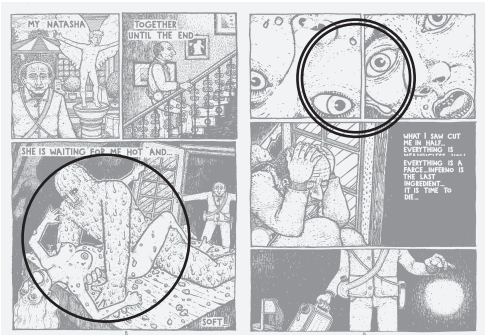
This interior turns out to be muddier than we expected. Mud people separate him from the rest of the humans and recruit him as their snitch. He stumbles upon Natasha on one of his searching expeditions and falls in love with her. He protects his beloved from the Mud People as the pair becomes the last two remaining examples of their own kind.



This is not the only allusion to the Garden of Eden. Namely Natasha loves eating apples that the protagonist thoughtfully delivers her every day. When the orchard runs out of apples, the story takes a new turn.



The images again support the text. The protagonist's sudden turn at the bottom of page 7 reaffirms the abruptness of events that follow on subsequent pages.



A deliberate editorial decision was to put page 8 on the left-hand side due to the internal structure of the story. This is in fact where the protagonist's fate suddenly turns in the opposite direction.

