

The Zagreb School of Animation and the Unperfect

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Abstract

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From 1956 until 1991, a group of animators based at the Zagreb Film studio, in the Croatian capital, produced approximately 500 shorts, including avant-garde experiments, children's cartoons, gag shorts, and sex comedies. Like Yugoslavia itself, the Zagreb School of Animation (as the animators collectively came to be called) challenged utopian ideologies and the East-West binaries of the Cold War. Their work transformed the cartoon from a cinema of attractions, which celebrated the technology which gave it birth, into a cinema of the laborer, which celebrated the humble artisan behind the technology.

Animation, historically, has been described as a seamless marriage between mankind's lost childhood, embodied by anthropomorphized animals, and techno-modernity. The Zagreb School, however, emphasized human fallibility and accepted technical mistakes, such as a stray line in a frame, or an imperfectly synchronized connection between sound and movement. Rather than the confident Soviet new man, the defining character type of the Zagreb School was the "small man." This dissertation uses the "small man" to understand how the Zagreb School

struggled with the major preoccupations of post-World War II Yugoslavia: fears of nuclear annihilation, environmental collapse, and the disorientations of urbanization. It explores how the Zagreb School re-imagined the animator as a figure who *intentionally* reveals the make-do nature of his working methods and the flaws of his finished project – hence the use of the term “unperfect” instead of “imperfect.”

This dissertation involves a close formalist study of approximately twenty Zagreb School films, most of which are not currently in distribution. It draws on personal interviews conducted with surviving members of the studio as well as interviews conducted by other scholars, original Croatian-language scholarship, contemporary accounts of the studio and studio documents collected in a four-volume set published between 1978 and 1986. It draws on recent scholarship on the culture of the former Yugoslavia, as well as foundational texts in animation studies, particularly work focused on films from the US, the Soviet Union, and Canada.

This dissertation begins with a capsule history of the Zagreb School, from its pre-history in 1922 and reaching forward into the 1960s and '70s. It situates the Zagreb School within the culture of workers' self-management, the policy of the former Yugoslavia which hoped to provide labor autonomy. It then argues that the small man is a self-portrait of the laborers in the Zagreb Film studio and explores how the small man attempts to achieve the *ideal* of unperfection. It explores how the Zagreb School situates the small man as a citizen of the polis at a time when Yugoslavia was rapidly urbanizing. It then turns towards the Zagreb School's examination of war, and argues that the animators employ so-called “limited animation” to reinvent violence in the animation medium. It will argue that its conception of violence is part of a broader project to remember the traumas of World War II and warn of future conflicts and the specter of nuclear annihilation.

A humanist socialism defined the philosophies of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Accordingly, the animators of the Zagreb School sought not to technologize the human, but rather to humanize technology.

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Introduction

Reading the Zagreb School of Animation

From the 1950s to the early 1990s, a group of animators in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia and the second largest city in Yugoslavia, produced approximately five hundred films. They made children's cartoons, gag films, avant-garde experiments, and sex comedies. They mostly worked with cel animation. Some experimented with cut-outs, linocut, and puppetry. The eighteen "auteurs" in the studio — all men — included trained architects, comics creators, fine artists, live-action feature film directors, and documentarians. In 1959, the French critic Georges Sadoul dubbed the group the Zagreb School of Animation, either as a nod to the name of the studio where they worked — Zagreb Film — or to the city where they lived.

The Zagreb School does not have a uniform house style but rather a shared approach. Their subjects are universal: hyper-industrialization, technology, nuclear annihilation, urban alienation, and mass mobilization, as well as cosmopolitanism, the thin line between elite and mass culture, childhood, friendship, blue humor, gender, and sex. Like several independent animators and experimental filmmakers in the U.S. in the 1960s and '70s, the Zagreb School animators reveal the process of production in their films, primarily by embracing a lack of perfection. The hand of the animator is often apparent. Soundtracks are out-of-sync with the images and stray lines are left uncorrected in individual frames. The Zagreb School embraces the absurd and the uncanny. Films set in modern cities reduce buildings, machines, and men to abstract shapes and hard mechanical sounds. Adaptations of nineteenth-century literary classics are set in bizarre, Expressionist, twentieth-century landscapes. The films are disturbing and

amusing, lacking the coherence but also the studied formulaity of classical Hollywood animation.

Yugoslavia was one of the bloodiest sites of World War II. The country had lost one tenth of its population. A decade later when the Zagreb School began, Yugoslavia was in the middle of a massive project to reinvent itself, the idea of the nation-state, and the socialist experiment. The Zagreb School is a record of the nation's trauma and of this grand project. The philosophy of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia defines the Zagreb School. Its particular approach to socialist labor — embodied in the policy of workers' self-management — informs not only how Zagreb Film was organized but how the animators reveal themselves in their films. Tito's project also defines how the animators present themselves as both domestic and global citizens. This is all another way of saying that the socialist program in Yugoslavia redefines what it means to make animated films and to watch animated films.

Throughout its history, Zagreb Film vigorously promoted its animation at film festivals throughout Europe and North America, through joint projects with Canadian companies, through an animation film festival at home in Zagreb, and via distribution agreements with the West German company Windrose and the American company Rembrandt Films. The studio gained considerable prestige. Its *Surogat / Ersatz* (Dušan Vukotić, 1961) was the first non-U.S. film to win an Academy Award for best animated short subject.¹ The children's series *Profesor Baltazar / Professor Balthazar* (1967-1978) was shown throughout Europe, in Iran and South Korea, and

¹ At the time, the award was known as "Short Subjects, Cartoons." In 1971, the award name was changed to "Short Subjects, Animated Film." Since 1974, it has been known as "Best Animated Short Film." Three other Zagreb School films would be nominated for the award: *Igra / The Play* (Vukotić, 1962), *Tup Tup* (Nedeljko Dragić, 1972), and *Satiemania* (Zdenko Gašparović, 1978).

for one season on ABC television in the US. Despite the animators' push for international recognition, however, only a handful of American critics wrote about the Zagreb School over the period of its existence. Like fans of underground comics in the 1970s, these critics discovered in the Zagreb School an approximation if not of high art, at least intelligent social criticism that was all the more fascinating for its presence in a medium most often associated with the juvenile and the precognitive. The record of their encounters provide glimpses both of how the Zagreb School was received and how the Zagreb School wanted to be understood.

John English, a young journalism lecturer at the University of Georgia, after attending screenings of the films at festivals in Chicago and Atlanta, wrote in 1972, "A screening of animated films by Zagreb Film studio is a bit like watching a series of *New Yorker* cartoons come to life to act out subtle visual statements on the human condition" (48). Leonard Maltin, then a young film critic, after attending the 1974 animation festival in Zagreb, wrote of the Zagreb School, "These talented men know what they're doing every step of the way; their films are spirited and creative without ever becoming precious or self-indulgent" (8). In 1972, Ronald Holloway, a film historian based in West Germany, wrote a short monograph *Z is for Zagreb*, in which he tried to explain the source of the Zagreb School's humor.

Being in the provinces offers a looseness in style of living and the possibility to laugh at the foibles of the bigger powers, all the more necessary because Yugoslavia lies on a crossroads between East and West. A standard joke for a Yugoslav is to look at his neighbouring Socialist countries, and chide: 'You're the result of Marxism, but we're the descendants of the Marx Brothers!'

Such satire is the stuff of Zagreb Film, as zany and preposterous and woolly as its young, arrogant artists choose to make it. (37)

The turn towards such unfortunate cultural essentialism is understandable within the context of the animation culture in Central and Eastern Europe of the 1960s and '70s. The studios throughout the region had similarly varied personalities and stylizations, but each promoted sub-

genres linked to their individual national identities. Czechoslovak animation had become identified with Bohemian puppetry. Soviet animation had become identified with Russian folk art. Polish animation was not as clearly identified with a national past, as much as with poster art, an artistic enterprise that was also vigorously promoted throughout the period. Although the Zagreb School films often contain cultural signifiers familiar to those who have travelled in Zagreb, Dalmatia, and Slavonia,² the films as a whole do not have a clear, fixed aesthetic that declared their Yugoslav-ness. American critics were left to figure out the ties the Zagreb School held with a misunderstood, exoticized part of Europe — one that famously avoided alliances with either of the great powers — while also trying and failing to answer the question of what it meant for a cartoon to carry a deeper meaning.

The most intriguing contemporary account from an American of a screening of Zagreb School films appeared in January 1968, from Renata Adler, who would gain considerable fame in the '70s as a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and as the author of fiction whose prose could be as unpredictable and satiric as any Zagreb School short. Then a film critic for *The New York Times*, she attended a program of Zagreb School films at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). Her review of the program is beset by ignorance for the animation medium, but it is also strikingly insightful. The review cites *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Sub-Machine Gun* (Vukotić, 1958), a violent short about a bank robber, *Mali i veliki / Little and Big* (Zlatko Grgić, 1966), a gag short, and *Možda Diogen / Diogenes, Perhaps* (Nedeljko Dragić, 1967), in which a Saul Steinberg-esque caricature navigates a morphing, deserted background. Adler struggles through her bafflement, and in doing so she stumbles onto and then through questions

² As a matter of clarity for readers unfamiliar with the former Yugoslavia, Slavonia is a region making up the northeastern region of Croatia, whereas Slovenia is a separate state, bordering Croatia to the west.

that have and still continue to trouble animation scholars, not just those who study work from Central and Eastern Europe.

She begins by noting the Zagreb School's use of "limited animation," which she calls "reduced animation," a method in which only a few drawings are used over the length of several frames. (I will be discussing the significance of limited animation throughout this dissertation. The method is associated with films as disparate as the United Productions of America [UPA]'s Mr. Magoo films, Japanese anime, and Saturday morning cartoon shows. The term contrasts with Disney-esque "full animation.") "As a result, the cartoons (mostly well and imaginatively drawn) seem oddly choppy, almost in the manner of the early silents," she writes, seeing in the Zagreb School a possible return to the roots of cinema. She then notes the supposed maturity of the films' subject matter. "They frequently verge deliberately (and quite perilously for the kind of illusion cartoons normally depend on) upon the actual—adult fables, political satire, allegories." She awkwardly contrasts the Zagreb School to the history of the animation medium in the US. "In this country, the animated cartoon, in the great Disney tradition, is almost never used for any high serious purpose. To burden Tom and Jerry with ideology would be too much like sending Moonbird on a man's errand" (*A Year in the Dark* 18). Adler holds onto the idea that the great gag cartoons of classical Hollywood cannot be "serious" and do not contain an ideology of their own. Adler, like any number of film critics, maintains binaries between the grown-up and the juvenile, the serious and unserious.

She goes on to consider the relationship the classical Hollywood cartoon has held towards the violations of the body and towards death and life.

[T]here is a whole philosophy of life implicit in the way the cartoon world customarily operates: everything is arbitrary, violent, anarchical. Anything can collide with, flatten, frazzle or destroy any other thing. But everything is reversible. As the film can run backward, the harm done to any cartoon creature can be undone in an instant. An eternal

chase can begin again. The cat, sleeked down if he's been frazzled, restored to his third dimension if he's flattened out, returns to health and resumes his pursuit. But that's it. No moral. No dead earnest. Even the cartoons shown on television, which contain some of the most sophisticated puns and allusions to draw children over their heads into the world of adult conversation, never try to make a point. (*A Year in the Dark* 18-19).

Afterwards, she almost falls into Holloway's trap of cultural essentialism.

In Europe, particularly in the Eastern countries, it is different. Cartoons deal with everything from politics to the human condition. Perhaps charm and whimsy in animation are the perfect disguises for messages, since no one can be sure when and whether a message is there. The cartoon after all is the most abstract, least real of movies (in this sense, it is the opposite of a documentary). The problem is that the charm and whimsy do not always survive. (*A Year in the Dark* 19).

That last claim is particularly baffling as it suggests a stunning ignorance not just of Ernest Pintoff, the independent animators John and Faith Hubley (whose *Moonbird* [1959] she has referenced), but also of UPA, which had achieved considerable mainstream success, all of which influenced the Zagreb School.

Adler is most disturbed and fascinated by the violence in *Koncert za mašinsku pušku*.

This film...has the first cartoon character I can remember who, once maimed, stays maimed—a dismal, frayed, brown paper tab dragging himself along. The problem is that even a frayed tab is too representational; it looks documentary, without having access to any of the feelings a real documentary would arouse. But it is interesting. (*A Year in the Dark* 19).

She is right to remain shocked not just by the presence of death — Bambi's mother and the Queen Grimhilde had died decades before — but by a body that once violated remains violated, a body that no longer contains the “plasmatic” quality Sergei Eisenstein located in Disney animation. Still, one wonders. What is the exact difference between documentary and animation? And what does she mean by “representational”?

In her attempt to tease out and explain the Zagreb School for *Times* readers, Adler falls back on a number of assumptions: that there is a clear difference between the real and the unreal in cinema and that animation and documentary somehow exist on opposite ends of the spectrum

in how filmgoers perceive reality (thereby ignoring the history of animated documentary stretching back to Winsor McCay's *The Sinking of the Lusitania* [1918]); that there is a clear marker between adult and children's concerns, as well as adult and children's cartoons (thereby ignoring the very adult themes in *Dumbo* [Ben Sharpsteen, et al. . . . , 1941] and *Bambi* [David Hand, et al. . . . , 1942]); that it's clear when a film is trying to send a "message" and when it isn't (thereby ignoring the mix of themes in UPA shorts); that European animators are more likely to study the "human condition" (ignoring the existential angst of classics like Charles M. Jones's *Duck Amuck* [1953]). The slipperiness of her language reflects the ambiguities and confusion with which film theorists and historians have long struggled when they have encountered animation, the sad, neglected little brother of live-action film. When Adler uses *actual* particularly after referencing early cinema, one thinks of Lumière's *actualités*, and one wonders why she would use the word when describing "adult fables" and "allegories."

Her review was originally entitled "Tom and Jerry in the Real World." Such a title ignores the long history of the animation medium's struggle with the real, a history that includes the translation of the thin Cab Calloway's gliding backstep to a fat walrus-ghost's dance via rotoscope in *Minnie the Moocher* (Dave Fleischer, 1932) and the various permutations of Disney's hyperrealism, manifested in the attention artists paid, for instance, to *Bambi's* musculature. In this sense, Adler is reflecting the paradoxical poetic artists' statement which accompanied the series at MOMA, the first part of which reads:

Animation is an animated film.
A protest against the stationary condition.
Animation transporting movement of nature directly
cannot be creative animation.
Animation is a technical process in which
the final result must always be creative.
To animate: to give life and soul to a design,
not through the copying but through the transformation of reality. (*Animations: Zagreb*).

The statement suggests that “Tom and Jerry in the Real World” might actually have been the proper name for the review. It suggests that the Zagreb School uses the animation medium — the film technology most associated with the invention of other-worlds — to create a reality that, abstract and iconic and devoid of the fluidity of Disney animation, would avoid the utopic and the fantastic. Instead, it would favor a style that would record the grounded world of Yugoslavia and of the studio which gave birth to the Zagreb School of Animation, a world in which, as Adler notes, death, actual death, is real. Lower-case “a” *animators* authored the films of the Zagreb School, not the *Animator*, a word that, as the film historian Donald Crafton has noted, was for seventeenth-century English writers a euphemism for *God* (“The Veiled Genealogies of Animation and Cinema” 97). Mortals inhabited the halls of Zagreb Film and mortals inhabit their films.

In her remarkable essay “Traces of the World,” published in 2016, the late animation theorist Hannah Frank attempts to collapse the firm distinction between the real and the unreal in the medium, and her conception forms the foundation for much of this dissertation. In her study of the relationship between photography and animation, she notes that each drawn image in every frame of an animated film is essentially a *photograph* of a drawing and not the drawing itself. And yet: “The mechanization of the labour process by which animation’s constitutive frames were photographed leads to a curious and perhaps paradoxical phenomenon: the complete disavowal of cel animation as *photographic cinema*” (24). (Emphasis in the original.) She continues by examining the false binary this has created for live-action cinema and animation.

The frame of a painting is centripetal, pulling us inward, toward a world found only within its borders; the photograph, by contrast, is centrifugal, pushing us outward, beyond its bounds: a window. Thus live-action cinema offers us one thing, a view of *the* world,

and cel animation offers us something different, *a* world governed by a physics all its own, a plasmatic and limitless world where bodies never bruise and anvils are always falling from the sky (24-25). (Emphases in the original.)

The model, Frank notes, is false. Each classical Hollywood animation short is a collection of individual photographs of products of labor, documents of the life of the studio and of the figures which produce them. And each photograph depicts a moment informed by slightly different lighting techniques, sometimes different drawings, the drop of lint or dust on a frame.

This dissertation, accordingly, will not argue that the cartoons which so puzzled Adler in 1968 as something like *documentaries* as we understand the term. (Films we would describe as animated documentaries, like *The Sinking of the Lusitania*, as Sybil DelGaudio has noted, are faced with a crisis, as they lack the documentary's ability to use a pro-filmic event to present a truth-claim [190].) Rather this dissertation will argue that the Zagreb School presents a series of *documents* of Zagreb Film and of a society governed by a particular and peculiar set of labor practices and the ideology behind those labor practices. *Maska crvene smrti / The Masque of the Red Death* (1968), a spectacular work of cut-out animation and heavy paints, was made by Pavao Štalter over a period of three years, working mostly individually while fulfilling his responsibilities for his colleagues' films (Štalter). *Izumitelj cipela / Inventor of Shoes* (Zlatko Grgić, 1967) was the first cartoon of the far simpler, more streamlined *Profesor Baltazar* series. Both films were shot with the same camera in the same studio. Zlatko Bourek, the background artist for the *Profesor Baltazar* series also worked near the same in-betweeners and sound men, making his own avant-garde experiments, like *Bečarać / Dancing Songs* (1966).

Each film was created in a studio informed and ruled by a philosophy known as workers' self-management. That is to say that Zagreb Film was a well-functioning, self-governing entity at the local level. It followed basic socialist precepts, enjoying the financial support of the State while not suffering the all-encompassing hand of a central authority located far outside the walls

of its home in the capital of Croatia. Through the 1960s and '70s Yugoslavia entertained visits from delegations of various industries from other socialist countries to present this model (Ramet 1). And the Zagreb School could arguably be considered part of the project to advertise these organizational and labor practices on the international stage.

There was a more profound ideal behind workers' self-management, one articulated by Rudi Supek, a member of the Korčula School, which sought to return Marxism as it was practiced in Yugoslavia to its humanist roots.

One of the essential characteristics of the humanist model of organization is that it does not separate man as producer from man as consumer, does not divide human existence into 'working time' and 'leisure time,' does not consider man to be one being with regard to his work capabilities and another with regard to his needs for enjoyment. What is more, the humanist conception of organization *focuses its interest on 'man with needs,'* human needs, and above all human social needs, which were already recognized in the sphere of production for purely 'productive' or 'capitalistic' reasons (from Taylor to Ford)... ("Organization as an Intermediary Between the Individual and Society" 56). (Emphasis in the original.)

For Supek, socialist organization serves as a means of achieving two goals. "Our entire model of humanist organization is based on this 'minimal conception' of human needs — on taking account of only some needs, namely, the need to be free and the need to be social, needs which are often combined in the concept of 'human dignity'" ("Organization as an Intermediary Between the Individual and Society" 57). The Zagreb School's films themselves are at very least an artistic iteration of the philosophy of workers' self-management. They fore-front the films as documents of Yugoslavia. They maintain an aesthetic that American critics would perceive as intelligent but also unpretentious, humanist and humane. They do not erase the worker's presence and in fact they embrace the auteur theory both in terms of their later production methods and in their publicity materials.

Accordingly, the animation technology in the Zagreb School films is simple, maintaining a workshop aesthetic — what we might call in English the do-it-yourself, DIY — an aesthetic that eschews genius, that allows the workers of the Zagreb School to declare their presence as honest and playful laborers. In their films, the Zagreb School animators attempt to create a new country and contribute to a new experiment, but they were not creating anything like the “New Man” of Dziga Vertov’s *Chelovek s kinoapparatom / Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). The most ubiquitous character of the Zagreb School is called the “small man,” a *mali čovjek*, who is something between a modern-day common man and a Medieval Everyman, a figure who suffers the brutality of the post-World War II world, while maintaining a human, honest relationship with the technology that gave him birth. He, like his creators, is self-consciously un-extraordinary and navigates a world lacking in anything close to perfection, a world governed by a philosophy of socialism but hardly a perfected socialism, a world that strives for an *ideal*, but not a *utopia*.

At first glance, there is nothing obviously unique in the Zagreb School’s attempt to convey so-called “messages” through cartoons, as Holloway understood the term, and such animated films with messages had been celebrated since the early 1950s. McLaren’s *Neighbours* (1952) had depicted the brutality of war via stop-motion. (Intriguingly, the film had won an Academy Award for Best Documentary [Short Subject], not for animation.) In the year before *Surogat* won an Oscar, the Academy honored Gene Deitch’s *Munro* (Gene Deitch, 1960), an American satire of military conformity, based on a short comic by Jules Feiffer. In the year afterward, the Academy recognized John and Faith Hubley’s *The Hole* (1962), which examines the justified paranoia of nuclear war and features the voice of Dizzy Gillespie. But the Zagreb School’s tendency to examine these universal subjects reflects the point-of-view of a constructed

Yugoslav, as he is positioned in the global landscape. For the animation historian Midhat Ajanović Ajan, the small man serves as a representative for the small nation of Yugoslavia. He is an honest critic of the madness of modern life in the U.S. and the Soviet Union, encroaching militarization, the threat of nuclear annihilation, pollution, and a new hyper-industrialization that leaves no space for authentic human emotions. The Croatian hats the School's "small defiant fellow" sometimes wears signals not so much Croatian-ness but Yugoslav-ness, and more importantly, the values of the Third Way, namely "neutrality, independence and a big NO to the block politics" (*Animation and Realism* 98). This dissertation argues that the small man is not only an iteration of the laborer in Zagreb Film, but also that the process of labor in the animation medium, in itself, is the declaration of Yugoslav humanism.

The first chapter of this dissertation will offer a capsule history of the Zagreb School, beginning with its pre-history in 1922 and reaching forward to the 1960s and '70s. It will note the entrepreneurship that described the studio's formation, and how the studio developed its approach to production, labor, and distribution, as well as its universal subject matters. The Zagreb School evolved, so to speak, through accident and emendation, always working under the strictures of economic circumstance. As much as the studio was governed by workers' self-management or self-governing socialism, the development of how that philosophy would inform studio practices fit no set trajectory, and the philosophy of labor inhabited as much if not moreso the subconscious of the studio's laborers as their conscious. The second chapter will study the human bodies of the Zagreb School, particularly those of the small man, whom I will dub an "unperfect man," noting that their hero is *intentionally*, not *unintentionally*, made to lack perfection. It will study how the unperfect man was an invention of the labor practices of the Zagreb School as well as an iteration of an idea of Yugoslav-ness, and it will examine the

various degrees by which individual small men achieved the *ideal* of unperfection. The third chapter will study the various attempts the Zagreb School made to depict cities, reflecting not only the universal issues of modernity, but also the rapid urbanization Yugoslavia experienced at home. It will see in the construction of city life an attempt to place the small, unperfect man, as well as other archetypes, in a polis that allowed them to maintain both their humanity and to explore their roles as citizens. It will argue that the city of the Zagreb School occupied a liminal space between the Yugoslav and the non-Yugoslav and that the Zagreb School's small men, before they were global citizens, were first citizens of Yugoslavia. The fourth chapter will focus on war, and consider how the Zagreb School reinvents violence in the animation medium. It will examine how the depiction of violence which so shocked Adler in films like *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* was a means of developing a new conception of death in the animation medium. It will argue that this new conception of death was part of a broader project to both remember the traumas of World War II and warn of future conflicts and the specter of nuclear annihilation. It will argue that the violence of the Zagreb School was directly related to its use of limited animation.

This dissertation is structured as a series of formalist studies of about twenty of the Zagreb School's films. Although it will study *Surogat*, it will not focus on the films most recognized as the masterpieces of the Zagreb School, including some of my personal favorites, among them *Šagresnka koža / Le Peau de Chagrin* (Vlado Kristl, 1960), *Don Kihot / Don Quixoe* (Kristl, 1961), *Satiemania*, and *Riblje oko / Fish Eye* (Joško Marušić, 1980). Rather, it will focus on the films which best exemplify the problems with which the laborers of the Zagreb School most struggled, and, perhaps fittingly for the subject of this dissertation, the films which most loudly declare their lack of perfection. Some of these films are available on a series of

DVDs and VHS tapes released by Rembrandt Films in 2000, and a few have appeared on and then disappeared from YouTube and other online streaming sites, but most of them are not currently in distribution and I have obtained them directly from Zagreb Film, which still exists as an entity governed by the City of Zagreb. It will draw on personal interviews I conducted with surviving members of the studio as well as interviews conducted by other scholars, original Croatian-language scholarship. It will draw on contemporary accounts of the studio and studio documents collected in an invaluable four-volume set published between 1978 and 1986. My arguments will be supplemented by recent scholarship on the culture of the former Yugoslavia and as a means of comparison, my dissertation will frequently gesture towards foundational texts on animation studies, particularly work focused on films from the U.S., the Soviet Union, and Canada.

I am as American as Adler, Holloway, and Maltin. Like them, I have no ethnic background in nor familial connection to the former Yugoslavia. I am also of a different generation. My introduction to the region was marked by stereotypes formed by media coverage of the Balkan wars in the 1990s. I had been informed by other stereotypes of the Central and Eastern European region as a whole, having been exposed throughout my childhood and adolescence to the euphoric rhetoric of life in post-1989 Europe and a media culture that emphasized brave dissidents, while defining clear binaries between free and unfree political cultures and open and closed markets. I had assumed that any good art produced in a non-democratic European country would be exotic, strange, and subversive, containing messages that only honest, intelligent souls would understand. My earliest attempts to understand animation in the region made during the Cold War, in an interview I conducted in 2006 in Tallinn with the Estonian animator Priit Pärn for the English-language newspaper *The Baltic Times*, were beset

by these prejudices. And even at this late date, I am more prone to ask questions concerning censorship than are most scholars from the region.

I was not hindered by prejudices regarding the animation medium. In elementary school, I attended an exhibition on Looney Tunes at an art museum in Baltimore. I read Chuck Jones's autobiographies which psychoanalyzed his famous characters, and wrote a report on Looney Tunes for my fifth-grade class. At the Key Theatre in Washington D.C., I attended animation festivals with my family where I saw work from Bill Plympton alongside the most recent oddball work from Canada and Poland. Like everyone of my generation I knew that *The Simpsons* (1989-) was the smartest show on television and that *Beavis and Butt-Head* (1993-1997) was also a work of genius. Still, animation studies continues to occupy a niche place in film studies; many introductory undergraduate film courses taught in the US still don't cover animation at all and if they do, the subject is usually tucked neatly into a week on avant-garde film. As seriously as the Zagreb School filmmakers and their audiences took their work, the fascination with the Zagreb School abroad relied on the assumption that the animation medium would always attract the child's eye, and the novelty that a medium attractive to the non-intellectual could be intellectual.

This dissertation is not about the wars in the 1990s. The Zagreb School films depict brutal violence and the failures of civilization, but the animators were not prophets of a genocide. They were working within their own historical moment from the mid-1950s to the early 1990s, which, like today, was beset by global and domestic concerns of a nuclear apocalypse and environmental degradation, dehumanization via technology, and hyper-urbanization. The Zagreb School's animators lived in a country which did not adapt itself easily to other models of governance in Europe during the post-World War II era. Titoist Yugoslavia was a dictatorship, but although one of the most well-known Yugoslav authors in the Anglophone world during the

period of the country's existence was a political dissident — Milovan Đilas — most of the major Yugoslav writers and artists were not. Meanwhile, Yugoslavia's cultural productions and inputs were exuberant and Western. Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo recalls watching Billy Wilder films as a young soldier (Personal Interview 2017). They read Saul Steinberg and *Mad* magazine. Rock musicians performed Serbo-Croatian-language covers of American songs. The society's borders were open. Croats and Slovenes would shop in Trieste, Italy. Yugoslav workers would labor in West Germany and send their money home.

“Yugonostalgia” is prevalent if not all-encompassing in Croatia today, as the country struggles to position itself in the even more globalized world as a member of the European Union. But this dissertation is not a Yugonostalgic exercise. It is a study of how a group of laborers documented their labor and themselves, how they documented their place within a medium, and with work that existed in a liminal space between the domestic and the international, the real and the unreal, joyfully accepting the tragic absence of perfection.

Chapter 1:

A Short History of the Zagreb School of Animation

The Zagreb School has been the subject of two recent capsule histories in English, each of which struggle to explain exactly what made the Zagreb School unique. Sanja Bahun notes the Zagreb School's use of "limited animation" in describing the animators' approach: "The most important common denominator to the various artistic practices of the Zagreb School...was an intention to probe the limits of animation art by challenging the naturalistic representation." She divides the Zagreb School into three periods, based on the major auteurs who figure most prominently at each moment, and notes an evolution in subject matter from those grounded in global concerns in the 1950s and '60s, to more internal, phantasmagoric exercises in the '70s, to "masterpieces of the uncanny" in the late '70s and early '80s. Giannalberto Bendazzi, in his three-volume survey of world animation, divides the Zagreb School into two periods, the first from 1957 to 1964, during which the Zagreb School "legitimized its style of limited animation, with its marked tendency towards avant-garde graphic and pictorial techniques (such as collages and assemblages) and its subjects." Bendazzi stresses, "Films provoking liberating laughter still existed, but Zagreb's films gradually grew into long, painful moaning about the horrors of existence" (70). The second phase, beginning in 1963 had affinities to art cinema. It was more auteurist, honoring the individual personalities of each filmmaker's oeuvre, while still developing a "Zagreb style" (262).

These attempts to categorize, though understandable, are problematic. We can see films which address global concerns, similar to the work of the early 1960s, in the early '80s.

Likewise, we can see grotesque, uncanny horror in Vatroslav Mimica's avant-garde experiments in the early 1960s. I will however note the presence of limited animation throughout this capsule history in order to explain the evolution of the studio and its guiding principles. The bulk of this chapter focuses on the history of the studio up to the late 1950s, for even as the Zagreb School learned to advertise itself on the auteur model, and even as it gained prestige abroad and at home, the principles by which it operated did not change as much as one would think. Throughout, the Zagreb School maintains an affinity for the hand-made. The Zagreb School's films are as likely to collapse genre categories as they are to cement them. Its auteur sensibility is linked to the policy of workers' self-management. A Yugoslavist sensibility permeated in one way or another throughout its history. Throughout this dissertation, I will note that labor serves as a means of self-invention and reinvention, but this chapter will locate the groundwork of this philosophy towards labor in the Zagreb School's early years.

This chapter relies on histories produced by members and fellow travelers of the Zagreb School itself. From its early years, the Zagreb School's filmmakers and Yugoslav writers documented studio practices in articles and interviews. In 1978, an invaluable three-volume set was published, organized by Zlatko Sudović. The first volume, written entirely by Ranko Munitić, is an almanac of the history of animation in Yugoslavia from 1922 to 1972. The second is a collection of scripts from animated films. The third is a collection of articles, interviews, and speeches about the Zagreb School, some from Yugoslav critics and historians, others from workers in Zagreb Film. A fourth volume published in 1986 is an almanac of the years from 1972 to 1982. In the past 15 years, the Croatian government has published monographs on individual auteurs, each organized by Midhat Ajan Ajanović, on Milan Blažeković, Nedeljko

Dragić, and Dušan Vukotić. Another book on Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo³ was published by the *Srpsko kulturno društvo* — the Serbian Cultural Society — in Zagreb. (Dovniković-Bordo is an ethnic Serb.) Nenad Pata wrote several books on the Zagreb School, as well as a 20-part documentary, *Zagrebačka škola crtanog filma / The Zagreb School of Animation* (Zoran Tadić), which was produced in 1991, on the eve of both the Zagreb School's and Yugoslavia's collapse. Hrvoje Turković, Croatia's most prominent film theorist, and Ajanović have written studies of world animation, each of which include separate chapters dedicated to the Zagreb School. I also rely on my own interviews with surviving auteurs from the Zagreb School: Zlatko Bourek, Dovniković-Bordo, Joško Marušić, and Pavao Štalter. These books veer into the hagiographic, the interviews are oral histories, and the historical record is hardly complete — and this dissertation as a whole is emphatically not a history but a formalist study of the films themselves — but I hope to offer a window into how the Zagreb School saw itself and how its laborers thought of the meaning of their labor. I also hope to explain how the Zagreb School came to tell stories that were accessible, or meant to be accessible, to non-Yugoslav audiences, in other words, how it defined itself as both a global and a Yugoslav institution.

The Zagreb School's Place in History

Among animation historians in North America and Western Europe, the Zagreb School is best known as an outgrowth of a movement begun by the United Productions of America (UPA), a studio founded by former Disney employees which became most famous for its heroes Mr.

³ The animator's birth name was "Borivoj Dovniković," but he adopted the "Bordo" as a nickname. His animation and comics have been signed alternatively as "Borivoj Dovniković," "Bordo," and "Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo." My choice to use the latter name is somewhat arbitrary.

Magoo and Gerald McBoing-Boing. A 2002 article on the background dissolves in UPA cartoon shorts begins by positing *Surogat / Ersatz* (Dušan Vukotić, 1961) as the logical endpoint of experiments in *Gerald McBoing-Boing* (Robert Cannon, 1950) and *Madeline* (Cannon, 1952) (Frierson 50). In the preface to his history of UPA, in an attempt to establish the wide reach of the studio's influence, Adam Abraham notes its legacy in the productions of Hanna-Barbera, as well as the Zagreb School (ix). To take the relationship from the other end, the comparison with UPA serves as a shortcut, a quick way in to understanding the Zagreb School itself. The best known early Zagreb School films — *Na livadi / On the Meadow* (Nikola Kostelac, 1957), *Premijera / Opening Night* (Kostelac, 1957), *Osvetnik / The Avenger* (Vukotić, 1958), *Mala kronika / Everyday Chronicle* (Vatroslav Mimica, 1962), *Surogat*, and *Bumerang / Boomerang* (Boris Kolar, 1962) — adopt several UPA conventions: limited animation, flat graphics, a move away from linear perspective and a moderate use of isometric perspective, modern art-influenced backgrounds, the integration of body and background, modern jazz soundtracks, a preference for the rectangular over the curvilinear, an emphasis on human characters over anthropomorphized animals, as well as the occasional (intentional) lack of humor. UPA begat the Zagreb School, this narrative suggests. But in truth, the Zagreb School had many fathers.

The differences between UPA and the Zagreb School are just as significant. UPA's films employ a heavy use of clever dialogue often performed by recognizable character actors, while the Zagreb School rarely employs any dialogue. UPA's films were marketed to movie theaters and television stations and so had to conform to specific lengths to fit program schedules. Its theater shorts met the one-reel length of seven minutes that had been the norm since the late 1920s and the studio adopted the name Jolly Frolics in imitation of Silly Symphonies and Merrie Melodies. The Zagreb School was particularly interested in audiences at international film

festivals; the shorts could be as short as a minute or as long as twenty. UPA was a for-profit business. The Zagreb School sought commercial production and distribution throughout its history, its animators began their careers by producing advertisements, but despite its success with the *Profesor Baltazar / Professor Balthazar* series (1967-1978), it always relied on government funding. UPA, despite its experimentation, adopted a recognizable style, with thick block colors and often child-like drawings, and the narratives were clean and precise. The Zagreb School was definable more as an approach than a style, its experiments were more varied, and its narratives and pacing often uneven. Amid Amidi attempts to define the uniqueness of the Zagreb School in the final pages of his monograph on modern design in 1950s animation by emphasizing the Yugoslav animators' labor practices rather than their output. "The studio functioned more like a collective of independent artists than a studio in the strict hierarchical sense of American animation" (184). The claim is pat, and makes many incorrect assumptions both of studio life at UPA and at Zagreb Film. But Amidi is correct to note that the formation of the Zagreb School, as well as the Zagreb School's output and identity, relates directly to a particular ideological approach to labor and a particular history.

The problem with making such a claim would be evident from simply looking at UPA, Disney, and Zagreb School films. Thrown together, we see a series of abstract shapes and colors. How are the circles in the opening credits of *Surogat socialist*? How are the running lines in the overture in *Fantasia* (James Algar, et al..., 1940) capitalist? Blunt political rhetoric appears repeatedly in Disney animation as well as in the work of Disney's heretics — in Disney's World War II propaganda films like *Victory Through Air Power* (Algar, et al..., 1943), for instance, or in UPA's anti-racism short *Brotherhood of Man* (Cannon, 1945) — but the Zagreb School's didacticism is more abstract. How does the collaborative approach to filmmaking in the Zagreb

School differ from that in the US, and is there any truth to Amidi's claim that the labor practices in the Zagreb School were less hierarchical than in American animation studios?

The attempt to sort out the differences becomes more difficult when we consider that both UPA and the Zagreb School occupied a place in what has come to be known as the anti-Disney movement. The term "anti-Disney" suggests that the term "Disney" is more an ideology than an actual studio, company, style, technique, or man, and to place UPA with the Zagreb School suggests that they shared an ideology of their own. What was that ideology? cursory assumptions of socialism would make the comparison easy. The kernel for the formation of UPA began with a workers' strike in 1941, led by, among others, a former member of the John Reed Society (Abraham 9). The term "communist" was leveled by Walt Disney⁴ himself against one of his workers (Abraham 14). In answering his employees' complaints Walt Disney argued in his defense that he was a true entrepreneur who had suffered and taken severe risks to build what was by then a huge studio complex, complete with air-conditioned rooms and its own police force (Barrier 18). Given the origin story of UPA, "Disney" is identified with centralized business practices and a great man theory of capitalism, and "anti-Disney" with labor autonomy.

The full story of Disney, however, upsets the binary. Communists and capitalists alike had celebrated the studio as a reflection, respectively of both labor cooperation and of individualistic entrepreneurship throughout the 1930s and '40s (Frank, *Looking at Cartoons* 138-139). Artists as ideologically disparate as Sergei Eisenstein, Thomas Mann, and Leni Riefenstahl visited the studio (Leslie 126, 164, 219). Contemporary observers, among them the NAACP, and current scholars are particularly critical of Disney and American animation's racism; the

⁴ For the purposes of clarity, I will use the word "Walt Disney" to describe the actual man. The use of the word "Disney" will refer to a style or company as will be made obvious by context.

criticism has lasted until today and has inspired parodies on *The Simpsons* (1989-), *Family Guy* (1999-), and *Saturday Night Live* (1975-). But Disney does not adapt itself so easily to specific ideas of whiteness or blackness; *Dumbo* (Ben Sharpsteen, et al..., 1941), for instance, depicts black bodies both as ennobled workers and as minstrel crows. If “Disney” was an ideology, by the early 1940s it could not fit comfortably with any of the isms of its period. In the most generalized terms, “Disney” at best describes, like the Zagreb School, a philosophical approach to animation technology.

A belief in Disney suggests a belief in the ability of technology to invent a utopia, here figured as the hyperreal. To believe in Disney is to believe that anthropomorphized animals realize a lost ideal. To believe in Disney is to believe that films for children can be a focal point for each of the seven arts, both high and low, from Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky in *Fantasia* to Germanic folk art in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (William Cottrell, et al..., 1937). To believe in Disney is to equate the very concept of animation with American-ness. If we take these rules as the definition of “Disney,” the first truly anti-Disney moment in cinema appears early, before Disney had achieved a fixed identity, before it had achieved its exalted status in animation history, in Fritz Lang’s *M* (1931), a live-action film, when Peter Lorre’s child predator Hans Beckert follows his prey into a candy store where a cut-out of Mickey Mouse looms large and menacing in the mise-en-scène. Lorre has the face of a deformed infant and the body of a beetle. He was born to be caricatured and he would be in several Warner Bros. shorts. In *M*, his grotesque body and what that body does to children stands as an indictment of Disney’s modernist project.

UPA represented something far brighter and optimistic than Hans Beckert, and its early short *Gerald McBoing-Boing*, though melancholic at moments, has a kinder message than those

found in the early Mickey Mouse shorts, *Pinocchio* (Ben Sharpsteen, et al..., 1940), and *Bambi* (James Algar, et al..., 1942), and includes nothing like the nightmares that continue to shock viewers. UPA sought to be more egalitarian than populist. If Disney was to achieve a utopian vision through the perfection of bodies that would maintain weight and volume, UPA's figures would be effervescent and geometrical. If Disney would enslave its heroes to full animation, UPA would paradoxically liberate them with limited animation. If Disney would make nature more real than real, UPA would excite psycho-physical sensations with abstract shapes and graphic designs. If Disney would maintain a small-c conservative ideal of America, UPA would remain, as long as possible, unembarrassed by its left-wing politics. Whatever the complications in the binary — the abstract animation in the overture of *Fantasia*, for instance, the similarity in the narratives of *Dumbo* and *Gerald McBoing-Boing*, or the willingness of UPA to do work for an oil corporation antagonistic to the values of its staunchly Democratic auteurs (Abraham 99) — UPA's identity was defined as oppositional.

The Zagreb School's political identity was not oppositional, at least not in its early years. Its birth and development was tied directly to Yugoslavia's rapidly changing identity and labor reforms, and its stylizations borrowed as much from Disney as it did from UPA, as well as from the National Film Board of Canada, Jiří Trnka's Czech puppet films, lesser-known Czech cel animation, George Grosz, and the writings of Béla Balázs. (The auteurs of the Zagreb School did not read the two texts that were almost biblical for the UPA animators: the Hungarian-American artist György Kepes's *Language of Vision* and the Soviet montage filmmaker Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Film Technique and Film Acting* [Dovniković-Bordo, Personal Interview 2017, Mimica]). In the films of the Zagreb School, we can locate cousins of Mr. Magoo, but also cousins of Hans Beckert and Mickey Mouse.

Prehistory

When Donald Crafton wrote his classic work *Before Mickey*, first published in 1982, he began by debunking certain assumptions about the birth of animation. The first animated film was not, as had long been assumed, *The Haunted Hotel* (J. Stuart Blackton, 1907), a stop-motion film in which objects are made to move without the evidence of human intervention (20). Countless films had employed such tricks for a decade at that point, and Blackton's own *The Enchanted Drawing*, released in 1900 but possibly filmed earlier, had employed a similar technique. In 1980, Kirsten Thompson pointed out that the optical toys of the nineteenth century, such as the zoetrope and the praxinoscope, relied on drawn cartoons and not photographs ("Implications of the Cel Animation Technique" 106), suggesting that the prehistory of cinema itself was related more to what would eventually come to be known as the animated film. One could argue, and scholars have, that live-action film, even the most realistic, has always been a form of animation, a collection of still photographs placed against each other and presented in such quick succession that they offer an illusion of movement. Thompson points to an 1897 book about cinema called *Animated Photography* ("Implications of the Cel Animation Technique" 107).

Ranko Munitić does not search such a broad territory to define the origins of the Zagreb School, but his documentation suggests a similarly broad definition of the medium. In the beginning of his almanac, Munitić searches for the early experiments of animation in Zagreb in an attempt to describe the sources of the spirit of the Zagreb School. Whereas Crafton's narrative leads to Disney's lackluster work in the silent era and his first sound films with the understanding that Disney himself was aware of the experiments that had preceded him — a making-of documentary produced by Disney in the mid-1950s all but declares Walt Disney as a

direct descendant of Winsor McCay (*The Story of the Animated Drawing*) — it's not so clear that the animators of the Zagreb School were aware of or cared at all about the animators who preceded them in their own city. Munitić's prehistory suggests that experimentation and ingenuity, as well as a propensity to constantly reinvent the wheel, were part of Yugoslav animation's identity.

The distinction between Yugoslav artists and artists who work in Yugoslavia is important. The first animators in Zagreb were not born in Yugoslavia. In 1922, Sergije Tagatz, an ethnic Pole from the Soviet Union who had trained at a studio in Yalta, produced two advertisements, one for tea and the other for shoe polish. The films are both mostly live-action, but in each short the letters of the words of the company brands move on screen. In 1923, Tagatz did the same for the production logo of Bosna Film, the Zagreb-based affiliate of a Viennese distributor. When Bosna Film released *The Kid* (Charlie Chaplin, 1921) that year, Tagatz created an advertisement which animated still images of the head of the film's child star Jackie Coogan (Munitić 20-22).

In 1928, in the *Škola narodnog zdravlja* — the School of National Health — Aleksandar Gerasimov, another immigrant from the Soviet Union, decided to produce films which promoted hygienic practices for what was then the largely illiterate and mostly rural population of Yugoslavia. Milan Marjanović, a doctor, became the chief of the outfit and decided to make these films with a series of animated sequences. The organization's first film about alcoholism was mostly live-action, but also contained an animated sequence of silhouette cut-outs, black bodies against a white background. Three years later, the organization produced what was the first entirely animated film produced in Yugoslavia, *Martin u nebo / Martin in the Sky* (Petar

Papp). The drawings were slightly more detailed, but the movements of the bodies were always extremely simple (Munitić 26-28).

A group of German brothers of Croatian and Jewish background, Zvonko, Vlado and Ivo Mondschein, emigrated from Berlin to Zagreb in 1931 and founded their studio, Maar ton-filmska reklama (Maar Tone-film Advertisements) which would be dedicated to propaganda films and commercial advertisements. The studio grew quickly and distributed work in Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Ljubljana (Munitić 39). Munitić quotes at length one Yugoslav animator who believed his Berlin-born supervisor did not understand the techniques of simplifying and streamlining animation. One film depicted a march of a row of cigarettes and the supervisor ordered that the animation account for every detail and count every single phase. The supervisor's replacement taught him how to animate people and animals, how to handle a camera, and how to set up an animation table (45).

Munitić describes other animators from this period, some Yugoslav and others non-Yugoslav. In 1932, Viktor Rybak, a documentarian and film reporter throughout the 1920s, produced an animated fragment without "pretensions for public presentation or commercial exploitation" (52). In the late 1930s, Kamilo Tompa experimented with puppet animation. His *Medvedgradska kraljica / The Queen of Medvedgrad* (1939) and *Naježda Turaka na Zagreb / The Turkish Invasion of Zagreb* (1939) are not the first films in Munitić's almanac to describe domestic themes, but they are the first to describe themes related to Yugoslav heritage. It's also the first time Munitić notes the influence of Disney on animated film in Yugoslavia, here in the conception of space and in the drawing and structure of *Medvedgradska kraljica* (61). Other studios, Uski Film and Nastavni Film were set up in the late 1940s. The former employed the talents of Botoslav Petanjek who had spent time in Argentina training under Quirino Cristiani.

His film *Crnac Miško / Black Misha* (1949) features a racist caricature and also shows the influence of Disney (72-77). Few such images appear in the history of the Zagreb School. The lack of such images likely does not represent a conscious decision on the part of the animators — it's unlikely it had anything to do with Yugoslavia's position in the anti-colonial movement — but rather to the influence of UPA and other anti-Disney animators who consciously avoided racist caricatures.

Throughout the early pages of Munitić's study, we come to understand animation in Zagreb as a creation of the DIY mindset. The animators were developing techniques that had long before been developed in the US and France and even if they were aware of animation handbooks published in the US, there is no mention that they used them.

Crafton notes the direct influence of comics in U.S. animation in the early period of animation. Comics characters became the first stars of series animation and an attempt to animate still drawings of panels of comics in movie theaters in the 1900s forms a key moment in early cinema. When comic-strip characters enter into American animation they become part of the then-developing star system. The Zagreb School, as we know it, was also a direct outgrowth of comics — Vukotić, Dovniković-Bordo, and even later Dragić and the last auteurs of the 1980s, Joško Marušić and Krešimir Žimonić, began as comics creators — even as its early work could be seen as a certain species of trick film.

The godfather of the Zagreb School is arguably Walter Neugebauer, a comics artist who had drawn a magazine *Zabavnik* throughout World War II. In 1945, a state film studio Jadran Film was established. (*Jadran* is the Croatian name for “Adriatic.”) Walter Neugebauer, an illustrator during World War II, collaborated with his brother Norbert Neugebauer to produce short propaganda films for Yugoslavia, among them *Svi na izbore / Everyone, Go to the Polls*,

which features in the 1991 documentary. The bodies are cut-outs and move like flat puppets against an isometrically designed background. It's a silly film by our standards, and indulges socialist propaganda, demonizing the wealthy and corrupt, while stoking legitimate hatred for fascism. The content of the film matters little compared to the fact of its very existence. (Walter Neugebauer's actual political beliefs are unclear. He had drawn propaganda for the Ustaša government during World War II. An eleven-minute film about an anti-Semitic exhibition held in Zagreb in 1942 features a young Neugebauer drawing a vicious caricature. The narrator mentions him by name [Rafaelić 94]. It's not clear if his associations during the war or his personal beliefs contributed to his decision to leave Yugoslavia for West Germany in the late-1950s. It's unclear if his previous associations were discovered and he had lost the ability to get work in Yugoslavia. Dovniković-Bordo repeats the official story, that the Neugebauer brothers' Disney-esque style was at odds with the Zagreb School and that their Sudeten-German background made them more suited to West Germany than to Yugoslavia [to Krelja and Turković 33].) Walter Neugebauer brags in an archival television interview featured in the 1991 documentary that he did the work on *Svi na izbore* all by himself, marking him in a sense, as a descendent of the early animators in the US, like Blackton and McCay, who presented themselves as lone craftsmen and individual inventors.

Origins

Veliki Miting / The Great Meeting (Walter Neugebauer, 1950), a piece of propaganda made at the tense moment following Tito's break with Stalin, is arguably — so arguably that it isn't a very good argument — the first film of the Zagreb School, in that it was made by artists

who would eventually make up the Zagreb School's earliest auteurs. It was made thanks to the entrepreneurial initiative of Fadil Hadžić, the publisher of *Kerempuh*, a comics magazine. Walter Neugebauer headed a team made up of several artists, among them Dovniković-Bordo and Vukotić. The animators used a book by the Disney animator Preston Blair, *Advanced Animation*, as a guide. According to Dovniković-Bordo, they used the original English-language edition of the book and simply relied on Blair's pictures (Personal Interview 2017). The 1991 documentary, however shows a Croatian translation of the book, which may have been published later. (Louis Adamic, a Slovene-born American writer who had emigrated to the U.S. in the 1910s and maintained strong ties with Yugoslavia until his death in 1951, makes a cameo appearance in this history. He sent the aspiring animators a copy of Blair's book from the US [Munitić 96].) The animators received no formal education. "All of us learned from [Walter Neugebauer] like in a master's workshop," Dovniković says. "We worked with him, we watched him work, we completed the tasks he assigned as assistant animators — that was a real school" (to Krelja and Turković 21).

The production of *Veliki miting* is remembered fondly as the product of grassroots ambition. Hadžić, the 1991 documentary notes, obtained celluloid for animation cels from other companies. Dovniković says that the animators figured out how to solve problems for themselves, creating their own pegged paper necessary for animation, developing the "middle system," a technique that was widely used elsewhere, by which two key phases were placed atop one another on a lighted glass tracing surface and there draw intermediate phases on another paper (to Krelja and Turković 24-25). The film took ten months to make. Contemporary reports highlighted the film's production as evidence of national self-sufficiency. An article in *Borba* reported that the animators developed their own paint suitably adhesive for celluloid. Whereas

most foreign films were between five and ten minutes, the author points out, *Veliki miting* was seventeen minutes — the film is actually nineteen minutes — and that a total of ten thousand drawings were made for the film (V.S. 25-26). An article in *Narodni list* declared that the film had been produced “without the help of foreign experts” (“Dovršava se prvi domaći umjetnički crtani film” 20). An article in *Vjesnik* claimed that “our chemists” devised non-running paints from horse dung which would be proper for celluloid, paints which were superior to what the Yugoslav animators could obtain from outside the country (Mihovilović 22). I have not been able to verify the claim that chemists developed special paint for celluloid out of horse dung. But the need to make the claim indicates what was exactly at stake when *Veliki miting* was produced. Yugoslav animation, at this stage, would be defined not by style or artistic genius but by the circumstances of its birth, of the fact that it was produced within the borders of the country, by and only by Yugoslavs, without foreign influence. (Incidentally, Pavao Štalter, who like Dovniković-Bordo has no recollection of the use of horse dung, says that he and Zlatko Bourek were still trying to perfect cel-adhesive paints in the late 1950s [Personal Interview].)

The spirit behind *Veliki miting*'s production informs its subject matter. The film opens in a dilapidated Bucharest, one with fantastical Russified architecture to emphasize its relationship to the backward east. Drunk men and waddling ducks populate the lobby of the building. A fat propagandist sits alone in an office, writing a series of memos about the “strange country” of Yugoslavia. The memos transform into squawking ducks whose wings are made out of rectangular paper letters. The bureaucrat sends one of his minions to Albania to encourage Enver Hoxha, here presented as a monstrous, illiterate frog — his croaks nastily mimic the sound of the Albanian language to the Slavic ear — to attack Yugoslavia. On his way back to Bucharest by plane, the minion flies over Yugoslavia itself, where he discovers a rapidly modernizing country,

a hydroelectric dam, heavy construction in Belgrade, a highway connecting Belgrade and Zagreb, and modern worker cooperatives. He returns to Bucharest and reports back to his boss, who promptly throws a tantrum.

One can see the influence of Blair's *Advanced Animation* throughout the film. In the lobby of the propagandist's office, a drunk's walk follows the shuffle Blair describes in his taxonomy of character walks (24), following a specific trajectory by which the top of the head never rises above an invisible line of movement. But not everywhere. The bureaucrat is the closest thing the film has to the "heavy" pugnacious character," an archetype Blair anatomizes as a gorilla or bullying cop (14). Like Blair's heavy, the bureaucrat has a "comparatively small cranium" and a "huge chin and jowls." But whereas Blair's heavy has a small hip area, the bureaucrat is heavy in the stomach and buttocks. The film still maintains a place in what the animators thought of as a Disney tradition. The emphasis is on the curvilinear line. Most of the characters are anthropomorphized animals.

Veliki miting is not a good film by any means. Its many flaws are salient, perhaps the result of the many topics that Blair does not discuss at all. The comic timing is as poor as the earliest cel animation from the 1910s. In the 1991 documentary Dvorniković-Bordo mentions that, contrary to the practices at Disney, the animators drew the film's elaborate, hyper-realistic, Disney-esque backgrounds first — the ridiculously Russified domes of the propaganda office in Bucharest, the Albanian swamp where Hoxha holds court, the modern cities and factories on the Serb landscape — and the characters afterwards. From a practical point of view, in Disney animation, it was much more difficult to fit a character to a set background than a background to a character. (UPA had a different approach to the uses of backgrounds.) Hadžić's team also lacked a streamlined system, according to Dvorniković-Bordo, whereby one animator laid out the

key phases of a character's movement and other artists filled in the phases in between. The Taylorization process which had begun in American animation in the mid-1910s and had been modified but more or less still used in even the most egalitarian animation studios in the US was not used.

Towards the end of the production of *Veliki miting*, Hadžić applied for and received funding from the Republic of Croatia to set up a new studio Duga Film, headed by Hadžić himself and Walter Neugebauer, alongside four other men, among them Mimica. The logo of the company featured the proud block lettering of the name of the company, 20th-Century-Fox-like, and a rainbow. (*Duga* is the Croatian word for “rainbow.”) Vukotić, who had trained as an architect and worked as a caricaturist, directed their first effort *Kako se rodio Kićo / How Kićo was Born* (1951), featuring a character from his comic strip, a smallish, bald Croatian gentleman. Another film starring Kićo, *Začarani dvorac u Dudincima / The Haunted Castle in Dudince* (1952), made with a makeshift table in an apartment, is more significant. He travels from an office in Zagreb which sells raspberries, to the Slovenian town of Dudince to obtain more supplies for his company. He finds himself in a haunted hotel. The best jokes in the film appear in the backgrounds, the hilarious propaganda-like slogans advertising raspberries and a train station littered with “how-did-it-get-there?” detritus like bed frames, but the film is almost as incompetent as *Veliki miting*. Turković noted the obvious problems in the film in a 1975 capsule history of the Zagreb School:

[T]he drawing is amateurish, without skill, the animation clumsy, the characters ‘swim’ because the animation does not use the force of gravity, the gags are stale, without any particular surprises, and thematically it is ideologically obvious, more or less within the political framework of the moment (criticism of bureaucracy, criticism of the Information Bureau)” (*Život izmišljotina* 155).

At the time, however, a critic in *Vjesnik* praised the film's humor and use of music. He suggested that Yugoslav animation, freed from the machinations of the capitalist market would be able to compete by focusing on realistic everyday themes, attracting the interest of European audiences who might have grown bored by Disney (Turkalj 36).

Duga Film was liquidated late in 1952. It was replaced by Zora Film which produced the first color animated film, *Crvenkapica / Little Red Riding Hood* (Kostelac, 1953). Zora Film remained a fixture in the animation industry and eventually became the Zagreb School's only competitor in Yugoslavia, producing puppet films and educational movies. Interpublic, a new studio, was set up in 1955, and included the Neugebauer brothers as well as Dovniković-Bordo and Zlatko Grgić. The cartoons were propagandistic, but the studio also marks the first time in the post-war era that animators partnered with foreign business interests, producing a commercial for BMW that aired in West Germany (Munitić 121).

But Munitić's almanac still emphasizes the individual and the entrepreneurial and after several headings noting the names of specific studios comes a heading that describes a strikingly unofficial title: "In the Apartment of Nikola Kostelac: The Advertisement Films of Dušan Vukotić 1951-1955." Here a private team of other future Zagreb School auteurs, among them Bourek, Boris Kolar, and Aleksander Marks, made thirteen film advertisements, between thirty seconds and one minute in length, among them one for a film magazine and another for an Osijek-based dentist. They used materials from what was then the defunct Duga Film, shot the films at Zora Film and recorded the sound at Jadran Film. This part of the history is the first time Munitić mentions the specter of censorship, from an office in Belgrade. A liquor advertisement *Na terasi / On the Terrace* (1954) had to be remade as the first version was "an insult to the Yugoslav woman" (125-127).

Zagreb Film had been founded as a general film studio in 1953. In 1956, Kostelac, Vukotić and the rest of their team came to the studio and set up a special division for animation. In the 1991 documentary, we tour the first building of the studio, which was right on the Sava River and shared with the city's crew team. Throughout my interviews, the animators claim that they did not base the backgrounds of their animation on specific places in Zagreb (Dovniković-Bordo, Personal Interview 2017; Bourek; Mimica) and it's fair to say that the word "Zagreb" entered into the title of the Zagreb School by an accident of history. But would the studio's international reputation have been the same if it had been called the Jadran School, the Duga School, or the Yugoslav School? Today, the studio currently lies under the auspices of the city of Zagreb, not the government of Croatia. The Museum of the City of Zagreb has maintained an exhibit on the studio for several years. The 1991 documentary of the Zagreb School points to the various Interwar and Austro-Hungarian-era buildings which housed the apartments and cramped offices which the Zagreb animators would occupy before settling on the building at Vlaška ulica 70. Munitić, in his almanac, concentrates on early animation experiments in the city of Zagreb itself, not mentioning various experimental film experiments in Belgrade that could qualify as a form of animation just as much as the work of Tagatz for Bosna Film. In short, the city of Zagreb is an essential part of the studio's identity, as much as New York for the Fleischer Studios and Burbank for UPA.

Development

The 1991 documentary depicts one long room at the bottom floor of Zagreb Film, where tables were set up in rows and Vukotić stood at the head walking along the floor giving

directions to the men and women who were working at their desks. They quickly developed a division of labor between designers, inkers, painters, in-betweeners, and key animators. Among the auteurs, one sees considerable collaboration. A writer on one film is a character designer on another, a director on a third, and a background artist on a fourth.

The first animated film Zagreb Film produced was *Nestašni robot / The Disobedient Robot* (Vukotić, 1956), a science-fiction comedy about a robot who disobeys his scientist-creator. It's difficult to define what makes the Zagreb School the Zagreb School. But there's much here that defines what the Zagreb School would become. Its characters, though either humans or robots, move with a curvilinear line, at times following the stretch and squash stylizations of Hollywood animation. But the backgrounds, abstract and employing a wide palette, follow the modern-art stylizations of UPA. Unlike UPA, whose individual backgrounds often maintained a carefully strict palette — mostly yellow and blue for one shot or black and blue for another — the background in *Nestašni robot* is more varied. If the film can be grafted onto Yugoslav politics, it can be grafted onto the politics of most other countries. Its story, focusing on the theme of the disobedient machine is inherent to the story and the medium of animation going back to McCay's fight with Gertie and Max Fleischer's fight with Koko the Clown. It had a small international audience, and was distributed on each side of the Cold War divide, in West Germany and Czechoslovakia. Its stylizations has as much in common with Disney as it does with UPA, both of which were just on the cusp of ending their production of theatrical cartoon shorts. Zagreb Film's animators were pursuing a genre of animation that was all but dead in the US.

Nestašni robot presented a question that would trouble the animators during their early years. What kind of films would the Zagreb School produce? An article Vukotić wrote for the

Belgrade-based *Književne novine* summarizes the questions of aesthetics, economics, politics, and themes the studio was struggling with in this period, and its various anxieties of influence. There's quite a bit of ambiguity in his claims, and the essay is more interesting for noting the various problems that were unresolved and would remain unresolved throughout the history of the Zagreb School. Vukotić begins by criticizing the staleness of Disney films and oddly suggests that Disney's reliance on the curvilinear line was a means of being economical, a claim well outside the conventional wisdom of animation history. Disney was too reliant on middle-class values. He calls for Yugoslav animation to find its own path and says that it can't do so without effort as well as funding. But he's careful to note the impulses that may lead an artistic school astray when it tries to forge an identity.

Running away from eternal role models is good and positive, provided that it implies treading new paths; alternatively, it becomes an obstacle if all the advantages and achievements — particularly in terms of forms of work organisation, attained in many renowned production houses — are discarded (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 241-242).

He condemns the long outdated assumption that animation is for children but also states that “animated films can indeed be one of the determining factors in [children's] personality development, and be of tremendous help to all those social organisations and social factors whose main task is the upbringing and educating [*sic*] of children and youth” (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 242). He fears Yugoslav animated films may be simply copies of foreign films. He calls for animated films to reject anything like realism, perhaps a direct rebuke to the hyperrealism of Disney animation (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 242). He offers an example of a medical film that is at once educational, artistic, and funny (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 243). He looks to the Czech studio Bratři v triku which used editing techniques mimicking live-action film to solve the

problem of presenting specific flat-graphic characters from different angles (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 244).

His most interesting point comes at the very end of his essay, in which he examines a problem Balázs noted in Grosz. It does not seem possible for an artist to combine unlikable, “bad” characters with likeable good characters, if one employs the same style of caricature for both. How could Grosz, an Expressionist painter who indulges the grotesque place a noble worker alongside an awful banker in the same painting and expect anyone to believe in the world he describes? Vukotić answers that art history provides examples of caricaturists who had solved the problem, among them Honoré Daumier, but he also pointed to the contemporary arts in Yugoslavia, noting the work of the Bosnian caricaturist Zulfikar Džumhur, a.k.a. Zuko, whose illustrations for *Doživljaji Nikolettine Bursaća*, a novel by Branko Ćopić, had just been published in Sarajevo. In Zuko’s illustrations, one can see a line that is never truly static, delineating ugly bodies all out of proportion, indulging the grotesque. They have less in common with Vukotić’s work than with Dragić’s in the late 1960s and early ’70s, but the point stands. These images create a grotesque *world* rather than specific *grotesque* bodies. In these illustrations, positive traits are not taken to romantic extremes and negative traits are not made monstrous. For Vukotić, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as well as the Soviet Disney-style film *Zolotaya antilopa / The Golden Antelope* (Lev Atamanov, 1955) indulge such extremes and “what is lost is the essence of humanity, while the characters end up differing to the point of becoming absolutely incompatible with each other in the same surroundings” (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 244-245).

The organization of the studio and of the various roles of the studio were still in the process of being defined. Throughout this early period, Mimica and Vukotić were the two most

recognized auteurs, even if Kostelac's films were among the most accomplished. Mimica never drew his own work, and approached his role as an animated film director much the way he would later approach his role as a live-action filmmaker, by ordering his artists to perform the way he would order actors (Mimica). Vukotić, an illustrator, was different.

The subjects of the Zagreb School in this period attempted a degree of universality. *Premijera* and *Mala Kronika / Everyday Chronicle* (Mimica, 1962) could each have been set in any Western modern city, but other films declared their Yugoslav-ness: the second half of *Cowboy Jimmy* (Vukotić, 1957) is set in a Yugoslav urban environment; *Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate* (Kostelac, 1959) has a scat-Croat-language soundtrack and depicts socialist architecture. Critics began trying to define the genres of the Zagreb School, and none of them quite succeeded in offering a satisfactory definition.

Interesting hints complicate the narratives of the Zagreb School throughout this period. The influences are not as obvious as they first appear. One critic compared a few of the films of the Zagreb School not to UPA, but to the late Disney films (Bogdanović, "San i vrlina" 165). The comparison is more apt than it first appears, as the Disney films of the 1950s, widely regarded as inferior to the work of the high period of the late '30s and '40s, portray often completely still human characters, and increasingly isometric backgrounds, reflecting itself the influence of the increasingly popular UPA films. Meanwhile, the grim *Na livadi*, which features an anthropomorphized flower and a curvilinear line, has more in common with Disney's World War II films than with Jolly Frolics. Other films can be placed closer to the anti-Disney canon. *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Sub-Machine Gun* (Vukotić, 1958) employs extreme flat graphics and what we might call hyper-anti-realism, the suggestion of buildings through faint

lines and the creation of a space at once concrete and ephemeral. The Zagreb School never stopped looking for a voice, itself indicative of an approach.

The Zagreb School films generated considerable excitement among Yugoslav film critics when nine films were shown at the Pula Film Festival in 1958 and a year later they were shown again at the Cannes Film Festival where the French critic Georges Sadoul dubbed the movement, the Zagreb School of Animation. A critic writing about the success of Yugoslav animation noted what was to be one of the definable problems, or at least facts of the Zagreb School's existence. "Having found a place among the avant-garde in international relations, our animated film is not quite *domesticated* at home to its domestic viewer. Why? First: it does not speak to him. Second: it does not speak about him" (Boglić 97). (Emphasis in the original.) Today, the Zagreb School is well known at home. The films are widely exhibited and respected. Dušan Vukotić is a household name. But the Zagreb School came to be defined in terms of how it was seen by foreign eyes. And for all of its attempt to describe itself on its own terms, it would always be considered in relation to dominant animation movements in the West.

A Note on Censorship

Throughout my years as an animation scholar, speaking about my project in formal and informal settings, I am often asked about the issue of censorship in Central and Eastern European animation. The assumption behind the question is twofold. First, the questioner usually assumes that any studio in Central and Eastern Europe faced significant problems with censorship. Second, the questioner assumes that the only artists in a non-democratic environment — at least any artist of possible interest to a Western scholar — would be subversive and opposed to the

state. William Moritz's retrospective essay on what he considers works of resistance in Central and Eastern European animation, written in the mid-1990s, expresses these assumptions.

While many animators remained content to concentrate on innocent children's films or benign 'situation comedies', some artists attempted to produce allegorical or satirical works critical of totalitarian regimes, and their careful planning to outwit censorship made them, in some cases, create masterpieces of film art. (38)

Moritz assumes a clear delineation between genres which simply did not exist in any of these animation studios. But more importantly, he lays the groundwork for several naturalized beliefs which trouble scholarship in the region as a whole. A scholar who lives and works in a democratic society and who studies an artist who lives and works in a dictatorial culture must follow remember a few truths.

1. Even though an artist in a dictatorial culture may criticize the state in which he lives, resistance and protest are not necessarily his primary motivations.
2. There is no absolute binary between resistance and complicity. Politics in dictatorships can be static and they can be fluid. They can accommodate reformers who first appear as resisters.
3. Even when censorship is common, it is not necessarily all-pervasive.
4. Censorship in dictatorial cultures may resemble censorship in democratic cultures. Dictatorial cultures may permit material democratic cultures might prohibit.
5. An artist in a dictatorial culture may be "reacting" to a political situation, but he may also simply be "acting," that is to say, behaving in a manner indifferent to the functions of state or society, to the movements or armies or the morning news.

Scholars of animation in this region have considered these issues with various degrees of subtlety. David MacFadyen writes that Soviet animation "went about its business in a way that suggests a type of selfhood confounding our expectations of dictatorial cultures" (31). Still, censorship existed. *Steklyannaya garmonika / The Glass Harmonica* (Andrey Khrzhanovskiy), for instance, was banned following its release in 1968 until 1986 (Pontieri 167-168). On a

Fulbright fellowship in Budapest in 2008, I interviewed the major animators from Hungary's Pannonia Studio. I consistently asked about censorship, often to the annoyance of my subjects. There was only one case of outright political censorship anyone could point to: Marcell Jankovics wished to make a short film about a statue who comes to a small village. The statue would absorb all the houses and possessions of the citizens to become a large, unwieldy construction, before collapsing and falling (Jankovics). I posed every animator a question, regarding censorship: Was there a film you wanted to make that you didn't even bother planning because you knew it would not be approved? There was only one instance in which an animator answered in the affirmative. István Orosz, despite his dreams, did not bother to even try to make a film about the massive emigration from Hungary to the U.S. following the 1956 Revolution, a possible sequel to his film about the first major wave of Hungarian emigration to the US. (Orosz).

The Zagreb School animators have similar responses. Mimica says his concerns about transporting cartoons from out the country to the Annecy Film Festival in France in the late 1950s (Mimica). Kostelac brags in the 1991 documentary that censors asked to watch their early films repeatedly because they enjoyed them so much. When asked if censorship had been a problem, Dovniković-Bordo replies, "Good question! The only thing we couldn't do was say something bad about Tito. But why would we? We loved Tito" (Personal Interview 2014). No one names a single case in which they didn't make or plan a film for fear of censorship. Only one case suggests such concerns, and it is an exception that proves the rule. Vlado Kristl, who made only two films with the Zagreb School — *Šagrenska koža / Le Peau de Chagrin* (1960) and *Don Kihot / Don Quixote* (1961) — grew frustrated with his work environment. Both Mimica in my interview and the 1991 documentary describe a figure defined by his desire to oppose, to not get

along with any government or authority. In Slovenia, he directed a short live-action film parody of Tito. He left the country soon afterwards.

Perhaps the best summary of how the animators regarded censorship comes from Dragić's account of his visit to Los Angeles in the early 1970s, following the Academy-Award nomination of his *Tup Tup* (1972).

At the Hollywood film projection people could not believe that something like that had been made under communism. They didn't believe it when I told them that I could make a film like that without any problems. The well-known journalist Tomislav Butorac, who was my interpreter, said that I had represented the state better than the best diplomats. At a talk organised about a film they once asked me, is there any censorship in Yugoslavia. [*sic*] I said, o yes, [*sic*] certainly, just as there is here with you. All you are interested in is political censorship, but as far as I know, with you the length of a kiss on screen is censored. There is the censorship of ideology and the censorship of profit. But the artist doesn't care, he's unhappy if you forbid him to do something, whatever the reasons. If someone is forced to draw a cat and a mouse all his life, that, too, is a kind of censorship (to Ajan, "Linija riječi" 411).

The films the Zagreb School produced were abstract criticisms of nuclear war, modern technology, gender, and urbanization, all topics of discussion which were encouraged within the political culture of Titoism. The animators did not pursue a strategy of abstraction as a means of avoiding censorship. According to Turković, it was simply where their artistic and aesthetic interests lay (Personal Interview). Though the second chapter of his dissertation directly riffs on the title of a book by one of Yugoslavia's dissidents — *The Unperfect Society* by Milovan Đilas — the Zagreb School can only be described as a site for subversion in the most existential sense. The hand of the animator was not raised against the state.

A Note on Transnationalism

Early on, the Zagreb School of Animation attracted the interest of Western animators, and it relied on distribution agreements with various non-Yugoslav companies. But there are only a few moments of significant collaboration with non-Yugoslav animators in the history of the Zagreb School.

In 1966, the Yugoslav and Canadian governments discussed the possibilities of collaboration and those discussions trickled down to Zagreb Film and the National Film Board of Canada, both in regards to their documentary divisions and animation divisions. In 1971, the two studios produced an animated short *The Specialist*, co-directed by Boris Kolar and Don Arioli. The Canadians provided the outline and story, but most of the work was done in Zagreb. When, in 1971, a delegation from Zagreb Film visited the studio to work on the finish of *The Specialist*, they also discussed possible projects for the studio's documentary wing, none of which ever panned out: a multi-part series on environmentalism that would involve the participation of several other countries; a Canadian-produced series on Tito; and a Yugoslav-produced series on Pierre Trudeau. For a period of four years from 1969 to 1973, the studios' animators worked on the environmentalist omnibus film *Man: The Polluter* (Don Arioli, et al..., 1973) which also involved Chuck Jones. There are no other known collaborations between the two studios. Albert Ohayon, a conservator in the archives of the National Film Board, wrote me, "I could not find out why the collaboration ended but I can assume that it was very difficult to have two agencies thousands of miles apart trying to complete projects in an era where all correspondence had to be by mail."

There are other moments of transnational cooperation. Bob Godfrey came to the studio in the late 1970s to collaborate with Zlatko Grgić on the film *Lutka snova / Dream Doll* (1979), a sex comedy comparable to a *Playboy* cartoon. The series *Inspektor Maska / Inspector Mask*

(1962-1963), meant for distribution in the US, did not succeed, due to the fact that the studio was not able to pursue commercial work while maintaining its artistic ambitions (Dovniković-Bordo to Krelja and Turković 37). Of course, *Profesor Baltazar*, which was distributed by an entity in West Germany, was successful in Iran, South Korea, and much of Europe. The visitors to the studio included Jones, Friz Freling, and Yuri Norstein.

In 1969, the International Association of Animators (ASIFA) decided that Zagreb would establish an animated film festival. The first was held in 1972 and it has continued on a biennial basis to the present day, except in 1976, and even during the war in 1992 and 1994. Margit Antauer, the previous organizer of the festival, described the festival as a friendly place where animators met and drank. They did not often use the opportunity to confer with each other on animation techniques (Antauer). Controversies at the festival were rare, but they did occur, most famously in 1974 when top honors were given to two Zagreb School films (Maltin 8). In 1980, the Soviet animator Fyodor Khitruk denounced the films at the festival. “[I]f an alien landed in Zagreb and had only these animated films as legitimating for our planet currently, this would not be the best display of our potential” (*Z...znaći Zagreb* 107). Still, there is at least one incident in which the festival had a significant effect on artistic production. Jankovics changed the ending of his film *Sisife / Sisyphus* (1974) on the advice of one of the Zagreb School judges (Gemés).

It is outside the scope of this dissertation to study exactly how the philosophy of workers’ self-management or the labor process in Zagreb Film manifested in these collaborations. I offer these anecdotes as a means of suggesting the permeable nature of influence and that there were soft flows between Zagreb Film and studios in other countries. There were limits on labor collaboration, but these limits were more practical than ideological.

Conclusion

I will discuss *Surogat* in the following chapter, but I will note here that the achievement at the Academy Awards in March 1962 marked the most significant turning point for the Zagreb School as a cultural entity in Yugoslavia. (In the previous year, the Serb writer Ivo Andrić became the first, and as it would turn out, only writer from Yugoslavia to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.) The studio was assured of funding. In the coming years, major figures of the studio became Party members. Their prestige and their political affiliations assured the studio a degree of stability. Vukotić and Mimica would retire from animated filmmaking and pursue live-action work. Both would collaborate with the documentarians who also worked at Zagreb Film.

In 1964, Dovniković-Bordo made a three-minute film *Bez naslova / Without Title*, a rare Zagreb School film that requires a knowledge of the Croato-Serbian-language⁵ to get most of the jokes. The film dramatizes a battle between a poor everyman with a drum set, one of the Zagreb School's "small men," and an extremely long and increasingly silly list of credits. First, we see *Generalni direktor* — "general director" — in show-business lights over a prominent signature. Below, in tinier lettering, there is *Sekretarica* — "secretary" — with the signature of a woman named Cira below. In a pause between the music, a sigh animates her job title. There follows a series of job titles: *pomoćnik gen. direktora* ("assistant to the general director"), *Administrator korespondent* ("administrator correspondent"), *Pravnik* ("lawyer"), *Daktilograf* ("typist"), etc... Thumbprints appear. One signature ends with an exclamation mark. A typing sound articulates the animation of *Pravnik* and *Daktilograf* needs to be corrected. A *Referent za prodaju* ("Sales

⁵ Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term "Croato-Serbian" to describe the language of the animators of the Zagreb School. This was the official name of their dialect during the period.

Officer”) is followed by a *Referent za propogandu* (“Officer of Propaganda”). According to Dovniković-Bordo, the film reflects the management of Zagreb Film during its early years, a period that by 1964 was over. The studio “even had a post for a man who took care of the building (honestly!). He was an intelligent and nice man, but, of course, he didn’t do anything. He just spent all his time sitting in the buffet and playing chess; he actually had a high ranking.” The film ends with the name of the only two people who actually made the film, Dovniković-Bordo — scriptwriter, drawer, animator, and director — and Tomica Simović, here listed as the composer.

Dovniković-Bordo does not speak well of this period in the Zagreb School’s history.

All cartoonists began directing late. Because until then we were separated, as in all Eastern animation sectors, into directors, cartoonists, animators and inbetweeners [*sic*]. Everybody did his own job. Until the mid-1960s, people who had no experience in comics and who could not even draw became directors in *Zagreb Film*. [*sic*] Thus, whoever could not draw could become a director. And designers/animators, even those with a great deal of experience, were actually their assistants. Just look at the filmography of that time and analyse the quality of these films. I call this the black era of Zagreb animation (to Krelja and Turković 35).

What’s most striking about Dovniković’s criticism is that it describes a studio run much like Disney in the 1930s. Walt Disney did not draw. He made only one, terrible foray into directing, and divided laborers as on an assembly line.

Still, the Zagreb School, according to the 1991 documentary, would come to base its production on the auteur theory. The oral histories involve several stories of mentors who offer guidance to younger auteurs while offering them a considerable degree of freedom. Dragić says Mimica allowed him considerable freedom on his first work, but helped him shorten it so that it would not be too boring (to Ajan, “Linija riječi” 408). Marušić had Dovniković-Bordo as a mentor, though the two later had a falling out (Marušić, Personal Interview). Of course, the problems with the auteur theory as it applies to the Zagreb School are the same as those which

apply to the auteur theory anywhere and the remainder of this dissertation will alternatively analyse the films both as works of collaboration — as collaboration was a constant in the studio — and in terms of the intentional, auteurist stamp on specific films.

The history of the Zagreb School, up to this point, describes the major themes of this dissertation. The identity of the Zagreb School never fully shook off its roots in the earliest experiments of the 1950s, and perhaps the vestigial memories of the animated films produced in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. Even as the studio developed a more organized approach, rooted in both an auteurist sensibility and in the conception of workers' self-management, it always maintained a DIY approach stretching back to its earliest years. Its approach to labor would reflect the tensions of the Titoist system between individual autonomy and a collective system. The Zagreb School would be a Zagreb institution as well as a consciously Yugoslav one. Its affiliation with the city of Zagreb as well as its Yugoslav national identity would equally affect how the studio presented itself to the world and how it would itself be perceived. And its approach to discussing global concerns, such as urbanization and mass violence, was as much a product of a desire to be understood on an international stage as it was to work through traumas at home.

Chapter 2

Unperfecting the Body

The bodies of the Zagreb School lack perfection, but they are not imperfect. They are unperfect. “Imperfect” suggests the lack of perfection is unintentional. “Unperfect,” an archaic term in English, suggests the lack of perfection is intentional. “Imperfect” is a quality we accept. “Unperfect” is a quality we create. The imperfect object falls short of our desires. The unperfect object brings us closer to our ideal. For the Zagreb School, the unperfect body, particularly the unperfect body of its complicated “small man” — *mali čovjek* — is an idealized iteration of the laborers of Zagreb Film and of the citizens of Yugoslavia, a figure who embodies a humanist socialism. This unperfect man suggests several problems. The difference between *intentionally* and *unintentionally* lacking perfection is not always clear, for instance. It’s not always clear what it means to achieve a humanist socialism. This chapter will study how that small man, imbued with a complexity that can never be fully delineated, achieves the *ideal* of unperfection.

Even a mildly attentive viewer would notice the errors in a Zagreb School film. In *Orator* (Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo and Dragutin Vunak, 1969), the line a demagogue’s head clashes with the line of a wall for a few frames as he struggles through a speech. In *N.N.* (Dovniković-Bordo, 1977), a film which relies on aural sensations, the sound effects are delayed by several fractions of a second. When considered separately, these mistakes are not unperfections. They are imperfections. Dovniković says that his prolific career as an animator, illustrator, and comics creator may have made mistakes inevitable, but that their presences are not marks of his intentions. He simply accepted his working methods’ shortcomings (Personal Interview 2014). Joško Marušić expresses a similar indifference to the mistakes in his oeuvre (Personal

Interview). Still, the animators strove for their own concept of high quality. They were embarrassed by their early efforts in the early-to-mid-1950s. Their ingenuity was meant to compensate for their limited budget. The films' handmade appearance and the mistakes which declare the films' materiality — qualities satisfying to the cinephile if not always to the creator — are not stated goals, but rather the fortunate byproducts of the animators' working methods.

And yet “unperfect” applies. I borrow the term from *The Unperfect Society*, the English-language title of a mid-career tome by Milovan Đilas,⁶ a political prisoner and would-be reformer of Yugoslav socialism, one of the few critics of Yugoslav society who could be called a dissident. “To speak of society as imperfect may seem to imply that it *can* be perfect, which in truth it cannot,” he wrote in the late 1960s. “The task for contemporary man is to accept the reality that society is unperfect, but also to understand that humanist, humanitarian dreams and visions are necessary in order to reform society, in order to improve and advance it” (5). (Emphasis in the original.) Socialist reformers of the Korčula School, a group of intellectuals who met annually on the Croatian island to discuss and criticize historical trends in their ideology, as well as loyal Party members voiced adjacent beliefs. The auteurs of the Zagreb School themselves were not dissidents; many were Party members themselves. But their approach to aesthetics is similar to Đilas's approach to society-building. In the second part of the artists' statement for the exhibition of their work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in January 1968 — the first part was quoted in the introduction of this dissertation — they wrote, “Take one kilo of ideas (not too confused if possible), five dkg of talent, ten dkg of hard work

⁶ When Đilas's books were published in English, he was identified as “Djilas.” I render his name accordingly in the bibliography of this dissertation.

and a few thousand designs. Shake it all together and if you are lucky you will *not* get the *right* answer to the question” (*Animations: Zagreb*). (Emphases mine.)

It’s a joke, but the joke contains truth. We see in their films that the Zagreb School animators choose not to create films that carry the sheen of perfection, anything like Disney’s utopian visions, as defined by the latter studio’s conception of hyperrealism. Chris Pallant points to the paradox inherent in the concept of the hyperreal, “the attempt to represent reality in a medium predicated on artificiality” (40). Despite claims to the contrary, the hyperreal is about everything except the recreation of the real as we know it in our live-action world; it is about the invention of a new greater reality. J.P. Telotte notes the complication at the heart of understanding Disney’s conception of realism in its imitation of live-action film techniques regarding depth and movement. By the early 1940s, Disney

was employing that same technology not so much to underscore and further exploit the reality illusion as to fashion a new sort of *fantasy* vision, one in which the very *difference* between live-action and illusion-of-life animation would be foregrounded and become the very stuff of narrative. (59) (Emphases in the original.)

Still, the creation of this new vision required a very specific set of techniques, which were developed to create the hyperreal. The techniques assume that bodies can move with purely defined physical movement. There is, presumably, not a single error in Pinocchio’s or Geppetto’s walk. Their limbs move in concert with their heads. Their bodies are fitted to time and space. The bodies in the Zagreb School, by contrast, are not so fully studied. They are not ever fully suited to their place. For all the precision of movement and composition the viewer may notice in the Zagreb School’s bodies — in the geometrically-studied walks of the opera-goers, matched to the heavy jazz horns in *Premijera / Opening Night* (Nikola Kostelac, 1957), for instance, or in the staccato bounce of the hero of *Surogat / Ersatz* (Dušan Vukotić, 1961) — the Zagreb

School's animators accept the absence of perfection. That acceptance is form of intention. That intention becomes a strive for the imperfect. That strive for the imperfect becomes an attempt to realize an *ideal*, not a *utopia*.

To say that art lacks perfection is to speak with a cliché. To declare a work of art perfect is an insult in many schools in various disciplines. Still “perfection,” as a concept, runs through the history of animation production and reception, sometimes explicitly, and sometimes implicitly. Sergei Eisenstein's writings on Disney and even his essays on montage offer a possible foundation for the discourse. In “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form,” written in 1929, the Soviet filmmaker writes, “In painting the form arises from *abstract* elements of line and color, while in cinema the material *concreteness* of the image within the frame presents — as an element — the greatest difficulty of manipulation” (*Film Form* 60). (Emphases in the original.) For Eisenstein, the perfect photographed image, what I will describe even if he does not as an ur-image, eludes the live-action filmmaker. Though the point is little more than an aside in his essay, his claim can be paired with his notes on animation from later in his career. In 1940, he celebrated the “plasmaticity” of Disney animation, which he described as “‘represented’ in a drawing, a being of a given form, a being that has achieved a particular appearance, behaves itself like primordial protoplasm, not yet having a stable form, but capable of taking on any and all forms of animal life on the ladder of evolution” (*Disney* 15). In live-action film, the face can never fully match the imagination of the casting director, the actor can never walk in absolute tandem with the filmmaker's imagination, the clothing can never fall just right. The filmmaker can take thousands of hours of footage of forests and never control exactly how the wind will blow through the trees. Animated film, in contrast to live-action film, can birth an ur-image

which can move and change within one shot, evolve fantastically but also organically, making montage, the construction of a story out of various photographed images, unnecessary.⁷

But animation, even the classical animation Eisenstein studied so closely, has never been “perfect.” At best, the animation medium offers the illusion of perfection even as it offers the imitation of life. Hannah Frank, whose study of animation and photography forms the basis of this dissertation’s theoretical grounding, notes several errors in a mere six seconds of a Looney Tunes short. Unlike the errors in Zagreb School shorts, however, these mistakes are not noticeable to the average viewer. “[B]link and you will miss these errors. You must stop the film. Look. Stare. Treat the still frame as if it were a mug shot” (“Traces of the World” 27). The mistakes are reminders as noted earlier that these frames are not drawings but photographs of drawings and that none of these photographs are ur-images. The editing of one photograph next to another is necessary for the illusion of perfection, and of the creation of a universe separate from our own.

But if classical Hollywood animation attempts to hide the photographic quality of its films, the Zagreb School forefronts the presence of the camera and the cameraman. The Zagreb School treats its films as records of the Zagreb Film studio and of the larger society which gave the studio its birth. If *Surogat* suggests a harmonizing of geometry in space in a newly created universe, the photographic quality of the film pulls us back from that universe into the real world, so to speak, of the studio filled with imperfect bodies which — to turn a word I have used as an adjective and a noun into a verb — unperfect their films. The unperfect bodies of the Zagreb School’s films are idealized portraits of the imperfect bodies of those films’ creators.

⁷ This paragraph is adapted from my previously published article, “The Animated Esperanto: The Globalist Vision in the Films of Sándor Reisenbüchler.”

And those creators are stand-ins for the many imperfect workers and citizens of all trades who perform their labor outside the walls of Zagreb Film.

Documenting the Studio

From the time of its birth, as noted in the previous chapter, the Zagreb School has been documenting its own history in the most traditional sense of the word. Its auteurs wrote furiously about their work in the Yugoslav press through the 1950s and in 1960, Vukotić made a documentary about the studio, *Tisuću jedan crtež / A Thousand and One Drawings*. Mihail Ostrovidov, a master both in black-and-white and heavily color-saturated cinematography who collaborated with Vukotić on several live-action films, shot the film. The fourteen-minute documentary suggests a natural marriage between animation and live-action. That is to say, it depicts the animation short as a collection of hand-drawn documents of a studio representing a series of moments in time that cannot be lived again. Ostrovidov's camera, which picks up every small detail, discovers qualities in Zagreb Film that are ubiquitous in the animated films the studio produces.

By 1960, there had been many documentaries about animation in the U.S. Some of the canonical works that have been described as the first animated films — *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (J. Stuart Blackton, 1906), *Little Nemo* (Winsor McCay and Blackton, 1911), and *Gertie* (McCay, 1914) — even when considering their roots in the trick film, can also be ahistorically described as making-of documentaries. In *Humorous Phases*, Blackton appears before the camera to introduce himself, before he breathes life into a line on a chalkboard. McCay explains the basic concept of animation in his two films to a group of men, played by a

comedy group, before disappearing into his studio where the viewer sees him toil away on thousands of drawings. In 1941, Disney produced *The Reluctant Dragon* (Alan L. Werker, et al...), a technicolor-saturated feature which dramatizes a visit to the studio by the humorist Robert Benchley, a writer for *The New Yorker* and a former member of the Algonquin Round Table. Benchley serves as a naive bumbler passing through the Disney studio, here depicted as a remarkable, self-sufficient machine, appropriate to the refined films it produces. Kirsten Thompson writes,

[W]hether on screen or off, labor in...*The Reluctant Dragon* is simultaneously represented yet erased. The small, quick and very precise gestures of the ink and paint machine become theatricalized, sensual, affectively mesmerizing and rhythmically languid displays of pure color. (“Quick—Like a Bunny!”)

The four films treat animation as a product of American capitalism and the animator as a true capitalist. In *Humorous Phases*, *Little Nemo*, and *Gertie*, the magician-animator represents something between the larger-than-life P.T. Barnum-like showman and the low-rent carney-barker. In *The Reluctant Dragon*, Walt Disney plays a different archetype. He is an entrepreneur harnessing his men and their machines towards a mission to create the hyperreal. There is no rust in his world and his workers — all played by actors, including a handsome, pre-fame Alan Ladd — never sweat. Walt Disney is a great man of an industry always propelled just a couple of minutes into the future where bodies, colors, and movement will be different, better, than what we have now in our world.

In the black-and-white *Tisuću jedan crtež*, however, the animators of the Zagreb School live in the present. They are craftsmen and playful laborers, working individually but never alone within their studio. The studio, as represented in the film, is an example of workers’ self-management, the program that had been defining the Titoist project for nearly 10 years by the time the film was made. (For a fuller summary of workers’ self-management, please see my

introduction.) *Tisuću jedan crtež*, which was made for BBC television (Munitić 168), could arguably be considered part of the project to advertise these organizational and labor practices on the international stage.

Tisuću jedan crtež ties the animation studio to Yugoslav labor practices by presenting the animation medium as a subset not just of cinema but of the applied arts — many of the animators of the School had trained as architects and engineers — and the animated film as material that is handmade and in which mistakes are plentiful. This world is full of grit. There is a major difference between the animators as they are depicted in *Tisuću jedan crtež* and the animators as they are portrayed in *The Reluctant Dragon*, *Humorous Phases*, *Little Nemo*, and *Gertie*. In the American films, animators are both masters at reinventing existing technology as well as scientists inventing new technologies. They reveal themselves as new men and women; the machine is part of who they are both as people and as capitalists. As a cinema of attractions, *The Reluctant Dragon* demands the viewer see man, woman, and apparatus as completely merged into a giant new machine, each human figure part of a colorful, happy Borg, or simply the seven dwarfs multiplied by hundreds. In *Tisuću jedan crtež*, technology is the medium by which the laborer reveals himself and his role as a citizen of his city. The animator isn't the apparatus. The animator controls the apparatus. Technology has not robbed him of his humanity. The laborer and particularly the laborer's humanity — whether male or female — is the attraction. To put it another way, *Tisuću jedan crtež* celebrates the cinema of the laborer.

Tisuću jedan crtež opens with an animated silhouette of a man waking up. The outline of his body frames an aerial shot of Trg Republike — the square that stands at the central point of the city and now known as Trg bana Jelačića — and the narration announces that the city will enjoy a “gay day.” Ostrovidov's camera captures the routine of the morning commute. The film

cuts to a worker at Zagreb Film, played by Dovniković-Bordo, boarding the number 4 tram, carrying a set of sheets. (The film features several actual members of the studio, including Milan Blažeković and Zlatko Bourek, but none are named in the film.) He finds a free seat. A hand, carrying a bag of groceries, grasps the rail above him. The film cuts to a point-of-view shot through the window at a canted angle capturing partial views of bicycles and cars narrowly missing collisions with the tram. There is no suspense. The pacing is gentle. The commute does not demean anyone in the crowded tram, which the viewer glances only through a series of short close-ups, the black-and-white cinematography delineating every object in a narrow depth of field. Tomato juice leaks from the bag of groceries onto Dovniković-Bordo's sheets. He glances up at a woman with an interesting face; a nose with a small tip protrudes at an angle from the planar line of the rest of its profile. The low-angle shot, Dovniković-Bordo's point-of-view again, exaggerates the expression, makes her seem like a cartoon caricature of a snob. He rubs the tomato juice before it dries into a fine likeness of her profile. He exits the tram and enters the offices of Zagreb Film at Vlaška ulica 70, which is still the studio's home.

Dovniković-Bordo enters the courtyard. The camera articulates decay, suggesting a little age in this building which had housed the Zagreb School for just a few years at that point. The courtyard is completely cut off from the noise of the city, but the presence of urban life looms. Dovniković-Bordo enters a small hallway, preceding a modern, working woman wearing sunglasses and white gloves, dressed in a long coat. He then enters a series of claustrophobic offices. The film tells the story of how the morning's accident serves as an inspiration for three days of production at Zagreb Film, a process that in its essentials, if not always in its particulars, differs little from the processes which had been in use at Hollywood animation studios for decades, albeit with larger workforces. But unlike Benchley's journey into the Disney studio,

Dovniković-Bordo's entrance into this world is not transformative. There is a natural progression from Dovniković-Bordo the citizen of Zagreb and Yugoslavia to Dovniković-Bordo the laborer. From beginning to end, he is always as Rudi Supek describes, as noted in the Introduction, a "man with needs."

The film cuts to a stop-motion sequence of inks and paints rearranging themselves on a desk, the first suggestion of an animated world, collapsing the distinction between animation with live-action materials and animation with line-drawing on the page, and then to the lower leg of a young woman in high heels, wrapping her foot around the back leg of her chair. The camera tracks along desks filled first mostly by women and then by men and women equally, working as inkers, colorists, and in-betweeners, the last intriguingly called *fazeri* in Croato-Serbian, as in artists who carefully depict and define different "phases." If the English term "in-betweener" suggests a subordinate figure working below the "key animators," who draw characters in their extremities, *fazer* — the singular version of the word — suggest an artist who works on their own terms, in specific "phases," moments in time.

Now, the film narrates the production process in chronological order. A man appears at his desk, running his fingers on his forehead, turning his neck in imitation of the movement of a typewriter. The script done, the screenplay is sent to Dovniković-Bordo. In real life, Dovniković-Bordo would take on many roles in the studio. In this film, he is the character designer. He suffers through several character sketches, trying to create an image from the screenplay. (From the scripts available from the Zagreb School, it's clear that this depiction of the artistic process is authentic. Rudolf Sremec's — himself a future documentarian — script for *Surogat*, for instance, describes the tourist as "a mostly bald fatty" (66) leaving the character designer to describe the yellow man whose gut is expressed with an imperfect quadrilateral and nose with a sharp thin

triangle.) Although we do not know what this particular script calls for, we see a hint in Dovniković-Bordo's plans as he draws a giant sheet covered with simple caricatures, little men with noses of slightly different lengths and shapes. In a medium close-up, Ostrovidov heavily illuminates Dovniković-Bordo's face and right arm, leaving the rest of him in grey or heavy black shadows. A similar lighting technique will be used for most of the technicians in the studio: the significant parts of the body, as well as the hand, and tool will be well articulated, while the rest of each worker's body and the architecture of the studio will be either largely hidden or de-emphasized.

After building a pile of waste paper, Dovniković-Bordo finds inspiration in the caricature of a woman he had seen on the tram earlier in the morning that he had drawn with tomato juice. There follows a sheet presenting the character in various poses, a silly simple man with large feet, a widening waistline and a long ovular nose, to be known as "Drawey." In the next shot, a pair of hands flips through a storyboard book. The film suggests that both the character sheet and the storyboard materialized very quickly. It also suggests that the entirety of this first section involves various forms of script-writing. Paul Wells writes, "Arguably, in many cases, the piles of sketches, storyboards, materials, artefacts, and data files left at the end of the process of making an animated film, are 'the script'..." ("Boards, Beats, Binaries and Bricolage" 89). *Tisuću jedan crtež*, accordingly, presents this script as necessary detritus, work that will eventually be discarded, a reminder that before the technological apparatus enters into the assembly line of production, the animators are still working with tools that preceded the industrial age.

The film depicts the studio's methods of sound recording, which differ little from practices that had been perfected at Disney and Warner Bros. over the previous 30 years. As Carl Stalling had done in the early 1930s at Disney and Warner Bros., the composer uses bar sheets

— “a notated blueprint of the music, dialogue, and animation timing — which made possible very precise synchronization of the soundtrack and the action” (Goldmark 20). After the camera captures the bar sheet with the same fascination it had captured the character sheet and storyboard, the composer conducts an orchestra. As before, the musicians and sound engineers appear against heavy black backgrounds, only their faces and the body parts which control their instruments and tools, as well as the instruments and tools themselves, are well lit.

Later, the film will introduce Miljenko Dörr, the studio’s sound man, a prodigy in real life who combined the vocal talents of Warner Bros.’ Mel Blanc with the ear for Foley of Warner Bros.’ Treg Brown. He offers several possible sounds for Drawey. And as was the case at Warner Bros. since the late 1940s, the sound effects are added via post-synchronization. Dörr’s performance is the most comical of the film. The camera switches between his face at the microphone and short animated cutaways of the several overly-simplified animals he voices, their white lines set against a plain black box. If the other workers in Zagreb Film remain committed to their simple defined tasks at hand, he is a showoff. His performance briefly disrupts the narrative of the documentary and the narrator corrects his behavior. Dvorniković-Bordo, who worked closely with Dörr and admired his talent, says, “Animation is not opera” (Personal Interview 2017). Accordingly, *Tisuću jedan crtež* subordinates sound, suggests it is a possible disruption to the animated film, a primarily visual experience.

Tisuću jedan crtež does not capture the faces of the in-betweener/*fazer* — the figure who draws the various sheets between Drawey’s extremes — although the viewer sees the shadow of his hand as he draws the phases of the character’s walk using a tracing board. The narrator announces that there are up to twenty-four drawings per second, a figure that will eventually involve several thousand drawings for a roughly ten-minute film. (If we assume the film works

with a twenty-four-frames-per-second rate, this assumes that there will be one separate drawing for each frame of film, vaguely if not quite following the practice of Disney's full animation, but not practices of other Hollywood studios. As I will discuss later, this is a stunning exaggeration.) There follows a quick zoom on the all-powerful camera, with, uncharacteristically here, no human hand present. The camera will return later, but its presence at this point in the film is foreboding, and reminds the viewer that they are watching a work of live-action cinema, and that the line between live-action cinema and animation is thin.

A woman appears as an inker and colorist, and her presence effectively slows down the rhythm of the film. Ostrovidov captures her meticulously tracing the bodies onto cels and then painting the bodies on the *verso* side. Whereas the male artists are quick and spontaneous in their work, the woman is careful, running her ink along each cel to articulate a clean line, numbering and placing the finished piece on the correct shelf. The lighting illuminates the woman in full, along with her environment. A photograph of her children sits behind the cleaning sponge. The narrator smirks, "Drawey seems to be quite happy in this company."

Thompson examines the similarly gendered division of labor in the Disney studio. In *The Reluctant Dragon*, she writes, "the scenes of the female workers on display in the Ink and Paint department suggest that femininity, color and surface are at the heart of Disney's color machine." After reading oral histories held in archives, Thompson notes the brutal conditions under which the women at Disney actually labored, their terrible pay, and the sexual harassment they suffered ("Quick—Like a Bunny!"). I do not know how the actual lived experiences of the women at Zagreb Film compare. In the 1991 documentary on the Zagreb School, they speak well of their life at the studio, though it's clear they did not hold any power. I do not know if any women ever sought promotion at the studio. Either way, there were no female auteurs. The most interesting

contrast here is the contrast in mythologies. In Disney's film, women mix colors in giant vats as they would cook food at home. They work quickly to maintain pace with the speed of production, and, as Thompson notes, such labor mirrors the witch's work at her cauldron in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (William Cottrell, et al..., 1937). The care of the women in *Tisuću jedan crtež*, in contrast, slows down the pace of production and the pace of the film. Ostrovidov holds his camera a little longer. The music falls. The woman's work is vital. Without it, the film-within-the-film starring Drawey, could not exist.

The female colorist's work isn't magical. If anything, it's a little ugly. In a later Disney making-of documentary *The Plausible Impossible* (William Beaudine and Wilfred Jackson, 1956), a female colorist reenacts the coloring of a scene from *Fantasia* (James Algar, et al..., 1940). Her work seems pristine and flawless. Drawey may be happy in the company of the woman, but the woman's treatment of Drawey is more maternal than sexual. She's cleaning the dirty boy up. When Bourek appears in the next scene, painting the backgrounds of the city — he had and would continue to design sets for the live theater — his work is presented as interesting, but comparatively easy and emotionally detached. He is the manly, self-assured architect at his desk.

Finally, the cameraman appears with a camera. He is lit much like each laborer in the film. His face and hands are highlighted along with his tool. He marks each photograph of each cel on his sheet, capturing each shot as a moment in time. “[A]t the end all this is photographed onto the film track as work of the past, preserved for the present and future and put into the captivity of dark and silent tin boxes,” the narrator says, all but anticipating Frank.

Yugoslav television would produce several interviews with and documentaries about the Zagreb School auteurs throughout its existence, but Vukotić's early, playful short chronicles at

least one version of how the Zagreb School filmmakers saw themselves or at least wished to be seen by the world in the 1950s and early '60s. The film also directly contradicts contemporaneous accounts of the studio in the Yugoslav press and the omissions in *Tisuću jedan crtež* are as important as its commissions.

First, the narrator claims that upwards of fourteen thousand drawings are put together for one ten-minute film. This is an astonishing claim considering Vukotić described a very different model for animation production the same year the film was released:

Our first films [presumably *Veliki miting / Great Meeting* (Walter Neugebauer, 1951) and *Začarani dvorac u Dudincima / The Haunted House in Dudinci* (Vukotić, 1952), both made long before the Zagreb School earned its name], produced by using the classical method, contained 12-15,000 drawings on both paper and on celluloid. By contrast, by implementing creatively set up reduced animation, we have reduced the number of drawings to 4-5,000 without diminishing the visual richness of our films. This type of production requires meticulous attention to detail and a thorough understanding of animation, because an uninventive use of schematised cycles of closed movements and reduced number of extremes, dictated primarily by the budget produces disappointing results, which we see quite often today, particularly in some animated films made for television (“The Yugoslav School of Animation” 246-247).

(McCay had also exaggerated his own productivity in *Gertie*. The 1914 film dramatizes the animator at his desk, toiling away on ten thousand drawings over a period of several months. The actual number of drawings was between 2,500 and 3,500 and he resorted to reverse motions several times throughout the short [Nathan and Crafton 40].⁸) A study of the Zagreb School’s early films makes it hard to accept the number fourteen thousand. It’s clear why McCay would

⁸ The “reverse motion” is often confused with the “cycle.” A “cycle” is a reuse of drawings to depict repetitive movement. A cycle can be used to describe character and inform narrative. Betty Boop’s sexed-up jazzy sway is a result of a cycle. Cycles can also lengthen time (Thompson “Implications of the Cel Animation Technique” 117). But cycles have always had an economic function. The cycle permits filmmakers to decrease man-hours, hence their reputation as a cheap shortcut. Vukotić is calling for an alternative way to limit man-hours, as well as budgets, through more creative and possibly aesthetically effective means. “Reverse motion” involves a similar form of repetition, but also a repeated use of the same drawings photographed backwards. It is also often used for economic reasons.

want to exaggerate his labor, to draw a portrait of himself as a lone man with superpowers capable of producing so much in so little an amount of time. But the contradiction for Vukotić is a little more complicated. The animation processes at Zagreb Film, as they are presented in *Tisuću jedan crtež*, differ little in its essentials from the processes that had been normalized at Hollywood studios for decades. The impressive feature of the Zagreb School, for Vukotić, is its ability to follow this process of production, but with ingenuity, allowing it to produce films of a similar quality within a shorter length of time, in the case of *Tisuću jedan crtež*, just three days. Perhaps Vukotić fears an accurate depiction of his goal for limited animation would have made the process seem a product of laziness. The discrepancy suggests that Vukotić is more interested in depicting energy and competence than genius.

Second, *Tisuću jedan crtež* does not depict the live-action performances animators recorded of themselves modelling characters in their films. An undated compilation of clips held today at the Croatian Film Archive shows Vukotić expertly performing alternately like a fat man with a waddle, as an old man with a cane, and as a female with a pronounced sashay, similar to the sex bombs in *Cowboy Jimmy* (1957) and *Surogat*.⁹ (Judging from Vukotić's physical appearance in these clips, they were likely filmed in the late 1950s or early '60s.) The strategy is not new. The use of live-action modelling among animators in the US stretches back to the silent era; the Disney animator Joe Grant noted that Walt Disney "would stand in front of the boards and re-enact the scene. You could see the reflection of him in the film: his pantomime was beautifully followed through" (quoted by Solomon A13). I will take the liberty of offering an observation from my experiences interviewing the animation veterans of Zagreb Film in Croatia and Pannonia film in Hungary. My subjects had strikingly expressive faces and at times

⁹ I do not have permission from the Croatian Film Archive to show any stills from this compilation.

physically modelled the movements of characters in the films we were discussing with striking precision. They all had a raw talent for pantomime, evident in Dovniković-Bordo's own performance in *Tisuću jedan crtež*. The male performers in Vukotić's film, cast from the studio's ranks, are strikingly photogenic. We see them as actors every bit the equal of their creations, suggesting a merging between their live-action bodies and the bodies on the page.

Third, there is a mention of a film director, but no auteur. Vukotić, by then and still the most famous animator of the Zagreb School, does not appear in the film itself. Unlike *The Reluctant Dragon*, *Tisuću jedan crtež* does not depict anything like a film author either in the form of a director or producer or a great man theory of animation. There is certainly no figure like Mimica, who says he did not draw at all, and simply instructed the laborers on his animated films in the same way a live-action director instructs his actors (Personal Interview). The omission is a little odd. The Zagreb School, despite its pretensions, always included a director credit, cited Vukotić, Kostelac, and Mimica in its press as the primary intelligences behind their films, and would develop an even stronger auteurist-based identity within a few years. Again, the film suggests that the Zagreb School is not a home for geniuses, but laborers, creating and combining materials, not building a cathedral as much as a collection of chapels.

Fourth, there is no attempt in the film to explain how the Zagreb School differs from other studios in North America or Europe, or to place the Zagreb School within the history of the animation medium, as Disney does in another making-of documentary *The Story of the Animated Drawing* (Beaudine and Jackson, 1955). The opening minutes of *Tisuću jedan crtež* makes much of the studio's presence within the city of Zagreb, and there are several writings over the previous ten years discussing how the studio would establish its own character as a Yugoslav institution. But not once does the film look beyond the country's borders to the so-called anti-

Disney filmmakers most discussed among the animators in the Yugoslav press at the time: Stephen Bosustow of UPA; Norman MacLaren of the National Film Board of Canada, whose non-narrative abstract films would not find any analogues in the Zagreb School until the mid-1960s, but whose *Neighbours* (1952) was similar in narrative to Kostelac's *Na livadi / On the Meadow* (1957); and the Czech puppet animator Jiří Trnka whose work had less direct influence on the studio other than for the fact that it was too decidedly not Disney in its stylizations or animation philosophy. *Tisuću jedan crtež* depicts both "animation production in Yugoslavia" as well as "animation production." It suggests that the Zagreb School is not reacting to or working within a global animation history. It is something distinctly Yugoslav.

Fifth, although the film's narrator describes and Ostrovidov's camera depicts the studio's female colorists, the black-and-white film does not dramatize color, as does the technicolor *The Reluctant Dragon*. As a result, the diversity of the films depicted at the end of the short — from the heavy yellows and oranges that describe *Cowboy Jimmy* to the grey-and-blue palette of *Happy End* (Mimica 1958) — is muted. The animated shorts become extensions of the exuberant but grounded black-and-white world of the studio itself.

Sixth, and finally, and for relatively obvious reasons, for all the depiction of the grit and mess of the studio, the narrator never mentions the errors in the final films. Drawey is close to the ideal figure Dovniković-Bordo imagines from the script, but hardly perfect. His walk is awkward. He isn't that much more interesting than the other figures Dovniković-Bordo sketches on his sheet. If anything the caricature he traces with tomato juice is more intriguing. It may have been assumed that the animation of the Zagreb School would never achieve the hyperrealism and perfected utopia of Disney, but there is no suggestion in the film's narration that the filmmakers

accept this reality. The film highlights the speed and sufficiency of the studio's working schedule, but does not mention any of the possible drawbacks inherent in such an approach.

And yet, there is a happy acceptance of a lack of perfection throughout the film. The film captures the charming but scruffy male figures in the studio. Ostrovidov's camera captures a stray line on a character sheet with the same affection it captures the female commuter's strange nose in the beginning of the film. The studio is made up of magicians who are, in some if not all respects, brutally honest about their trickery. Vukotić may have been calling for more ingenuity to compensate for a low budget so that the films of the Zagreb School would be of a higher quality than the cheap television cartoons that were emerging in the US and Europe, but *Tisuću jedan crtež* is a celebration of a lack of perfection.

Portraiture and Self-Portraiture

By 1960 and afterwards, the Zagreb School had created many unperfect bodies far more interesting than Drawey, a figure with a dull expression and an even duller walk. It would continue to create many more characters, all of them suggestive of a world that existed both within and outside the animation studio, a world in which the woman with the odd nose on the number 4 tram in Zagreb is just one tiny part. These bodies suggest complicated approaches to gender, class, and history at a time when Yugoslavia was undergoing rapid social change and struggling with recent memories of mass violence.

The Zagreb School depicts many children. *Krava na mjesecu / Cow on the Moon* (Vukotić, 1959) and *Svi crteži grada / All the Pictures of the City* (Ivo Vrbanić, 1959) feature both boys and girls. In *Krava na mjesecu*, the girl is smarter and wilier than the impish boy. In

Igra / The Play (Vukotić, 1963), a live-action boy and a live-action girl battle over their drawings. Neither of them win. Still, girls are depicted as intelligent, the equal and at times the superior of boys.

Grown women do not fare so well in the Zagreb School. *Surogat* and *Bumerang / Boomerang* (Boris Kolar, 1962) depict adult women as sex bombs. *Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate* (Kostelac, 1959) and *Neboder / Skyscraper* (Marušić, 1981) depict women as housewives. On one hand, Yugoslavia's generally open approach to pornographic and semi-pornographic images make these films unremarkable. On another, the approach is odd considering Yugoslavia celebrated women as workers in their own right. *Samac / Alone* (Mimica, 1958) is one of the few films to depict the distinctly Titoist model of a female office worker, here as a love interest of the hero's, although the film could easily be set in a capitalist country.

The Zagreb School depicts both rural men and women, as in *Rep je ulaznica / The Tail is the Ticket* (Vukotić, 1958) and urban men and women, as in *Piccolo* (Vukotić, 1959) and *Ljubav i film / Love and Film* (Ivo Vrbanić, 1961). Wherever they live, the characters exhibit strong folk qualities. They are children of the soil even when they live in the city.

The auteurs borrowed from art historical traditions from the Renaissance, and the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries, both high and low. *Dnevnik / Diary* (Nedeljko Dragić, 1974) directly references American comics and animation. The Chekhov adaptation *Osvetnik / The Avenger* (Vukotić, 1958), the Balzac adaptation *Šagrenska koža / Le Peau de Chagrin* (Vlado Kristl and Vrbanić, 1960), and the Poe adaptation *Maska crvene smrti / Mask of the Red Death* (Pavao Štalter, 1968) imbue nineteenth-century literary figures with grotesque stylizations from Henri Toulouse-Lautrec to George Grosz. Bourek's films — the ones he directed at least, if not

always the ones for which he drew the backgrounds — borrowed from Croatia’s tradition of Naive art. *Don Kihot / Don Quixote* (Kristl, 1961) — often referred to as the greatest of the Zagreb School’s films — reduces bodies to extreme abstraction.

These bodies are collectively a panorama of Yugoslavia, of the world, and, effectively, of the bodies various animation artists had already and were already producing in the US and Europe. But despite the panoramic scope of the Zagreb School, the imperfect filmmakers of the Zagreb School became most identified with three other bodies, each of them mascots for the studio, featured prominently on film festival posters, the covers of monographs, and Zagreb Film’s website.

First, there is the “mostly bald fattie” of *Surogat*, a tourist, who like the animators of the Zagreb School, conjures up objects and bodies out of geometric shapes. His status as a mascot, of course, is related directly to the Academy Award the film won. But he also represents a problem for Yugoslav society as it was developing in the late 1950s and early ’60s. He is a devout consumerist in a socialist society, as capable of inventing stoves and bathing suits as he is a beautiful woman. He is also a stand-in for the animator, practicing his craft; like the animators of the Zagreb School he turns abstract shapes into objects and living beings. The objects he conjures don’t quite meet the purposes which he intends. Like the Zagreb School animators, he doesn’t get the right answer.

Second, there is the titular hero of the *Profesor Balthazar* series, a gentle, eccentric inventor, with a beard, blue glasses, and a quick step, a fine citizen of his city who solves the problems of friends and neighbors, while also promoting world peace on the global stage. His first appearance precedes the release of *Yellow Submarine* (George Dunning, 1968), but like the

Beatles in Peter Max's backgrounds, he is grounded in a funky, pastel-colored landscape. Effectively, he is a children's version of a Titoist diplomat and Third Way self-manager.

Third, there is the "small man," a figure who appears in several shorts, often as a simple white figure articulated with a black line, most often having no clear markers noting his origins either in Croatia or in Yugoslavia or Southeastern Europe as a whole. Drawey is a potential member of the Zagreb School's large pool of "small men," but he is given no personality or character, and we don't know what he can or will become. The "mostly bald fattie" of *Surogat* has some qualities of this small man. Professor Balthazar has none.

I posit that these mascots are self-portraits of the filmmakers themselves. The mascots are inventors as well as self-inventors, expressions of the labor of their creators. They suggest the limitations as well as the possibilities of the animation medium and the animation studio where they were born. They come closest to achieving the ideal of unperfection.

The Roles of the Mascots

What roles do *Surogat*'s tourist, Professor Balthazar, and the small men play? If these mascots are portraits of the laborers who created them, are they themselves laborers? How does their interaction within their own worlds mirror the interactions the animators in *Tisuću jedan crtež* experience with the society in which they live and the studio where they work?

Before I answer this question, I need to define what kinds of films in which these mascots appeared. There were many attempts among the Zagreb School's critics and auteurs to develop genres. Just as there was no visual house style in the Zagreb School, there was no identifiable structure shared by the films' narratives. Here are four attempts to create taxonomies from

various moments in the history of the Zagreb School, accompanied by my criticisms of each system.

1956: An early critic describes *Cowboy Jimmy* as a satire for children and adults, *Susret u snu / Encounter in a Dream* (Kostelac, 1957) — a goofy caveman satire of consumer culture similar to *The Flintstones* (1960-1966) — as the work of a *poeta nascitur*, and *Na livadi* as an experimental film (Mihaljević 49).

Problem: Susret u snu is as much a gag film and as child-friendly as *Cowboy Jimmy*. *Na livadi* is relatively conservative in its stylizations, employing personality animation and a depiction of technology, similar to what existed at Disney since at least the early 1940s.

1964: A critic, writing five years after the Zagreb School earned its name from the French critic Georges Sadoul, and as the studio embraced a more auteur-driven identity that it had started developing in 1957, suggested a different set of three categories. The first category included films which embraced “popular art” and grew out of the late Disney traditions. This category included the films of such figures as Dovniković-Bordo and Vunak. The second type grew out of revolutionary animation styles, but still utilized classic dramatic structures — the presentation of a problem and resolution — developing a single style “both modern and archaic.” These films included those of Vukotić, but also of Kolar, Bourek, and Kostelac. The third type focused almost entirely on artistic form. The aesthetics themselves were the message. To this category, he named *Mimica* and *Kristl* (Bogdanović “San i vrlina” 165).

Problem: In a sense, almost all the Zagreb School films embraced popular art. It's not clear why Bourek, who indulged several avant-garde styles married with folk traditions and whose work grew increasingly difficult, is grouped with Vukotić and not Mimica. It's not clear why the critic points more to late Disney than to UPA.

2000: An anthology of Zagreb School shorts released in the US on VHS and DVD by Rembrandt Films called *The Best of Zagreb Film* offered five categories. "Laugh at Your Own Risk" included gag cartoons. "For Children Only" included children's cartoons. "Nudity Required" included sex comedies. "Be Careful What You Wish For" contained a poorly defined category, made up of tales of "irony, double-cross, and mystery." "The Classic Collection" included the best-known shorts, many of which are suggested to be *sui generis*. A sixth disc, later released, was dedicated to Vukotić's films.

Problem: Plenty of the gag cartoons can be read as sex comedies or children's cartoons. The *sui generis* films, many of them avant-garde experiments, could land in any of the other categories.

2014: In my first interview with him, Dovniković-Bordo himself offered a more simple taxonomy. The first category would include simple gag films, the second, art films, and the third, films which landed somewhere in-between the two.

Problem: At this point in history, it's hard to tell how any animated film produced by the Zagreb School could be considered a pure gag film or a pure art film. *Surogat*, the *Profesor Baltazar* series, and the films featuring the small men follow certain patterns of the gag film. The rhythm of each film is based on a combination of jokes, whether they be visual puns that look as far back as *Fantasmagorie* (Émile Cohl, 1908) or little jumps in narrative actions, disrupting the machinery of the characters. The narratives sometimes follow a classical structure. Others are pastiches.

We can begin to understand the roles of the characters in the films then not by studying the differences in the genres in which they starred, but in considering a possibility that each Zagreb School short, even the most serious and brutal, is a possible gag film. Even the cruelest and scariest films produced by the Zagreb School can elicit laughter. And if, for the sake of argument, we accept each Zagreb School film as a possible gag film, we can turn to Norman Klein, who posits three separate roles for animated characters in the classical Hollywood gag cartoon, a set of categories that spilled over into the classical Hollywood animated feature.

First there is a *controller* who is “allowed to change the rules within the cartoon to suit his whimsy.” This could be someone like Felix who can transform a line into anything that interests him. Then there is an *over-reactor*, who “can discharge his infantile rage without fear of punishment,” similar to Mickey Mouse who exerts untold cruelties upon small animals in *Steamboat Willie* (Ub Iwerks, 1928). Finally, there is the *nuisance* who troubles the hero: “mice, or the ‘bad guy,’ Pegleg Pete, Bluto, the wolf, Elmer out duck-hunting, Yosemite Sam” (37). The *controller* as Klein notes, is often a stand-in for the animators themselves. One could add that in the cases of the *Out of the Inkwell* series (1919-1928) and *Duck Amuck* (Charles M. Jones, 1953),

the *controller* isn't even a stand-in, but the animator himself. We could also point to Dovniković-Bordo and the rest of the members of Zagreb Film as controllers of Drawey in *Tisuću jedan crtež*.

Of the films I will be discussing, *Surogat* most closely follows this model. The tourist, like Felix, designs and redesigns the world around him to his liking. He can also lose control, enacting terrible cruelty in fits of rage upon the sex bomb he invents, becoming an *over-reactor*. The *nuisance* comes in the form of a muscular beach bum who steals the sex bomb away from the hapless tourist.

“A Mostly Bald Fattie”

The tourist in *Surogat*, “the mostly bald fattie,” is in conflict with the animation technology which gave him birth, as well as the technology he himself employs to create his own world.

Surogat treats the body of its star as a figure of contemplation, distilled from the background, a beach made up of block-painted yellow for sand and block-painted blue for water. The film opens on a background that is not quite a blank canvas, though it lacks the excess in the backgrounds of *Piccolo* and *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Submachine-Gun* (Vukotić, 1958) which the viewer can study but never fully absorb. The viewer's attention is drawn towards the tourist who is made up of a yellow gut that vaguely mimics a trapezoid if not for a rounded line, and a triangular nose, a giant mouth, four spider-thin limbs, two beady eyes, a small hat, and pipe. First, he wears a tiny pair of shorts. Then he wears a tiny bathing suit. Organically, the objects and the women he creates may not be in his own image, but they contain

the same organic material and follow the same rhythm of movement as the tourist's. The tourist has a steady, precise walk, his limbs are light, his gut is flabby, jiggling up and down in schematized cycles. He stops in absolute stillness several times, to check the temperature of the water or to savor food. The objects are in turn either completely still or shaped with the same simplicity. The woman is alternately still or a little too thin, and her own spider-like limbs are liquid.

The tourist uses a bicycle pump to transform small, colorful, geometrical shapes, circles, triangles, and quadrilaterals into a fishing pole, a tent, a stove, and a woman. He does not like the first woman he invents. She has a wide waist and small breasts. He pulls a plug and deflates her, and throws out the geometrical shape. He pumps up a new woman, a figure with spider-like limbs, a nice, firm behind, and two long ovular breasts. He pumps her again in order to inflate the breasts further. The tourist is a flat graphic Pygmalion. Accordingly, the jump in size of each object in relation to his bicycle pump reflects the jump movements of limited animation. He holds the woman he creates as a statue in his arms, kissing every geometrical shape of her body, including her breasts, but the woman, refuses his advances. She slaps him and becomes a disobedient machine.

The disobedient machine, the automata who achieves a degree of autonomy apart from his or her inventor, is a convention not only of horror and science fiction, stretching back to the nineteenth century, but also of animation. Scott Bukatman sees the figure both in Gertie's relationship to McCay in *Gertie* and Pinocchio's relationship to Geppetto in *Pinocchio* (Norman Ferguson, et al..., 1940). "[W]hy must they disobey?" Bukatman asks.

Perhaps it is precisely because something that simply follows its programmed instructions will never be anything *more* than an automaton. The spark of life that separates automaton from living being is precisely its assertion of autonomy. The

creation that disobeys does not just come to life: it takes on a life of its *own*.” (142)
(Emphases in the original.)

Before he creates a woman, the tourist proves himself ambivalent about life and death. He closes the eye of a fish before eating it. Meanwhile, the first woman he creates is not to his liking and he does not hesitate to kill her. He attempts to control the sex bomb, make her an object suited to his own desires, namely an object capable of devotion to his own imperfect body. She is only allowed life as long as she fulfills a promise inherent in her body.

The tourist is malevolent. He creates a shark and throws it into the sea so he has the opportunity of saving her life. But after she finally returns his attentions, she is distracted by a muscular beach bum, who appears on water skis. He takes her for his own, and they disappear to an island, where in a long shot, her breasts pump up and down along a horizon. When the camera comes to a close-up on the couple, the viewer sees her simply riding the chest of the beach bum. The viewer can see sexual desire, but can only imagine sex in the flat-graphic world. The tourist can't abide her disobedience. He hides in a tree, and removes the plug which keeps the air in her body. She deflates and becomes a shape herself. The tourist wins, reasserting control.

The beach bum, horrified and depressed, vainly combs his hair, then removes a plug from his own body, committing suicide. The tourist, an amoral killer, packs up his shapes, throws them in his car, and drives away. His car hits a nail, and he and his machines deflate into shapes themselves, leaving behind nothing but the empty background of the film. The animators assert control.

The mostly bald fattie is imperfect. His body is ugly and his personality is mean-spirited. When I've shown the film to students, they respond to him not as a villain in whom to delight. His evil is nowhere near as perfected and purified as the pseudo-pedophilic kidnapper in *Pinocchio* or the witch in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Instead, my students regard him

with mild antipathy. Spiritually, his malevolence isn't grand. It's petty. And yet his movements suggest a perfected precision; his body jumps at precise moments and when he dips his foot into the water to study its temperature, his toe wiggles gently before taking on the firm correct shape of a thermometer. But against the background, it's never clear if he is ever located in the correct part of the *mise-en-scène*, if he's ever really comfortable within the space he has been allotted. His undignified death suggests a clear signal of the imperfect, far outside the realm of the hyperreal. And yet, though the tourist is imperfect, he has not achieved the *ideal* of imperfection.

Klein's *controller / over-reactor / nuisance* model prohibits the tourist from achieving this ultimate ideal. By taking on even at a single moment the role of *controller*, he is endowed with too much power and control over his surroundings, permitting him an ability to achieve moments of perfection, which allows the spectator to forget, at least for a few seconds, the tourist's inherent lacks. A good Titoist citizen should never be given so much power and if given so much power, should use it responsibly. I propose another model which offers a concept for the gag short of the Zagreb School, one for the small man, in which the hero is never permitted a place as a *controller*, and can at times be an *over-reactor*, but whose identity is tied up with another category I call the *under-reactor*.

Under-reactors

In a typical *Profesor Baltazar* short, a member of Baltazar's community suffers a problem. The problem may be existential loneliness in a big city or an inability to pursue one's artistic passion. After the character in question suffers humiliation, Baltazar uses his giant machine to invent a solution. The new invention solves the problem, but not in the way Baltazar

intended. Professor Balthazar is a *controller*, but only for one moment in any given short, and his control is limited. The *nuisance* sometimes comes in the form of a villain, a group of pesky goblins who torment the town, but more often the *nuisance* is an amorphous social problem, not represented by a human or animal malefactor. There are moments of overreaction, quick jumps in emotional responses and odd quirks of movement, but these switches and suspensions of dramatic action are never truly anarchic.

Professor Balthazar is a kind of *controller* with his machine, but he is also another figure whom Klein adds to the narratives of Disney and Looney Tunes' cartoons: a *ensor* — “not only for the moral order, but also like the old Roman office of Censor, the keeper of the census, a presiding official.” For examples, he notes, “Grandma is censor to Sylvester. Pinocchio's censor is his nose. Sometimes the censor is the girlfriend, like Daisy to Donald in the Disney comics of Carl Banks” (44). Professor Balthazar's machine is always there to restore the Third Way project his town pursues. This *ensor* is a useful but unpredictable machine, and the results it produces may be wonderful, but it can never achieve absolute perfection. In other words, Balthazar's machine represents the storyboards, cels, and camera of the animators of the Zagreb School. Balthazar uses his machine to redirect the fantasies of citizens, rethinking the goals of the polis. The project of Balthazar's city is always unfinished. Every happy ending in every short does not assume suffering will cease. The machine will always be there to serve its role. But though the figures who suffer modern maladies are *over-reactors* at times, they are just as likely to withdraw from society, sad and alone, behaving as *under-reactors*, awaiting Balthazar's machine to redirect and reshape them.

If amorphous social problems serve as *nuisances* of the *Professor Baltazar* shorts, in films featuring the small man, such social problems are both *controllers* and *nuisances*. In *Idu*

dani / Passing Days (Dragić, 1969), a lone hero tries to enjoy peace in his apartment, but his quietude is constantly disrupted by, among other figures, police officers who enter his apartment periodically to beat him, a salesman who forces him into a commercial for toothpaste, two opposing political crowds who demand that he take a side, a pompous politician, and through it all, a cheating wife named Matilda, drawn as a giant man-eating monster. The hero of Dvorniković-Bordo's *N.N.* suffers in a similar universe. There is no *mentor*, no answer to solve the problems the film presents. In other films featuring the small man who faces *controllers* and *nuisances*, the small man is cast then as an *under-reactor*, a figure who simply tries to survive without anything like Professor Balthazar's machine.

I will discuss Professor Balthazar in more detail in the following chapter on city. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the small men of *Idu dani* and *N.N.*, the most ideal figures of the Zagreb School.

A Small Man

The "small man," *mali čovjek*, is the most ubiquitous archetype of the Zagreb School. There is no one small man. In *N.N.*, he is made up of thinning and thickening ink lines. In *Znatiželja / Curiosity* (Dvorniković-Bordo, 1966) he is a pure white figure. In *Samac*, he is made up of clean, colored geometric shapes, and wears a business suit. In *Idu dani*, he wears a bathrobe. He can wear glasses. He can be stripped down to his essentials to the point of complete nudity, and reveal his phallus, either flaccid or erect. Every now and then, he is given a name, like Mek the reluctant soldier in *Manevri / Maneuvers* (Dvorniković-Bordo, 1971), but for the most part he is defined either by his universality or his tragic anonymity.

The “small man” — and it is always a man — is easily aroused. He doesn’t appreciate the female form as a whole, so much as her parts, particularly the breasts and buttocks, which are always exaggerated to near monstrous proportions. In *Krek* (Dovniković-Bordo, 1967), the small man slides down the side of a giant woman’s breast. In *Tup Tup* (Dragić, 1972) and *Jedan dan života / One Day of Life* (Dovniković-Bordo, 1982), the small man swims in a sea of breasts. (With the exception of *Satiemania* [Zdenko Gasparović, 1978], the Zagreb School films are never erotic. They depict sex but they aren’t sexy. They depict arousal, but they don’t arouse.) The small man is more often than not frustrated in his attempts to achieve sexual conquest. When he does have sex, he isn’t very good at it. His marriages, when he is married, are miserable. His libido is inextricable from his other bodily functions. He eats, drinks, urinates, and defecates. He may die. In the Bakhtinian sense, he is a unified man performing all his functions from ejaculation to defecation often at the same exact time.

If the small man has a job, he works in the city. Sometimes he works in an office, sometimes in a factory. The jobs are never satisfying and he entertains an active and often hallucinogenic dream life, the soundtrack of which is made up of jazz or pop music, synthesizers or classical music, indicative of suppressed passions. He is often middle-aged. He will grow older. He may die. In all likelihood, he will not achieve his dreams.

For the animation historian Midhat Ajanović Ajan, as noted earlier, the small man serves as a representative for the small nation of Yugoslavia. But the small man is also a critic of those problems as they exist in Yugoslavia. His criticisms are pre-intellectual but not unintelligent. And for all his criticisms, he only now and then offers solutions to problems. “I always distanced myself from policy,” Mimica says (Personal Interview). More accurate English translations of the title of Mimica’s film *Samac* — conventionally the term means “bachelor,” but can also

mean “loner,” not “alone” — describe the essence of the “small man.” The “small man” tries to stand apart, afraid of the collective, any collective, maintaining a watchful knowing eye on what he sees from a distance.

At what point does the viewer identify with the small man? The heroes of *Idu dani* and *N.N.*, who suffer the boredom and humiliations of daily life, are mirrors of the viewer’s own ennui and mortality. The tourist in *Surogat*, however, is a figure of ridicule and his urges are silly. As a creator, he is a particularly cruel self-portrait of the animators. A viewer can graft his own personality onto the small man. The viewer can also step back from the small man and contemplate him as a figure whose pain and frustrations are no more affective than those of the Coyote or Elmer Fudd.

Dovniković-Bordo says that he dislikes the term “small man,” preferring instead *običan čovjek*, or “regular man” (Personal Interview 2017), what in the American vernacular would be called a “common man.” The distinction is subtle. The two descriptors show up in Dragić’s bare five-paragraph treatment for *Idu dani*, in which the hero is described first as “a completely regular man” and then as a “small, peaceful citizen” (“Idu dani” 188). In this context, “small” suggests a character who is put-upon, constantly oppressed either by material concerns, such as warfare, pollution, noise, and poverty, namely the man-made problems that affect any member of a given society, whom we call a “citizen.” “Regular” suggests more existential concerns, the fear of mortality and the boredom of existence. The small man was not born small. He was made small. The regular man has always been regular. The figures I examine here, the figures most commonly considered “small men,” are both “small” and “regular.”¹⁰

¹⁰ The anti-Disney movement in the U.S. also invented many men who lacked the fully-realized, often rotoscoped humans of classical Hollywood animation, such as Fleischer’s Superman or Disney’s Snow White. Inevitably, the stripped-down flat graphics of the anti-Disney movement

diminished these figures. Mr. Magoo is defined by his blindness. The adversaries in the Academy-Award-winning Terrytoons short *Flebus* (Ernest Pintoff, 1957) are explicitly called neurotic. Limited animation imposed limits on the human which manifested in specific disabilities, either physical or mental. These men are defined uni-dimensionally, in terms of their disabilities and the disabilities themselves remain under-examined. Unlike the small men of the Zagreb School, Mr. Magoo and Flebus are representatives of traits, not men.

The Zagreb School's small man has less distant cousins in the Soviet Bloc. Laura Pontieri studies Mamin, the hero of Fyodor Khitruk's *Istoriya odnogo prestupleniya / The Story of a Crime* (1962), in considerable detail. Mamin commits a murder in a public square, after a 24-hour period in which he has suffered the degradations of a society which has encroached upon his private life. Pontieri describes the film as a "representation of that particular moment of conjuncture of liberalization and restriction that characterized the Thaw era, when an individual strove to assert himself as an entity autonomous from society, yet still had to balance his own identity with the collective ideal of a communist world" (100). In *Istoriya odnogo prestupleniya*, Mamin strives for a private life, where he can read the newspaper and watch television, work quietly in his office, and avoid his neighbors. His crime, the murder of a neighbor, is a public act. "He is completely exposed; there is nothing intimate, secret, or private left" (100). The film is about the thin boundary between right and wrong, and about the difficulty of defining morality in consideration of the individual's responsibility to himself and to society. *Istoriya odnogo prestupleniya* is grounded in Khrushchev-era Moscow. The characters follow Soviet stereotypes. The film directly references Soviet economic models and construction projects (109). Mamin can never escape a Soviet identity or the fraught, ambiguous moment in history in which he is cursed to live. But like Flebus and Mr. Magoo, his personality is also relatively uni-dimensional. He is defined not in terms of a physical or emotional disability, but in terms of a moral conundrum, of whether or not he is a victim or perpetrator.

The Pannonia studio in Hungary fathered the least distantly related cousin to the Yugoslav small man, the eponymous star of the *Gusztáv / Gustavus* series (1961-1977). Gustavus is a low-level bureaucrat, almost always dressed in a simple grey shirt and hat. Most of the auteurs at Pannonia had a hand in at least one of the 120 five-minute shorts which ran over the course of several seasons, serving at various turns as director, designer, or scriptwriter. The shorts followed a similar pattern. Gustavus navigates a city that is clearly Budapest, surrounded by Austro-Hungarian architecture and modern apartment buildings. But the details which fill the backgrounds in a *Gusztáv* short are more authentic. Art Nouveau sculptures border the doorways of apartment buildings. A collection of tin mailboxes make up the sole decoration of those buildings' lobbies. Mini-towers at street corners are overrun with posters. The parks are lush with trees and fountains, but the benches are often missing a leg which no one bothers to fix. The backgrounds are rough and these details are suggestive not just of Budapest of an essential Hungarian-ness. Within this city grounded in reality, Gustavus faces problems that are either material or existential, not all that different from those suffered by the small men of the Zagreb School.

In *Gusztáv elidegenedik / Gustavus and Alienation* (Marcell Jankovics and Ildikő Sz. Szilágyi, 1976), Gustavus contends with urban loneliness and misanthropy. He bumps into people on the street who look like billiard balls. Restaurant patrons masticate like machinery. The apartment building where he lives is populated by a diverse group of citizens, men and women, staring out the windows, depressed, and the facade of the building fades into a

In their attempt at but never full achievement of psychological unity, the figures of the Zagreb School suggest their lack of perfection is a tragic reality, but also that unperfection is an ideal, a means of joining the various aspects of the nightmarish carnival of modern life. In their attempt to reveal their full selves they achieve something close to dignity. The mess of the studio, the unfinished lines, the paint and ink that will never fully ignore the ugliness on the

crossword puzzle. In his apartment, Gustavus tries to relax. He answers a phone which turns into a parrot squawking and then hangs up, preferring to be alone. He points a gun at an obnoxious figure on the television screen, Elvis Presley-like, shoots, and somehow kills the figure on the screen without destroying his television. He tries to commit suicide using his tie as a noose, but the tie breaks and he falls to the ground like a fool. He eventually leaves his apartment and walks slowly to a construction site, where he hides in an industrial pipe. The camera pulls back to reveal many lonely men and women who have made the same decision and find themselves in their own pipes.

The animation of the body in a *Gusztáv* short, particularly in its final seasons, is limited. In *Gusztáv elidegenedik*, the movement matches the stilted, slow melancholy of the hero, but the drama in each short is focused on Gustavus's remarkable, deceptively simple pale face against the drab green-and-black mise-en-scène, with which the color of his non-deceptively simple body merges. Jankovics, one of the many auteurs of Pannonia to lend his hand to Gustavus, was most influenced by Ken Russell and Federico Fellini, and the clown-like contortions of faces one locates throughout his oeuvre (Personal Interview). Gustavus's face stretches and contracts, revealing joy, sadness, and anger. He achieves an idea of unity from short-to-short. In one short, he attempts to solve the problem of existential loneliness. In another he tries to discover the joys in country life. In a third, he contends with lust. He changes from short to short, but he never experiences the full range of his emotions or experiences at the same time, and the remarkable changes in his face do not find expression in his body.

Collectively the shorts provide a portrait of the "goulash communism" that had emerged under the leadership of János Kádár. Gustavus struggles in a socialist system that offers hints of reform that are always inadequate, and which incorporates true non-communists into the conversation of how society should be built. (This model stands in contrast to the Yugoslav model in which the most prominent critics usually adhered to the logic of socialism.) The promises of technological progress and societal order are false, as is whatever comfort can be found in the signs of Budapest's roots in a long-dead empire. Gustavus is small because no one in his world is allowed to be anything other than small. (When Jankovics had grown bored by the character, he says he suggested promoting Gustavus to a manager, only to be turned down.) How should one feel about Gustavus? He elicits sympathy as much as condemnation. He can be kind and warm or cruel and petty. The Gustavus of *Gusztáv elidegenedik* is a particularly difficult case. It's ambiguous how much Gustavus himself is responsible for his own suffering.

verso side of the cel, all depicted in *Tisuću jedan crtež*, thus become the various means to articulate that which everyone in the studio knows can never be fully articulable.

Idu dani and *N.N.* take a convention seen in *Surogat* one step further; both are set in totally blank white spaces. The small men in these films could as easily live in Zagreb as any other city in Yugoslavia or the world as a whole. Dragić explains his strategy. “The whiteness came to me as an idea of space through associations. I needed the illusion of a house, family, environment, people, storm, war..., but for all it to be in one place so as to conjure up passage through one life” (to Ajan, “Linija Rijeći” 415). The blank canvas serves as an empty space upon which the viewer can place his own associations, but it also concentrates attention on the body in its entirety. In both *Idu dani* and *N.N.*, a world outside may encroach on the body’s privacy and the individual’s autonomy, but the body always retains something sacred and separate.

Idu dani and *N.N.* may call society’s values into question, but they do not ask how the small man is supposed to behave. The small man exhibits an instinct for survival, an instinct to maintain his unity, which is in itself a criticism of the society and the modern era in which he lives.

Idu dani

Idu dani was made in the middle of Dragić’s most vital period both as a comics creator and as a filmmaker. It’s particularly useful to read the film in terms of his other shorts as well as the comics he produced in this period.

In 1966, Dragić published a collection of cartoons, *Lekiskon za nepismene*, or *Dictionary for the Illiterate*. Each cartoon in the book is a caricature of an idea. The jokes can be light

comments on aesthetics. “Apstrakcija” / “Abstraction”¹¹ depicts an abstract body who attempts and fails to understand a realistic painting. In “Arhitektura” / “Architecture,” a gentleman drawn as a caricature from a fin-de-siècle comic emerges from a gothic house and greets a man drawn as a collection of geometric shapes emerging from a modernist home. The jokes can be grim. In “Cenzura” / “Censorship” a man stands with a giant pair of scissors in one hand and his own decapitated head in another. In a two-page spread entitled “Civilizacija” / “Civilization,” Dragić depicts the progression from a hangman’s scaffold, to a guillotine, to an electric chair, and finally to the brick wall of a concentration camp alongside canisters of Zyklon B. Each cartoon is distilled. Each joke is self-contained. Together, the cartoons coalesce into a theme: Civilization is a lie. We are just as barbaric today as we were when we lived in caves.

There is no one depiction of a body in *Leksikon za nepismene*. In “Banka” / “Bank,” homunculi with thick black eyes and their hands splayed out into thin lines surround a giant mouse trap containing money instead of cheese. In “Bar,” the cartoon on the opposite page, a heavy footed, squarish waiter, hidden in shadows, and with a threatening gait, carries a tray with a bottle of wine and a bare-chested woman. There is something consistent to these caricatures. More often than not, Dragić employs the thinnest of pens to describe his men and women. The bodies are incompletely drawn. The line articulating the limbs of his men often fade out into nothing, and the lines often break for no apparent reason. However long Dragić actually spent drawing any particular body, their fragility suggests impermanence. The surroundings in which his men live and the objects they handle — paper money, an Austro-Hungarian city with a church skyline — are often thicker, heavily inked. They loom over these figures. Dragić articulates a heavy static world, but the men are articulated as figures created in light, fleeting

¹¹ The book has not been translated to English. The translations are my own.

moments. The book is ripe for an animated adaptation in which figures pass through one panel and head into another, where they will be rearticulated and recreated again.

The worlds which feature in two of Dragić's films of the early 1970s — *Tup Tup* and *Dnevnik* — illustrate my proposed animated version of *Leksikon za nepismene*. In both films Dragić employs his skills as a caricaturist to create long, comical, visual poems. In *Tup Tup*, the main figure, a thin man in pajamas, remains constant, as he navigates a post-apocalyptic dreamscape of doors that open out of nowhere, cities which collapse and morph in the background, and a giant sea of women's breasts. *Dnevnik*, which was made after Dragić visited the US for the first time, opens with the hand of the animator, scribbling the title of the film, and then chronicles a figure as he morphs from a representative of one twentieth-century artistic school to a representative of another. These artistic styles represent high culture (abstract expressionism), mass culture (cartoon mice), the aesthetics of the Upper West Side (Saul Steinberg, a personal favorite of Dragić), a giant rat that would have been comfortable in a Ralph Bakshi film, several child-like scribbles, and a faintly drawn man, made up of whispery lines who could be easily found in *Leksikon za nepismene*. The backgrounds change just as often, between a New York high-society party, an elaborate highway system, and farmland. The commercial and aesthetic ideals are at war with each other throughout the film. If the main figure is a self-portrait of Dragić as traveler, they depict an artist imagining and redefining his sensibilities in a country in which aesthetics are at the mercy of commerce.

In both films, Dragić employs AI animation, a technique by which each frame of film captures one phase of drawing, so that the body remains fluid and avoids all forms of stasis. The approach stands in marked contrast to most of the films of the Zagreb School, particularly those Vukotić had envisioned towards the end of his career as an animator in the early 1960s. The

result of this strategy differs in the two films. *Tup Tup* employs the “squish and squash” principle of early Disney animation. The body of the main figure maintains the same volume, always returning to his body’s essence, no matter how many violations he suffers. He is, as Eisenstein would say, plasmatic. In *Dnevnik*, the A1 animation makes sense of the aesthetic evolution of the main figure’s body. It also serves as a self-portrait for the artist. As a “diary,” it tracks the constant evolution of the Dragić’s own sensibilities, and the protean nature of artistic influence. The figures in *Dnevnik* are imperfect, in that they are studied travesties of animation. *Dnevnik* includes a figure picked from the pencil-test stage of animation production. A homosexual cartoon mouse attempts to seduce a heterosexual cartoon cat at a cocktail party.

The small man of *Idu dani* is more typical of how Ajan imagines the archetype, as a figure who criticizes Yugoslav society and global politics as a whole.

At the beginning of *Idu dani*, a man sits in a simple chair, wearing nothing but a bathrobe. He is a thicker man than most of the Zagreb School’s small men and his long ovular nose is more pronounced than Drawey’s. A lone lightbulb hangs from a fragile wire from the top of the frame. Tomica Simović’s frenetic score announces that any attempt to maintain this small man’s world will be upset over and over again. Dragić’s camera pans quickly across the blank space to the man’s supposed wife named Matilda, whose very appearance is the short’s first grotesque joke. She is a voluptuous monster, a gorgon, made up of giant breasts, a thickly lipsticked mouth and wild, scraggly blonde hair. She smokes a pipe. The two puffs which emit from her pipe, articulated by Dörr’s sound effects as two pops of bubblegum, make up the short’s second joke. A closet door materializes next to her, and a lover kisses her. Her mouth opens wide and she sucks the man into her body whole. The third joke. The camera pans back to the lone man, who blows out the lightbulb as if it were a candle. Joke four. A door materializes and opens

next to him. A policeman enters the frame and beats him violently. The man sniffs the air. He collapses into his chair which has become a liquid mass and nearly drowns. Thus concludes the first minute of a ten-minute film.

In his analysis of the animation script, Paul Wells describes “micro-narratives”:

Micro-narratives function as the core principle of much animated film because of its intrinsic ability to amplify the small-scale incident. A conversation, a singular event, a motif or iconic image, a cycle of metamorphosis, the extrapolation of a visual source, a spot gag, etc., becomes a concentrated ‘narrative,’ intensified by the way in which all the aspects of the imagery carries with it the specific weight of ‘deliberate choice.’ There is no ‘accidental’ in animation, and consequently, all of its elements take on associative weight, accumulating into a mode of storytelling which self-consciously constructs its formal idioms to work as *saturated* image forms, where character, colour, context and choreography all simultaneously and equally *signify* meaning. (“Boards, Beats, Binaries and Bricolage” 90) (Emphasis in the original.)

The gags of *Idu dani* are anything but “accidental.” They carry the “deliberate choice” of Dragić. And it is this fact, the conscious understanding we hold that each of these gags are weird, not quite fit into a clear narrative, which makes them acceptable. The gags appear nonsensical for the first minute or so, but an overall narrative eventually develops as the conflicts around these jokes periodically build: man versus the institution of marriage, man versus woman, man versus the police state, man versus nature, man versus civilization, man versus the consumer society, man versus groupthink, man versus technological advancement. And throughout, like the tourist of *Surogat*: man versus the confines of the animation medium, particularly the limited animation of the Zagreb School.

The door opens again, and two policemen emerge. Dörr suggests the beating with what sounds like the dribbling of a basketball. The gags become more bizarre. Three spies enter in long trench coats and beat him again, the sounds again recalling the sound of a dribbling basketball. They leave and in the far distance, the man sees four men carry a horse with a man atop it, as if they were carrying a sedan. A man enters the room swimming, but when the small

man tries to imitate him he dives onto a hard floor. Three policemen enter to beat him again. An angelic woman appears and offers him an apple, as if she were Eve. He refuses, sits on an armchair and reads a book. One of the secret agents returns to take the book, tears it up, and then opens a closet where the skeleton of the man Matilda has eaten stands. Matilda re-enters the frame, carried on the back of a man. She slaps the small man and kicks him into the closet after the skeleton flees. She grabs the secret service agent to ride with her. They run off screen and have sex, the sounds of their lovemaking articulated by animalistic sucking and sighing. (“Oh, to see that!” the viewer wonders.) The small man steps onto a scaffold and prepares to hang himself. The lover Matilda had captured runs across the screen. Before the small man can carry out his suicide, a large crowd runs up from the distance to applaud his performance. Disgruntled and insulted, the hero removes his noose. The crowd, disappointed, pummels him. The hero becomes the victim of mass violence, in the form of two crowds of opposed political groups, one coded as purple, the other green, the same palette Vukotić had employed to describe the opposing factions in *Piccolo* ten years earlier in 1959. When the political groups run off into the background, there is yet another micro-narrative, as one member of the purple gang runs across to join the green group. The small man finds himself in a war zone. He faces a firing squad. Richard III makes a brief appearance, screaming “A Kingdom for a Horse,” and takes the hero as a horse for himself.

If in *Tup Tup* and *Dnevnik*, a small man passes through from one single-panel cartoon to the next, in *Idu dani*, the small man remains static and the jokes of each single-panel cartoon collapse against each other into his space, his private world. The man is no longer separately fighting the police state and a terrible marriage, from one moment to the next. He is fighting both the police state and a terrible marriage at the exact same time. His body achieves moments of

stasis throughout the film. Dragić holds his body still for the length of a few frames, while other bodies and objects move around him. Blood may spurt out of his body after he is beaten by the children Matilda conceived in an affair, but he always returns to form, never quite squishing and squashing as much as being granted a jump cut back to his essential self. The cross-hatching that describes the small man's slippers spills in and out of the frame of the man's body, and the faint yellow dash of paint that articulates part of his body, keeps appearing and disappearing. He's not a fragile figure. The line articulating his body remains thick. Nine years after *Tisuću jedan crtež*, it's apparent that the Zagreb School's inkers are still carefully articulating the body from cel to cel, maintaining a continuity of character. The hero of *Idu dani* never visually carries the physical scars of the many violations he suffers.

And though he faces death, he doesn't die. In the final and weakest gag of the film, the small man opens a series of doors each revealing graveyards. He closes them all, and is left alone again in a blank space, where he repeatedly beats himself in animated cycles, the repeats of movements, which Vukotić had warned against nine years earlier as a lazy strategy to compensate for a small budget. The small man of *Idu dani* rejects his mortality, and chooses to be as deathless as Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck, a decision which becomes a curse. Who would want to live in such an indestructible body? Immortality is hardly an ideal state, and as such, the hero of *Idu dani* may come close, but in the end he fails to achieve the absolute ideal of unperfection.

N.N.

In *N.N.*, Dovniković-Bordo's film, the body is constantly moving, even as the main character stands still. The lines which articulate the body pulse, reflecting slight differences in the inking on cels from one frame to the next. The hero's blood constantly flows. He is filled with nervous energy. He is never permitted stasis. Such qualities can be found throughout the history of limited animation. Fyodor Khitruk's *Istoriya odnogo prestupleniya / Story of a Crime* (1962) tells the story of a man in Khrushchev-era Moscow who is forced into committing a murder. David MacFadyen writes, "Khitruk's film is based upon flat chromatic blocks, stylized in accelerated, jerky motions to represent nervous bodies, overworked cars, and other overly mobile forms" (144). The same could be said for many of the Zagreb School's city films, particularly *Samac*, which studies similar themes but is far more sympathetic to its hero. In *N.N.*, the "jerky motions" have been entirely incorporated into the body of the small man. The sound pulses inside him. His body articulates his unseen surroundings. He is never allowed to stand still completely still, a commonly utilized dramatic technique in limited animation, including many of Dovniković-Bordo's other films. Like sound itself, this small man is always moving through time and space, as he heads to his inevitable death, achieving an ultimate ideal which eludes Dragić's hero.

I have pointed out several times throughout this chapter that amorphous social problems function as Klein's *controller* in Zagreb School films. I would like to claim that whatever Dovniković-Bordo's claims on the point of animation — "animation is not opera" — that sound, along with amorphous problems, are the *controllers* of *N.N.* A first screening of *N.N.* shows that sound both works upon the small man and reinvents him. And yet throughout the film, the small man's body moves just a few noticeable frames ahead of the accompanying sound effects. If the opposite were true, if sound slightly preceded image, I could say that this small man is always

thrust a little too far into a future for which he is not ready. Instead, I must say that it is the body that willingly and happily moves forward into a future for which he is not ready.

Such facts follow the story of the film's production. Dovniković-Bordo says he wrote and drew the film first. Dörr then provided him with a few hundred sound effects, various possible sounds of the city and apartment life, and gibberish speech (Personal Interview 2017). (In a pointed remembrance, Dovniković-Bordo sent me, he notes that Dörr, "interpreted even two characters in the same time. Watching a movie, you could swear that you understand what designed figures talk about. At the same time Dörr managed not to repeat himself in the talking and continued holding the logical rhythm" ["Irreplaceable Miljenko Dörr"]). Dörr asserts himself into the film, declaring himself and the world of *Tisuću jedan crtež* in *N.N.* Truthfully, the small man of *N.N.* can exist without this sound man. If you watch the film in total silence, the narrative is relatively plain. We don't need Dörr to tell us the small man is listening to a couple copulating when he gets an erection. But the sound makes him more complete, more full, more unperfect.

The small man of *Idu dani* is defined by his suffering, by a life in conflict. The small man of *N.N.* is defined as a consummate observer. He reacts to what he experiences, but he is not just an *under-reactor*. He is perhaps, a new figure we can add to our taxonomy, a *reactor*, who responds, more or less appropriately to what he experiences. He is not so different from Dovniković-Bordo, as he appears as himself in *Tisuću jedan crtež*, experiencing a minor nuisance on the Number 4 tram in Zagreb but not overreacting or underreacting to the experience.

N.N. understands the tragedy of this *reactor*. The hero of *N.N.* resists his mortality, running as far as he can into the distance, his surroundings, articulated by Dörr first as a passing train and then as a circus, fading in and out. He eventually stops and gives up. He disintegrates

into a pillar of dust, a cracking of the ink on the cel. A still shot of a casket surrounded by a city-size crowd of mourners follows. No longer an observer in life, he is, in death, the observed. There is nothing left to react to, but in life he has fulfilled the promise of his unperfection. He has also achieved the ideal of unperfection in his dignified, natural death. In his final moment, he remains true to his own self, an observer of society.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on animated bodies which are placed against a blank space and on live-action bodies placed in the darkened corridors of a film studio. It has argued that each of these bodies informs the concept of the small man as an unperfect figure, a being who will intentionally, not unintentionally lack perfection. The unperfect man, in other words, is a product of the imperfect men and their labor in the Zagreb Film studio.

But most of the bodies of the Zagreb School's films did not inhabit blank screens. They inhabited heavily detailed spaces, cities with highways and restaurants, and war zones with bombs and guns. In the following chapters, I will study how the themes developed in this chapter on these unperfect figures, can be located in the Zagreb School's studies of the urban environment, war and violence. The unperfect man's mortality, the unity of his organic functions, and his role as a self-portrait of Zagreb Film's laborers informs what we will understand as the unperfect cities of the Zagreb School and the greater fears of mass violence.

In both classical Hollywood animation, and at Zagreb Film as it is depicted in *Tisuću jedan crtež*, the body is drawn first and the backgrounds second. Sometimes these backgrounds

are as unperfect and as ideal as the bodies themselves. Sometimes, the backgrounds exist as a stage for battle, for the bodies of the Zagreb School to achieve unperfection against all odds.

Chapter 3

Inventing the City, Inventing “City”

The Zagreb School builds many cities. Or rather, it builds *one* city made up of multitudes. The Zagreb School’s animators do not reinvent Zagreb, but rather the fundamental concept of “city.” Just as the Titoist citizen is transformed and is remade again and again, so does the Zagreb School’s city avoid stasis, undergoing several formations and reformations, from one film to the next, and often within the same film. Still, there is a near-constant in the Zagreb School’s city: a memory of its citizens’ roots outside the borders of the polis. The Zagreb School’s city is at once modern and antediluvian.

At the end of World War II, only one tenth of Yugoslavia’s population lived in cities with over twenty thousand residents. By 1971, the percentage of the country’s urban population had quadrupled and the population of Zagreb alone had doubled. About half of the Zagreb School’s auteurs were among the country’s new urbanites. Dušan Vukotić was born in Bileća, a small town in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and grew up in Montenegro. Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo was born in a small town near Osijek in Slavonia and Zlatko Bourek also came from the region in northeastern Croatia. Pavao Štalter grew up in a wine-producing village near the Hungarian border, also in Slavonia, and attended school with Bourek in Osijek (Štalter). Vatroslav Mimica grew up in Omiš in southern Dalmatia. Mimica’s memory of the small town speaks to a proto-filmic experience; he recalls townspeople at the shore “looking in a continuous uninterrupted movement and eternal creation of a new movement” (Personal Interview). These animators experienced Zagreb as migrants, but anyone living in Zagreb in the 1950s and ’60s, whether they were born in the city or otherwise, would have witnessed a rapidly transforming environment.

“Yugoslav cities...became machines for remaking people,” the architectural historians Vladimir Kulić and Maroje Mrduljaš write (120). The machinery could be discovered in the shapes that arose in the city of Zagreb as well as in the shapes that were designed within the walls of Zagreb Film.

Although the animators consider their films representative of global concerns, their urban landscapes are Yugoslav. The Zagreb School rarely depicts a city specifically called Zagreb, although there are exceptions; Štalter’s historical study *Kuća Br. 42 / House Number 42* (1984), for instance, is set in Trg bana Jelačića in the early twentieth century. Still, despite the animators’ claims that they did not use Zagreb as a model (Mimica; Dovniković-Bordo, Personal Interview 2017), other films depict cities with obvious or semi-obvious Balkan inflections. Bourek’s funky, pop backgrounds in the *Professor Balthazar / Profesor Baltazar* series (1967-1977) are influenced by the coastal city of Rijeka (Bourek). Dovniković-Bordo’s *Jedan dan života / One Day of Life* (1982) consciously depicts a Balkan world where workingmen drink from small glasses at bars while talking about women’s breasts (Dovniković-Bordo, Personal Interview 2017); the film’s original script compares one character to a figure from the turn-of-the-century Serbian play *Koštana* (Dovniković-Bordo, “Jedan dan života” 359). The young fan of Hollywood westerns in *Cowboy Jimmy* (Vukotić, 1957) sits in a *kino*. Sometimes, the inflections are noticeable only to the most attentive spectator eager to absorb the entire *mise-en-scène*. Mimica claims that the Dalí-like landscape in *Happy End* (1958) does not reflect the remains of a Croatian, nor, more generally, a Balkan city. In the backgrounds, however, drawn again by Bourek, one can find the word *riba*, the Croato-Serbian word for fish, an unexplained flourish, tucked into a corner of the frame. Still, to describe these films as “Yugoslav” requires a conception of “Yugoslav” not only as a marker of a nation in Southeastern Europe but as a

marker of a human identity in the post-World War II era. In Nikola Kostelac's *Nocturno* (1958), anthropomorphized cars race through highways that have as much in common with the arteries in Los Angeles with the new projects in Novi Zagreb. The grating traffic congestion and noise pollution in Mimica's *Mala kronika / Everyday Chronicle* (1962), like the exuberant vision in *Nocturno*, predates the explosion of car culture in Belgrade and Zagreb by a few short years. The films remark on a universal conception of urbanity, while also anticipating the problems of rapid urban growth at home. And it should also be noted that the bank robber in *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Sub-Machine Gun* (Vukotić, 1958) robs a *bank* (English word!), not a *banka*.

For the Zagreb School, the city is the home of modernity. The animators are architects who construct houses, apartment buildings, factories, municipal institutions, theaters, roads, railroads, and bridges with precise colors and geometric shapes. Technological progress might require tragic compromises. These settings can be exuberant, but the structures of modernity alienate. Like the actual cities of Yugoslavia, the Zagreb School's animators never fully solve the housing shortage, traffic congestion, or noise pollution.

In the Zagreb School, city dwellers search for and locate their proper places in society. The city is the home of bureaucrats, flower sellers, factory workers, buskers, policemen, criminals, businessmen, prostitutes, and office drones. Sometimes, the urbanite fails to find their proper place, or pure happiness in their proper place. The Zagreb School's city is never a utopia and citizens must accept compromises for their own and the city's good.

The city is the site of commerce and culture. Some consumer products are harmless. Others are dangerous. Colorful flat graphic stylizations make them exquisite. The city is also the

home of opera, jazz, and rock and roll, restaurants, bars, sports, and, quite often, movie theaters which show more non-Yugoslav than Yugoslav films.

In short, the city of the Zagreb School, like its small men and ordinary citizens, is unperfect.

The most Yugoslav element of the Zagreb School's city, however, lies in its roots in a region associated with the primitive. The historian Mark Mazower describes the Western fascination with the Balkan peasant: "[T]he idea of modernity in nineteenth-century Europe, with its sharp sense of time moving ahead fast encouraged a view of the Balkans as a place where 'time has stood still'" (15). The animators indulge this foreign stereotype of themselves and relocate this figure to the urban landscape. In the city, the peasant is born anew, via the visual stimuli of the post-World War II world. "The visual image of today must come to terms with all this: it must evolve a language of space which is adjusted to the new standards of experience," the Hungarian-American artist György Kepes wrote in 1944. "This new language can and will enable the human sensibility to perceive space-time relationships never recognized before" (14).¹² Reinvent the Balkanite. Reinvent man.

I'll pause here to compare this admittedly abstract description of the Zagreb School's city to the city of Orson Welles's Kafka adaptation *The Trial* (1962), the most famous film to use Zagreb as a shooting location. Zagreb, as Welles said in a BBC interview, "had both that rather sleazy modern, which is a part of the style of the film, and these curious decayed roots that ran right down into the dark heart of the 19th century" (to Wheldon). Welles places Kafka's Josef K., played by Anthony Perkins, in a city with no proper names. I will return the proper names to

¹² As noted in the first chapter of this dissertation, Kepes's *Language of Vision* heavily influenced artists at the United Productions of America (UPA), but not the animators of the Zagreb School.

Welles's city. In the final sequence, Josef K. stands in the empty square in front of the gothic Zagreb Cathedral where he is grabbed by two policemen (Raoul Delfosse and Jean-Claude Rémoleux) and dragged through Gradec, in a circuitous path along the narrow streets lined with Austro-Hungarian architecture as well as small interwar modernist buildings, finally passing through the Stone Gate. It's nighttime and Edmond Richard's camera fetishizes every stone. The film cuts several hours forward into daylight, as well as a few kilometers south, past a modernist building near the Sava River. The compositions are menacing, layered with whites on whites. In the next jump, Josef K. and the policemen are a kilometer or so north, in the desolate, infertile fields behind the main train station, not visible on screen, near the site of today's main bus station.¹³ Zagreb's cityscape was emerging at the time *The Trial* was filmed, and the modern buildings were meant to define a new city for a new country, but for Welles, these modern buildings when placed next to the well-preserved Austro-Hungarian architecture envision an uncanny world, unmoored from time.

The policemen throw Josef K. into a quarry. They position themselves on either side of him, passing a knife to each other, suggesting the other perform the final murder. In the novel, one of the policemen jabs the knife into Josef K.'s stomach, an intimate killing, more primal than the depersonalized deaths in the war that was being fought at the time Kafka was writing *The Trial*. In Welles's film the two policemen walk out of the quarry, and after Josef K. dares them to kill him, they light and throw a stick of dynamite into the ditch. The film cuts to an extreme long shot of an explosion, black smoke over the fields.

¹³ Leon Rizmaul, the co-producer of *The Other Side of Orson Welles*, a documentary about Welles's lifelong relationship with the former Yugoslavia, provided me with this information during a personal tour of Zagreb.

There are several similarities between Welles's city and the city of the Zagreb School. The abstract themes of the Zagreb School would lead the animators to invent a city that like the city of *The Trial*, would combine Croatian, Yugoslav, and Balkan cultural markers with details that suggest a more universal city, one that could be found in any industrialized or industrializing country in post-World War II Europe or North America. As in *The Trial*, the Zagreb School's city serves as a stage for a small man/ordinary citizen to enact his suffering. Still there is a clear difference between the city of *The Trial* and the city of the Zagreb School. The Zagreb School never forgets a past, one not necessarily contained within the geography of the city, but in the rural subconscious of the city's urbanites, located out of sight of the actual city depicted on-screen. Its films combine the urban and the rural, as well as the socialist and the capitalist, all in search of a constantly morphing, unstable future, and towards the creation of a Yugoslav national identity. The city of the Zagreb School does not "remake" its citizens into new men, as much as help them realize exactly who they are. The city teaches them how to retain what they may have left behind in their small villages and towns. In the modern city, these men discover their Yugoslav-ness as well as something more essential and more difficult to change.¹⁴

¹⁴ Animation has a long history of capturing the modern city, and in doing so, aiding the modern project to reinvent the citizen-subject. Paul Wells locates this history in the Silly Symphony *Building a Building* (David Hand, 1933). In the short, Pegleg Pete chases Mickey Mouse through the skeleton of a new skyscraper. "At the very moment, when Mickey balances precariously on the girders which constitute a new skyscraper — steeped in its role as the symbol of aspiration for the new America, and literally 'reaching for the skies' in the desire to be closer to Godhead — he is imbued with an old style faith as he defies gravity" ("*Building a Building*" 128). Mickey Mouse is more symbol than character, but he maintains an essential American-ness as he stands perched atop a skyscraper, the ultimate symbol of his national identity in the pre-World War II era.

Wells notes films which use the modern technology of animation to express their fear of modernity and the modern city in particular. *Mr. Bugs Goes to Town* (Dave Fleischer, 1941) tells the story of an insect who travels to Manhattan, only to find himself in a "rooftop cottage" of the bug community where he discovers "the very struggle of 'modernity' right at the heart of the narrative: the specific architecture of New York used as a metaphor for the primacy of a real

Authenticity

By conceiving an essential Yugoslav the Zagreb School indulges a belief in an authentic Yugoslavia. In two early films, *Cowboy Jimmy* and *Ljubav i film / Love and Film* (Ivo Vrbanić, 1961), the Zagreb School defines the Yugoslav urbanite by casting him as a moviegoer, and a watcher of non-Yugoslav films, a cosmopolitan role they often played in real life in the 1950s and '60s. Both films consider the line between the artifice Yugoslav spectators witness on screen, as they sit together in the dark, and the supposed authenticity — a constructed idea of authenticity — that exists for them in the city outside the movie theater.

Cowboy Jimmy begins as a parody of the American western, filtered through self-reflexive animation puns and gags. The camera settles on Cowboy Jimmy, a full-chested hero,

United States having to move away from the conservatism of the old world” (*Building a Building*” 138). When the titular hero of *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933) stands precariously at the top of the Empire State Building, stop-motion animation marries a “primal creature” with “one of America’s greatest landmarks — the ancient imperative meeting the modern world in the frame by frame architecture of the imagination” (*Building a Building*” 140).

Wells suggests that the presence of Mr. Bugs and King Kong in New York serve as rebukes to the modernity of New York, but neither film is unsettling on a formal level. The narrative of *King Kong* may suggest that its hero has no place atop the Empire State Building and must be destroyed for his presumptions. But the juxtaposition between Kong, whose fur ruffles from frame-to-frame, and whose arms wave in pain atop another, and the more famous godhead of American capitalism, is not jarring. The humanity of Kong is clear, in stark contrast to the humans who destroy him, all of them piloting planes, transformed into unfeeling cyborgs. Although the film ends with Kong’s death, he emerges triumphant for the spectator. Kong’s presence makes New York a more humane place and imbues the Empire State Building with an even greater importance than it had before his journey in chains to the city.

There is a clear distinction between the modern and the primal in all three American films. King Kong, Mickey Mouse, and Mr. Bugs are not transformed by the city or more fully realized within the urban environment. Rather, their introduction into the urban environment transforms the city.

whose body sways from side-to-side as he rides a horse through what might as well be Monument Valley. A sign which reads “City À La Wild,” a goofy joke combining an idea of West European and American surfaces, points to a stage set of a one-saloon town. Inside the saloon, a pianist plays as a wasp-wasted woman with a large behind descends a staircase singing a blues song; the sway of her hips is accentuated by the morphing of her buttocks’ half-circles. During a chase scene, the camera pulls back to reveal the audience watching the movie. A small boy dressed as Cowboy Jimmy — a character more similar to late-Disney-style personality animation than to the UPA-like flat-graphic men and children identified with the Zagreb School — imitates his hero, pretending to ride a horse on his theater seat, throwing punches while Cowboy Jimmy does the same on screen. Cowboy Jimmy defeats the bandit. The bandit, in a clever gag, forces Cowboy Jimmy off the screen into the movie theater, into what the film suggests is the "real world."

The boy feels Cowboy Jimmy, recognizes that Cowboy Jimmy is, for all purposes at that moment, “real,” and then leads him from the movie theater. The two walk through the fine buildings of the city center into a neighborhood that is more broken and crudely drawn. The English word "saloon" points to a makeshift mini-saloon that sits in an empty city space, surrounded by dilapidated apartment buildings. Inside, children imitate the characters who have already appeared in the American movie. A young boy leans against the counter, dressed as the bandit in black. A boy in glasses plays a harmonica as a young girl descends a ladder, imitating the love interest in the original film. Cowboy Jimmy enters with his biggest fan. The boy imitating a bandit walks up to Cowboy Jimmy and the American star teases him. The child-bandit responds by stepping on Cowboy Jimmy's foot. Cowboy Jimmy screams in pain, revealing the fakery behind his bravado. The American image is a lie.

The film turns sadistic, more so than even the most savage Tex Avery short or early Mickey Mouse cartoon. The child bandit punishes Cowboy Jimmy for his artifice with a cruelty that Cowboy Jimmy himself would not exert on the bandit in the original film-within-a-film. He hangs Cowboy Jimmy on the light fixture, electrocutes him so that he turns into an outline of neon lights, and then reduces his body to jelly. In the film's funniest and creepiest gag, the image on the Cowboy Jimmy poster that hangs on the wall comes to life, watches what happens to the "real" Cowboy Jimmy and then blows his own brains out in shame. The child who idolizes Cowboy Jimmy studies the scene in horror. The other children are merely disgusted. The children emasculate their hero, tie him up like a captured bandit or damsel in distress, and return him to the movie theater. They toss him and then all their cowboy toys through the screen. The film-within-a-film ended with the English words, "The End." *Cowboy Jimmy* ends with *Kraj*, made up of the bullet holes the children shoot on the screen.

Cowboy Jimmy has an affinity with the movie parodies of Looney Tunes. In the conventions of these shorts, Bugs Bunny enters the world of a Warner Bros. genre film and teases caricatures of company stars, thus establishing his role as the Lord of Chaos and the superiority of the anarchic animated film over the constricted live-action film. In *Racketeer Rabbit* (Friz Freling, 1944), Bugs Bunny torments Edward G. Robinson and Peter Lorre lookalikes. He enacts visual puns and plays tricks on the Robinson stand-in; no matter how much Bugs transforms the landscape, the psychology of the Robinson stand-in remains forever trapped within the logic of the gangster film. Unlike *Racketeer Rabbit*, *Cowboy Jimmy* holds an explicitly pedagogical purpose. In the year the film was released, Vukotić noted that "animated films can indeed be one of the determining factors in [children's] personality development, and be of tremendous help to all those social organisations and social factors whose main task is the

upbringing and educating [*sic*] of children and youth” (“Concepts and Aspirations of Our Animated Films” 242). (Fadil Hadžić, the original producer of *Veliki miting* [Walter Neugebauer, 1951], perhaps in a sign of his own disaffection with the direction Yugoslav animation, preferred the straight satire of the first half of the film more than the “didactic” second half [59].) In *Racketeer Rabbit*, genre film serves as a stage upon which Bugs Bunny can perform. In *Cowboy Jimmy*, genre film is dangerous and must be systematically destroyed in order for the genre film’s fans to maintain authenticity, their grasp on the real.

The destruction of a genre is only the first step towards the creation of a national identity. If in *Cowboy Jimmy*, Yugoslavs *reject* genre-fakery developed outside their country, in *Ljubav i film*, Yugoslavs *transcend* genre. The film depicts an actual movie theater, Kino Zagreb, located in Cvjetni trg, which like all movie theaters in Yugoslavia, played programs of both international and domestic films. The film opens on a live-action shot, filmed in Kodachrome, of two lovers on a park bench. A narrator speaks, “Everywhere in the world, young men and girls get together. Everywhere in the world, they sit on park benches at night. Everywhere in the world, they go to the movies.” The lovers enter the theater, where they watch seven short films, animation parodies of national film schools and stereotypes, one each from the US, Sweden, Italy, France, the Soviet Union, Japan, and then finally Yugoslavia. The American film is a western. Men shoot each other, mechanically, in an effort to win a woman. The Swedish film, dense in purple shades, parodies Ingmar Bergman. After a man and woman make love at a lake, the woman gives birth. The man kisses his wife and child and then leaves. The Italian film riffs on neorealism. It depicts a love affair that turns into a forced marriage, resulting in a family of six children which relies on American aid for baby milk. The French film is a bedroom farce in which a cuckold and his wife’s lover strike up a friendship. The Soviet film depicts two happy

Social Realist peasants. The Japanese film is a violent samurai movie. Only the French and Italian films contain urban settings. The other films are set in natural or rural landscapes.

The final film, a Yugoslav film, depicts the animated version of the two young lovers in the opening scene. The rhythm of their movement is more studied. Their affection for each other is natural and gently expressed. The man sighs, and leans back. The woman sighs and leans forward. The man runs his fingers along the park bench. The woman runs her fingers along the bench and her flat hand meets atop his flat hand. Their bodies are carved in sharp rectangles. They smile and the animated section of the film fades to black. In the film's live-action coda, the two Yugoslav lovers embrace each other in the movie theater. The narrator: "The love that they watch on the film screen is not the same everywhere. But in life, in the end, love is the same everywhere. It knows no borders nor differences."

The formal elements of *Ljubav i film* communicate the difference between love as captured in the Yugoslav film image and the love captured by the non-Yugoslav film image. The backgrounds of the non-Yugoslav films except the American western parody contain deep space, suggesting various textures in the natural landscape, but the bodies are heavily flattened; the Bergman-ian lovers face each other as silhouettes and the Soviet peasants are as flat as the posters on which they would have appeared. The mostly isometric bodies of the Yugoslav characters, however, are granted a slight if easily overlooked suggestion of three-dimensionality. The man points his foot just a little outward towards the spectator and his head leans back. The woman has a degree of perspective that permits her lower body to appear slightly larger than her upper body. If these Yugoslav lovers don't live in the multiplane world of Snow White, they also don't live in the absolute flatness of Vukotić's *Surogat / Ersatz* (1961), nor the Soviet Social Realist film-within-the-film that appears in *Ljubav i film*. *Ljubav i film* grants its Yugoslav

heroes a potential for if not the full realization of psychological depth. The animated world of Yugoslavia, tied directly to the approach to animation that was coming to define the Zagreb School, prepares the viewer for the lovers' gentle, sweet embrace. The moment avoids the fakery of genre and becomes what a Yugoslav film as well as Yugoslavia can be, something closer to a conception of the real, and a representative of what the authentic can be not just in Yugoslavia but elsewhere.

In both *Cowboy Jimmy* and *Ljubav i film*, there is no crisis of national identity. Both films draw a firm line between the world of the Yugoslav city and the foreign world depicted on the screen in Yugoslavia's movie theaters. There is a battle between the soul of the Yugoslav spectator — imbued with an essentialist notion of Yugoslav-ness — and the lost foreign souls corrupted by film technology and the apparatus of foreign film industries. In these two early films, the Yugoslav spectator wins. As the Zagreb School explores the conundrums of city life, that which exists in the public as well as that which exists in the private sphere, that line becomes blurrier, and that essentialist notion of national identity harder to defend.

The Authenticity of the Private Space

The Zagreb School uses the private space as much as the public space to define urban life. In the Zagreb School, the home is where citizens have sex, defecate, take showers, and eat. Their bodily functions have political implications. In *Orator* (Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo and Dragutin Vunak, 1969), a politico spews gibberish, while grunting and groaning, and is then revealed to be practicing a speech while sitting on a toilet. In *Put k susjedu / Way to Your Neighbor* (Nedeljko Dragić, 1982), a caricature washes his private parts in a shower before

leaving his house to enter a tank. (*Orator* was made a year after the Croatian Spring, though Dovniković-Bordo claims the film's themes are universal [Personal Interview 2017]. *Put k susjedu* was made a year after the student uprising in Kosovo, but it's not clear if Dragić had that major historical event in mind.) In *Orator* and *Put k susjedu* there is a clear break between the private space in which the spectator becomes a voyeur, catching bigheads and bullies with their pants down, and the public space where those same bigheads and bullies brutalize small men and ordinary citizens. But in the Zagreb School's city films, the border between the private and public space is more porous. Kostelac's *Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate* (1959) and Joško Marušić's *Neboder / Skyscraper* (1981) depict the private space both as site of the authentic *and* as an organic part of city life. The private space cannot be sealed from modernity. But privacy gives citizens the opportunity to negotiate modernity.

Zbog jednog tanjura is a modern-day morality tale about the perils of consumer culture. Like *Cowboy Jimmy*, it suggests that Yugoslav culture can be corrupted by market forces. A man works outside home in an office, while his wife takes care of their home. She dreams of filling the apartment with beautiful furniture, imagining the outlines of various shapes that appear and then disappear as she cleans their apartment. At work, the husband dreams of the wife, staring at her photograph that lies on his desk. Eventually, he fills the home with couches, boudoirs, and fine porcelain. During dinner, she accidentally drops a plate outside the window. Initially the man appears disappointed, but he shrugs off the incident. The moment serves as a kernel of a brawl. An argument escalates. They destroy the apartment and almost all the goods he worked to buy and she wanted. She decides to leave the apartment for good. She walks down the stairs with only a bag and a picture, while he follows. When they come to the bottom of their building, they discover the all-important plate intact in front of the doorway. The two look at each other with

shame and embarrassment. They return to their apartment and enjoy a modest dinner together in their bedroom. Their old love has returned.

At the time of *Zbog jednog tanjura*'s production, Yugoslavia was undergoing a debate over the ethics of consumerism. The new consumerism, which had emerged in the mid-1950s, seemed to undermine the Marxist principles upon which the country was founded. At the same time the consumerism catalyzed the development of an exuberant modern culture. The animators of the Zagreb School had contributed to the new consumerism before they established themselves at Zagreb Film. Kostelac's own advertising work, made in his private apartment, offers hints both for the potential his contemporaries saw in the advertising industry as well as the anxieties the new industry awoke. One advertisement from 1955, a three-minute gag film called *Samo trenutak / Just a Moment* about a domestic photography equipment company, anticipates his *Susret u snu / Encounter in a Dream* (1957), in which a young boy travels to a Flintstones-like caveman-parody of modern life, as well as *Zbog jednog tanjura*.¹⁵

In *Samo trenutak*, a man bicycles from one vignette of daily life to another, taking pictures. After he photographs each subject, he or she freezes. A rectangular frame materializes around the subject while the world around the frame continues to move, to be animated. The first gag of *Samo trenutak* announces its concerns with the advertising medium of which it is part. Two women stare at makeup mirrors, their backsides to the photographer. The women reveal themselves to be ugly and in a close-up of the mirrors the spectator sees drawings of Rita Hayworth and Marilyn Monroe, the brunette and the blonde, respectively. The message is clear.

¹⁵ *Susret u snu*, as a worker at Zagreb Film pointed out to me, was made three years before the first episode of *The Flintstones* (1960-1966) premiered.

The English-language narration at the end of *Samo trenutak* suggests the advertisement was directed towards a foreign audience.

The camera is useful only if it can find a worthwhile subject. Products that sell an inauthentic ideal of physical beauty are not worthwhile, and the photographer puts away his camera. The photographer eventually finds better subjects in a skier, lovers on a park bench, and a public band. Communal life is worth capturing. The photographer understands the correct way to use a consumer product.

That moral would have been welcome to contemporary advertising experts who looked back with disgust at a pre-World War II economy, made up of hawkers and merchants who sold their products haphazardly, with little knowledge or care for the consumer's needs, let alone wants; a description of their methods of salesmanship matches stereotypes of primitive Balkan street vendors. The new advertising, as noted in the publication *Naš publicitet* would “draw...arguments from only two vital and truthful sources, namely, the usefulness and advantages of the products and services advertised and the wishes and needs of the buyer-consumer-user” (cited by Patterson 51). The new advertising would be inspired by Western methods, but the advertising was to maintain an ethical standard. Consumer goods would be advertised as beautiful and useful only if they were in fact beautiful and useful. The photographer in *Samo trenutak* follows these rules.

Accordingly, *Samo trenutak* does not overindulge the spectator's wish for visual pleasure. The lead characters in *Samo trenutak* are designed with an under-stylized curvilinear line. The mise-en-scène is colorful, but also cluttered. Kostelac indulges a similar aesthetic strategy in *Susret u snu*, in which the characters in the Flintstones-like world are washed-out against greys and off-whites. The world is not ugly, but it is not beautiful either. *Susret u snu* lets the spectator contemplate consumer products from a distance without giving them a reason to buy anything.

Zbog jednog tanjura, in contrast to both *Samo trenutak* and *Susret u snu*, indulges the new commercial culture's visual pleasures, their hypnotic power, even as it acknowledges those pleasures' dangers, the possibility that they can corrupt the private space. *Zbog jednog tanjura*'s opening seconds announce its setting in Yugoslavia. The narrator says in Croato-Serbian, "In a large city, on a long row, in a particular building, on the seventh floor, oh so very close to the sky." An aerial shot reveals a long row of socialist housing. The camera enters the building and slowly rides up the elevator along each floor, and the spectator can see on each level the Croato-Serbian word for "building floor," *kat*. At the seventh floor, the elevator dissolves into a long curvy, but crude, staircase, floating up into the blank background, a suggestion of the distance between the world the couple inhabits psychologically and the plain architecture of their grounded world. The word for "sky," *nebo*, a sign on a cloud, sits next to a stately bed, a purple-yellow parody of a royal's hearth, upon which the husband and wife lay. The alarm bell rings. The bed transforms into a humble mattress with a plain bed-frame. A jazz tune, composed by Aleksandar Bubanović and sung by Jasna Benedek, plays. The lyrics are literal. "Good morning! Good morning!" Benedek sings as the man rises.

The mise-en-scène of *Zbog jednog tanjura* is a harmony of shapes, both the shapes in the bodies of the characters and the shapes in the world in which they move. The wife has a compact rounded trapezoidal head with purple hair, a dress and thin legs. Her haircut, for a later viewer who would have seen *The Jetsons* (1962-1963), is futuristic. The husband is long and thin with a giant ovular head. Both move in the sprinted dance of flat-graphic animation. The man throws his limbs out at obtuse and then acute angles, UPA-style, hitting the trumpet notes on the soundtrack, each angle completely different from another. The wife is more delicate in her dance. Her legs touch the backgrounds more lightly. Her body is an integral part of her living

room, and her furniture is an extension of herself. She sits on a chair marked out on the flat surface with a single black line and a small oval. There are four rectangles at each side of her, three dressers, one table, thick blue, thick red, and light pink. She floats among the shapes, and the camera gently tracks her. *Surogat* also indulges the wish for visual pleasure, but in Vukotić's film every shape is a set-up for a gag. In Kostelac's film, it's possible to enjoy each shape for itself and only for itself. But when those shapes cease to be abstract, that harmony is disrupted. In *Zbog jednog tanjura*, the body is effectively the only necessary part of the apartment. The furniture is superfluous. At the end of the film, the lovely abstract shapes of modern city life remain outside, where they will not disrupt the peace of home life, but the memory of those abstract shapes and that consumer culture will remain in the apartment, captured in the bodies of man and wife.

Such a reading would be obvious, except for one problem: *Zbog jednog tanjura* does not quite reflect the lived reality of Yugoslav gender norms. The husband works in an office, while the wife stays at home and tends house, an arrangement contrary to the egalitarian approach to labor in socialist Yugoslavia, in which men and women both worked outside the home. As such, the moral of *Zbog jednog tanjura* becomes confused; it's unclear not only *what*, but *who* belongs in the home. The disjuncture may suggest the confusing imbrication of gender and consumerism in Yugoslavia. Socialist societies in Central and Eastern Europe “found themselves in a difficult situation,” Patrick Ryder Patterson writes.

On the one hand, their public cultures were infused with Marxist egalitarianism and their policies toward gender equality were shaped by the sheer demand for women's productive labor—and the need for women's income to help support families. On the other hand, they often saw the persistence of what were often highly traditional and, in some parts of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, even unapologetically patriarchal attitudes towards women's roles. (90)

Patterson notes advertisements for appliances from the late 1960s and early '70s, about ten years

after the production of *Zbog jednog tanjura*, which attempt to solve the problem. Women are presented next to washing machines, but the washing machines are not found in the home. They are accompanied by images of women at work or enjoying leisure time. The home appliance liberates them from housekeeping so that they can become part of the labor force (90-91). But there is no indicator that the woman in *Zbog jednog tanjura* will go on to a steady job or any other pursuit.

The confusion suggests that *Zbog jednog tanjura* is about more than consumerism. Socialist Yugoslavia promised a more comfortable material life, as compared at least to other nations in Central and Eastern Europe, but the country's more philosophical ideas, regarding citizenship and brotherhood were powerful. In such a world, the abstract shape takes on great significance. The abstract shape is suggestive and filled with potential. It begins by representing nothing but itself, and as the Zagreb School animators dramatize in *Surogat*, can come to represent almost anything. But the abstract shape can also create the psycho-physical sensation in the spectator, an excitement for the atmosphere of life in the city itself, one that affects the body as much as the mind. *Zbog jednog tanjura* offers its viewer a city, a home-life, a man, and a woman made up of such abstract shapes, one that can be absorbed and felt outside the home and brought inside the private space, all of it suggestive if not absolutely descriptive of how exactly one should live their life.

Despite the ambiguities, however, in *Zbog jednog tanjura*, the tensions are clearly defined, the modern conundrums easily understood, and the fears of modernity are limited to a handful of concerns. *Neboder*, a depiction of the day-in-the-life of a skyscraper, on the other hand, transforms the private space into a lunatic modernity. The concerns of urban life — consumerism, violence, crime, loneliness, the fading memory of the rural — become even more

confused when placed against the most universal problems of the body: sex, eating, drinking, sleeping, defecation, urination, and sweat.

The film depicts a twenty-story skyscraper in cross-section. It's a claustrophobic community, made up of evenly-distributed block-shaped apartments. The apartments are connected by two arteries, what the script refers to as "two parallel systems" (Marušić, "Scenarij filma 'Neboder'" 353). In the middle of the building runs the first artery, a thick, vertical plumbing line through which courses urine, excrement, and other fluids and objects. An elevator, the second artery, occupies the far left portion of the screen. The bedrooms lie to the right of the plumbing system. The rooms on the left side of the apartment, in between the plumbing system and the elevator, serve as bathrooms — there's a toilet in each one — living rooms, and kitchens. In the course of the ten-minute short, Marušić cuts to specific sections of the building, captures tiny vignettes, and then cuts back periodically to extreme long shots of the apartment as a whole. The "two parallel systems" — the mechanical elevator running up and down the building and the human filth in the plumbing falling periodically — serve as the film's motifs. Throughout *Neboder*, men and women will defecate, have sex, invent machines, go to work, come home, read newspapers, watch television, eat, play with their pets, and calm their babies, all while just a mere few feet away — both within the world of the film, and for spectators watching *Neboder* projected onto a movie-theater screen — gravity pulls their neighbors' filth to the ground. Unlike the inhabitants of the building, the viewer knows that this building's mini-civilization is under threat. In a long shot, a thin line protects the inhabitants from their neighbors' filth. In close-up, the line is crude, anemic, and broken, ready to collapse at any moment.

But though the viewer occupies a privileged position, that position is controlled by a higher intelligence. *Neboder* is similar to the full-page illustrations in *Mad* magazine, which

circulated among Zagreb's comics creators in the late 1970s (Krištofić). (Marušić, although a comic-book artist himself, claims not to have read *Mad* [Personal Interview].) These illustrations invite the reader to fetishize the totality of the image, and thus develop a narrative based on where their eye voluntarily rests. In *Neboder*, Marušić guides the spectator to the sections of the building he would like them most to see, fitting the space of the building within a clear time frame for the narrative. The excess frustrates the viewer. Marušić planned the film as a series of 120 jokes (Personal Interview). The most attentive spectator would be unable to catalogue even half of them after two screenings. The spectator's privilege has limits. They know that they are looking at a "madhouse" ("Scenarij filma 'Neboder'" 353), as the Marušić's script calls it, but other than their knowledge that the skyscraper is on the verge of collapse at any moment, the spectator knows as little about this ecosystem as the ecosystem's own inhabitants.

Films which elude the spectator's wish to master every detail of the *mise-en-scène* had been ubiquitous in animated film festivals since the 1960s. The inability to absorb the world of Jan Švankmajer's puppet films is terrifying; the horror lies in the suggestion that not every image can be known in full. In *Yellow Submarine* (George Dunning, 1968), Peter Max builds a limitless playground. But in *Neboder*, each joke becomes a suggestion of a larger and more complex narrative, one that can never be fully known, one that is as elusive for the characters within the world of *Neboder* as it is for the spectator. The inability to absorb each gag becomes the source of another larger joke: its inhabitants are never fully articulated, and the spectator's frustrated attempt to understand these inhabitants is in itself humbling, a source of joy as well as terror.

Still, Marušić gives the viewer a degree of freedom. One frame captures three full apartments, as well as the bottom part of a fourth. At the top of the screen, a man sits ready for work with his suitcase, his pet parrot's feathers suggest a hint of animal life. In the floor below a

group of men stand solemnly with their coffin, completely still in prayer, also awaiting the elevator. In the floor below them, an alcoholic systematically drinks and empties red liquor bottles as they pile up at his feet; some of the bottles spill into the piping through which the human filth descends. And on the bottom floor, a man constantly prepares to have sex with a large-thighed woman, who lies reclining, bored, on her pillow, which also spills into the plumbing line. The man removes a series of shirts, first blue, then yellow, then blue again, delaying his performance. He's impotent. A poster of a clown sits atop the wall in the lower left section of the screen. A spectator willing to take in the entirety of the screen, fetishizing every detail, would be alternately attracted to the solemn faces, the happy face of the drunk, the bored eyes of the naked woman, and the flat eyes of the clown, letting their eye wander from one part of the screen to another. Though there is a diagonal of blue cut through by a horizontal red line, Marušić's composition offers little direction for where the eye should settle. It's possible for the spectator to only stare at the pile of bottles, but if they should choose to do so, the suggestion of the other jokes, the jokes that refer to the decaying corpse, sex, and sexual frustration inform and inhabit that pile of bottles. The spectator invents the contours of the narrative and the ecosystem for themselves.

Another intelligence besides Marušić's complicates the ecosystem, namely that of the sound effects man Miljenko Džorr. In the film, each sound event marks the beginning and the ending of a specific gag, a moment of screen-time. The sound of a curtain opening accompanies the opening of the curtain that shrouds the building at the opening of the film. The persistent alarm clock announces the death of a man who does not wake up with his neighbors. But the sound events also cause gags to collapse into each other. Most of the Foley sounds have direct corollaries to specific images on screen, whether it be a giant fart which almost destroys the

building or the mindless whirring of television screens at night. Due to the composition, however, and the spectator's semi-free eye, sound events meant to connect with certain images come to inform the images that are not specifically tied to the Foley effect. The sexually frustrated man removes his shirts and each removal contains a whooshing sound, a sound event that comes to describe the man who lies drunk in the frame as well as the gentlemen carrying the coffin. Sounds which emanate from one body inhabit other bodies.

But one sound offers the opportunity for a truly collective experience. At dusk, a man climbs to the top of the building and places a phonograph on the roof. A synthesizer plays. The inhabitants cease their movement, stand solemnly, with their eyes closed and their hands on their hearts. A woman stands naked. A man is perched outside his window trying desperately not to fall out. Herders with their farm animals — a reference to a past rural life that would have been known to many of the inhabitants — enter the screen and join the ritual. Still, the moment suggests unity and that this brutal world can take on a quasi-religious feeling if not quasi-religious belief; just as Marušić's script describes the skyscraper as a "madhouse," it also describes it as an "obelisk" ("Scenarij filma 'Neboder'" 353). In the collapse of all distinctions, between sounds, bodies, problems, joys, space, and time, *Neboder* discovers a community, an unperfect one, in 1981, a year after Tito's death.

A question lingers. Is the spectator really looking at a Yugoslav apartment building? Unlike the apartment building in *Zbog jednog tanjura*, the children's play-saloon of *Cowboy Jimmy*, or the movie theater in *Ljubav i film*, there is no obvious indicator that the skyscraper of *Neboder* is located in a capitalist state or a socialist state, in Yugoslavia or elsewhere. The uniformity of the building, and the seeming uniformity of the inhabitants, particularly in regards to their similar choice of clothes suggests Western stereotypes of socialist conformity in Central

and Eastern Europe; Marušić claims to have been inspired by the building where grew up (Personal Interview). At the same time, however, female characters stay at home where they take care of their apartments, while their husbands go to work.¹⁶ When the inhabitants of the building call for an elevator, they scream *lift* on the soundtrack — the word for elevator in Croato-Serbian — while the words for “elevator” appear in bubble white fonts in Croato-Serbian, American English, French, and German. The iconography suggests modernist fears of the collective, but the collective could be both a product of capitalist as well as socialist engineering. Still, a contemporary critic was adamant that the film was rooted in domestic concerns, noting that the film could not be seen as a “revealing of America.” It was rooted instead in an aesthetic of the Zagreb School, part of the same tradition that produced Dragić and Dovniković-Bordo’s films. He also refers to the skyscraper as a “civilized ‘dinosaur,’” an awkward phrase that suggests a marriage between the modern and the primitive (Kunovski 448). That confusion, in deciding what is socialist and what is capitalist, what is urban and what is rural — the building stands in the middle of nowhere, on a flat plain — what is the proper way to live and what is improper, what is private and what is public — Marušić’s script describes a “building without walls,” (“Scenarij filma ‘Neboder’” 353) but the viewer imagines them anyway — defines an essentialist conception of Yugoslavia in the last decade of the country’s existence. Yugoslavia, *Neboder* says, will never stop asking where its men and women should be or how they should behave.

The Authenticity of the Public Space

¹⁶ I am grateful to Vladimir Kulić for pointing out this detail. (“Re: Dissertation the Zagreb School of Animation”)

The public space of the Zagreb School's city is the site of a different kind of authenticity. In children's films, particularly, the Zagreb School attempts not only to discover this authenticity, which first appears as a form of chaos and tension, similar to what the spectator witnesses in *Zbog jednog tanjura* or *Neboder*, but also a site where order is either kept or restored, as is the case at the end of *Cowboy Jimmy*. These films present the child-Yugoslav urbanites with the same problems other films present adults. The solutions are imperfect.

There is at least one significant exception to this thesis. In Vrbanić's unremarkable *Svi crteži grada* / *All the Pictures of the City* (1960), made a year before his *Ljubav i film*, two colorful drawings of children navigate a small city where they meet a series of simple drawings, the kind of images one would find in a schoolbook. The city is small. The houses are not tall. The drawings include a choo-choo train and a stern American Indian. The children interact with two posters, one a travel advertisement for the Slovenian Alps, the other an advertisement for *limunada* poured by a blonde bombshell. There aren't any people in this small city. The spectator watches two-dimensional images of drawings interact with a more three-dimensional world, and use cooperation to survive. There is no hint of violence and the threats are mild. The two heroes of the short fly away from the city on the paper airplane with which they entered, returning, presumably, to the rural landscape of the storybook where they danced at the beginning of the film, or maybe even Slovenia. The two-dimensional drawings enjoy a more three-dimensional city, discover a world beneath the surfaces of simple drawings, witness a pleasant but un-extraordinary world and then leave. In *Svi crteža grada*, as in *Ljubav i film*, there is no crisis of national identity. The drawings are where they should be, and the city is what it should be, unpretentious and aware of the non-urban world.

At first glance, the *Profesor Balthazar* series, the subject of this section, offers a similarly unpretentious, uncomplicated idea of urban life. The titular hero of *Profesor Balthazar* is a scientist/magician, who wears the same pair of blue spectacles, a black shirt and green pants, and sports the same white beard in each episode. John English, the American journalism lecturer cited in the Introduction of this dissertation, describes *Profesor Balthazar* as “non-violent and joyous in its treatment of human attributes. The lively professor personifies generosity, kindness, friendliness and aesthetic appreciation” (49). The city of *Profesor Balthazar* is a joyous place. It is populated by symbols and caricatures, and watched over by the benevolent force of Balthazar himself, a friend to all at home, as well as a respected ambassador of peace abroad. He manages to maintain the essence of his city, to maintain a carnival, but a carnival with a clearer sense of order, a carnival without the grotesque. His city is often threatened by chaos, sometimes from outside forces, as in *Čudotvorni kolač / For Heaven’s Cake* (Boris Kolar, 1972),¹⁷ in which a group of brigands terrorizes the town, and *Oblačno sa svadavinama / Cloudy with Brawlstorms* (Kolar, 1977), in which a giant cloud turns the citizens of the city violent. More often, the problem comes from within, emanating from the individual shortcomings of Balthazar’s neighbors. However, Balthazar’s attempts to solve crises, while successful, are often not fully satisfactory. Each of his inventions has a theory behind them, but the practice of those theories never follows the initial predictions.

The cultural and national identity of *Profesor Baltazar*’s city, like the building in *Neboder*, is ambiguous, and the reception of the film series reflects that ambiguity. In Yugoslavia, the shorts often played at 7:15 pm during a slot designated for cartoons on Yugoslav

¹⁷ The English translations of the titles of *Profesor Baltazar* shorts often differ from the titles in the original Croato-Serbian. I will provide more accurate translations when necessary. *Čudotvorni kolač* more accurately translates as *Miracle-Making Cake*.

television before the nightly newscast at 7:30; it would appear on alternate nights with American series, like *The Flintstones*. Its voice-over narrations were translated into several languages, among them English, Farsi, French, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish, and distributed abroad by Windrose, a company based in West Germany. The foreign versions of the films were dubbed, not subtitled, but they sometimes announced their Yugoslav-ness. In the US, the series appeared on the ABC series *Curiosity Shop* (1971-1973), a variety children's program.

The city of *Professor Balthazar* is never named anything other than "Professor Balthazar's Town," but despite the studio's search for a popular international audience, the series suggests its roots in a particularly happy Yugoslavia. Bourek, as noted before, based his backgrounds for the show on the coastal city of Rijeka. The citizens travel by tram and the mixture of architectural styles, even with the *Yellow Submarine*-like stylizations, employs the same basic materials Welles used in *The Trial*: Austro-Hungarian and interwar modernist architecture, factories and buildings that could have been part of the new wave of post-World War II architecture in the country, and neo-classical museums. Professor Balthazar's town often looks like a collection of toys. Train tracks lead directly up to the entrances of houses, and the silliness of these gestures connects to the Balkan stereotype of the city that will forever be disordered, that will always be a piling on of styles each representing a different epoch of its history. The series is set in a Yugoslav present, but does not forget its past. Images of the rural are present in the town, but don't impinge; they are absorbed.

Like the country in which Balthazar lives, the inventor is always searching for or accidentally discovering an interesting third way solution to the problems of modernity. The shorts tend to follow a similar narrative, centered around a citizen trying to define himself within the larger society. An eccentric character from Professor Balthazar's town confronts a problem.

Balthazar uses a Rube Goldberg-like contraption, made up of umbrellas, clocks, a giant human ear, and assorted tubes to create a new invention which solves the problem. (The animators never take full advantage of the possibilities for formal experimentation presented by the machine. The cycle of the machine's movements is repeated in every short.) The stories are quickly paced, and made up of a series of bizarre twists and seeming non-sequiturs that are always quickly explained and absorbed into the logic of the narrative's trajectory. Balthazar's neighbors, like small children, cry when faced with troubles, but only for a few seconds of screen time, often for just a few frames, before Balthazar helps. However, the narrative structure of the *Profesor Balthazar* shorts questions the very logic behind the show. The animation medium, particularly cel animation, naturalizes non-sequiturs, jump cuts, sudden shifts in mood, and extreme shifts in body language. *Profesor Balthazar* condenses narratives with extreme shifts in time, place, and psychological focus within short time frames. But although these shifts are naturalized, they are self-reflexive. The shorts call into question the project of placing stories, and in these particular cases, stories of the city, within a short time frame. The show offers a template for problem-solving, but even so it's not clear if the "theory" of the show itself can so easily be put into practice.

Still, the series's narratives question the use of whimsy. Professor Balthazar's town is a playground. Like all playgrounds, it is home to as many unhappy children as happy children and the series's narratives suggest a depressive's eye. *Horacijev uspon i pad / The Rise and Fall of Horatio* (Zlatko Grgić, et al..., 1969) and *Martin na vrhu / Martin Makes it to the Top* (Grgić, et al..., 1969), two shorts from the first season of *Professor Balthazar* describe the overwhelming presence of urban loneliness, a modern malady that does not find similar treatments in the Zagreb School. Mimica's *Mala kronika* depicts the alienating effects of modern technology.

Dovniković-Bordo's *Jedan dan života* depicts the frustration of a factory worker and his exuberant sexual fantasies. But the stories in *Horacijev uspon i pad* and *Martin na vrhu* are stories of children alone on a playground as much as they are stories of adults unable to find connections in large urban landscapes. They return their characters, and perhaps the urban spectators who were watching the show with their children, to the darkest, most extreme roots of their pain, namely their early childhoods, discovering in their essential humanity the means to become a citizen.

Like every short of *Profesor Baltazar*, *Horacijev uspon i pad* opens on a set background, not unlike those Bourek designed for the live theater. A fountain in a town square lies hidden among massive structures. One building imitates the flow of water. A giant clown's face adorns the side of an apartment building. Tunnels lie in the middle of nowhere and lead to nowhere in particular. (In the final season of the show, the shorts open on a courtyard of an Austro-Hungarian building, with skyscrapers, museums and houses emerging behind it, a setting even more similar to the live stage.) The establishing shots offer no linear perspective, and the shapes of the city lie flat against the screen. The background may contain tall buildings, but no one building will permit any character to dominate their fellow citizens.

Horacijev uspon i pad begins with a reminiscence of Balthazar's childhood and his friendship with a young man named Horatio, an aspiring conductor. In the short's prologue, a young Professor Balthazar, with the same long beard and blue glasses, wears a schoolboy outfit, and skips along to school, as the narrator discusses his early years and his attempts to create his first inventions. He sits in a classroom, playing with chemical elements. On the wall next to him, the short inserts the first joke, a graffiti drawing of a plane attacking two farmers, which lies underneath standard schoolroom posters of the alphabet. The graffiti suggests a history that will

never be known nor explained in Balthazar's world. Its mere presence, as a stray unexplained detail, like so many in *Neboder*, is a joke in itself, and begins the process of the shows' decade-long world-building. The public space will never be fully absorbed by the spectator and as such will remain forever unfinished. *Profesor Baltazar* asks its spectator to enjoy this frustration.

Balthazar accidentally blows up the classroom, but later he enjoys his first success with a contraption made up of a ruler, a suitcase and a propeller, which makes it easier for him to travel with his luggage. He walks on the street in front of a building. He has, at this early age, found a place for himself within the cityscape. The child Horatio, a boy with a "strong urge for music" appears in the same setting, banging trash cans and dragging his ruler along the fence. He tries blowing on a jar, and when it doesn't work he throws it away and then kicks a small bottle through a store with a sign that says "Beatr." He is the wild child of the city, turning every object into an extension of his own musical talent.

"When he completed his composition studies, he went on to conducting," the narrator says. Horatio is then seen leading a ramshackle group of cats, dogs, birds, mice, and insects in an oddball symphony of animal sounds, all the animals sitting on boxes and oil cans, and the "meow" hitting every sixth note. The music is repetitive and takes up several seconds of screen time, allowing the spectator to notice the stray jokes, among them the studied dances of a fly and spider placed at the bottom at both ends of the frame. Horatio effectively starts his career on a very small scale, surrounded by animals, without the friendship of other children. Balthazar and Horatio graduate. They shake hands and they go their separate ways.

Balthazar, of course, becomes a famous inventor. He sits in a living room reading a newspaper, where he sees a photograph of Horatio, who is achieving considerable success as "the world's greatest conductor." Horatio appears before a live band in a public park, surrounded

by men and women in fine clothes. The band wears red. In a long shot, Horatio's pants fall down, revealing his polka-dotted underwear. The hysterical laughter of the audience erupts on the soundtrack. The film cuts to their cruel faces, each of them, despite a few details, barely distinguishable from one another. Horatio turns purple, suffering the terrible weight of humiliation. The ground beneath him breaks apart and he disappears from the site of the cruel crowds.

The incident is repeated on another occasion. The buildings of Balthazar's town shake with laughter. The mishap occurs on live television. In each incident, the music Horatio conducts becomes part of his diegetic world, and the fall of his pants matches the downward fall of a horn. A photograph of Horatio with his pants down appears in the newspaper. His career declines and now he returns to the alleyway with his animal orchestra, his old friends from childhood. Again, the scene lasts thirty seconds, a near eternity in this fast-paced short film. The problem occurs again. The animals laugh at him, and Horatio leaves them humiliated.

Horatio changes professions and becomes a chimney sweeper. His pants still fall down and he doesn't like the job, but at least, the narrator says, he is "alone, far from the laughter of the crowds." His face freezes into a permanent mask of misery. As he climbs up and down the Austro-Hungarian architecture of the city, his movements are rendered as a series of studied jumps to reflect the movement up ladders that we don't see on screen. The camera follows him in a pan. He is nothing more than an anonymous drone, passing through a city without joy.

One day, he falls down a chimney of Balthazar's house and encounters his old childhood friend. Horatio tells him the sad story of his life. His pants fall down again and Balthazar studies the moment with a slight twinge of embarrassment. He does not laugh at his old friend. Balthazar returns to his machine and invents "everlasting super suspenders." Balthazar searches for

Horatio, and he finds himself travelling through a city that appears more desolate due to his old friend's absence. A park maintenance manager sweeps leaves from the stage where Horatio had once conducted. The animals in the old orchestra sit in their same positions as before but when Balthazar asks about Horatio, they fall on their backs laughing uncontrollably, with the sound of the "meows" added onto the soundtrack interspersing with their own guffaws. They are cruel and indifferent to the fact that they lost the music Horatio had given them. Balthazar travels along the rooftops, moving with the same studied jump motions up and down with which Horatio was depicted when we first saw him sweeping chimneys. Balthazar has a talent for friendship, a necessary quality in this city.

Balthazar meets Horatio at the top of the largest chimney in town and offers him the new suspenders. Horatio tries them on, and a second later, they catch on the top of the chimney, and Horatio starts swinging up and down, like a bungee jumper, high into the sky and then falling almost touching the ground. The camera follows him for a few lengthy seconds, capturing the weight of gravity, the distance between the top of the chimney where Horatio had spent his life to the near ground, from which he had disappeared. It's a joyful experience. Horatio giggles uncontrollably. The other citizens of the town notice his unrestrained joy, and everyone obtains Balthazar's new suspenders for themselves. First a few of them are seen bouncing up and down along the cityscape and then more of them join. Balthazar and Horatio have accidentally invented a new sport. The fad spreads to the entire world. The final scene shows men and women swinging up and down from the surface of planet Earth.

Martin, the gentle, melancholic hero of *Martin na vrhu*, suffers a more existential crisis and the solution to the crisis is itself existential. The narrator introduces him: "He would have been quite an ordinary Martin except that he had a big problem. Nobody noticed him." Martin

walks up to two gentlemen on the street, one holds an alarm clock in his hand, and the other wears a bowtie; these details, like the graffiti in *Horacijev uspon i pad* have no clear history. Both ignore Martin through his repeated attempts to introduce himself. His face drops, and his eyes lose any semblance of joy. The camera follows Martin; the background of the city revolves around him. In the next scene, he tries to connect with two women chatting on the street. One has a white dog and Martin falls down on his knees and barks in the hope that they will acknowledge his existence. In the background, there's a giant box of a building on stilts, and the screen time permits the spectator to study it along with the green candy-cane-like lampposts which lead up to it. He walks in front of an alleyway of torn posters and litter, past two friends who greet each other warmly. One sign, a joke as much on advertising as it is on the nature of communication between people in the city reads "Bla Bla Bla." He tries again, dressing this time first as a jester, then as an American Indian in feathers with a tomahawk in order to draw attention to himself. Finally, he plays a tuba. Nothing works. And he walks away miserable.

Martin visits Balthazar, hoping the professor may offer him some advice. At first, when Balthazar opens the door, he does not notice him, but "Martin is persistent." He knocks again, and this time Balthazar's easy going, gentle nature allows him to recognize the unrecognizable man. They shake hands. "Well, for the first time in his life, Martin was noticed." This time, with his giant machine, Balthazar invents a book for him called "How to Climb to the Top of Success," every page of which is empty. It would be Martin's job to fill the pages himself. They say goodbye, and Martin walks out the door into the distance, a white blank space that has more similarities to a rural than an urban landscape.

Martin has left town, and now everyone begins to feel his absence. "Everybody missed him." The two friends, the one which held the clock, the two women and the dog, and the two

friends who embraced each other in the alleyway go in search of Martin. Horatio is among the people in the crowd, part of the cast of characters who will remain a permanent fixture of the city's background. "People felt a little guilty," the narrator says. They visit Balthazar, a respected member of the community, but even he doesn't know Martin's location. They search the city. The dog looks in the doghouse and on the fence behind him, one can see a lot of graffiti, all in Croato-Serbian. A stick figure of a man lying prostrate before a woman: *Paja je pijanac*, "Paja is a drunk"; a cartoon dragon and a math problem. A lone car runs along the road, past a giant ship and factories. Martin has not just disappeared from the city, he has disappeared from Yugoslavia.

The scene dissolves into a meeting at the city council, which, in a special session, decides to erect a monument in Martin's memory. The band, which first appeared in *Horacijev uspon i pad* appears again at the unveiling ceremony. As no one could remember what Martin looks like, when they pull back the curtain, they see only a pedestal with no statue. In the most hilarious line, the narrator declares it the "Monument to the Unknown Citizen." The camera pans along past factories and apartment buildings, past the borders of Balthazar's town into the mountains, where it eventually locates Martin at the peak, living happily with his new friend Arthur the Eagle, another character who had appeared in a previous episode. They rip out pages from the book Balthazar had given him, and make paper airplanes which they send down through the mountains. One lone airplane floats into the city, along the black backgrounds of the sky into Balthazar's house, where the inventor sits wondering what happened to his old friend. He opens the paper airplane and reads Martin's message, in German, perhaps in honor of the show's distribution company: *Danke*.

Professor Balthazar's town is not an evil place, but one can never assume the moral wisdom of its masses. At best, Balthazar's inventions can only inspire goodwill. It is up to the

masses themselves to see what they can do with the inspiration. *Horacijev* and *Martin* are early examples of the *Balthazar* shorts, and like many of the best shorts in the series, they begin by depicting loneliness in an urban society. Horatio and Martin are both children with no friends on the playground. They are also adults alienated from the day-to-day functions of city life. Both shorts have what appear to be happy endings, but the limits of Balthazar's genius are apparent in both shorts. Balthazar may have (accidentally) given Horatio an ability to be an athletic genius and an example to his fellow citizens, but Horatio's musical genius is still wasted due to society's inability to accept a different kind of eccentricity. Martin's joy requires him to escape from the town that never treated him well, and his newfound peace with only one true and loyal friend requires him to remain outside the city's borders, looking downwards from high in the sky, not from a godhead, but in a natural setting, causing an irredeemable loss for civic life.

The narratives are dense with detail within a short time frame, but the mixture of melancholy and joy within them has an uncanny effect thanks to the quick pacing of the show. In *Horacijev uspon i pad*, Balthazar's search for Horatio in the park only lasts a couple of seconds. The film does not linger on the weight of this particular setting to describe Horatio's loneliness or the loneliness inherent in a wide empty unpopulated city space. Horatio's journey along the rooftops, a mechanical journey up and down, like a conveyor belt, is more effective. The oddball jokes in the backgrounds demand the viewer's eye and just as often remain indifferent to it. The physical senses of Balthazar's city toggle between various emotional modes. This is not a world that bombards its citizens with noise or pollution as much as with the terrors of being human. It presents ideas of sadness and joy, the performance of emotion, that can be glimpsed among one's fellow citizens on the street.

There is a counterpart to these visions of loneliness in a contemporaneous work of Soviet animation, a stop-motion series about Cherubashka, an unclassifiable animal, who sets an example for tenderness and decency in a city. In his debut film, *Krokodil Gena / Gena the Crocodile* (Roman Kachanov, 1969), Cherubashka arrives in the city. He is unable to make friends, as no one knows who or what he is supposed to be. Eventually, he meets a few people who decide to build a house for all the lonely people of the city. An evil woman tries to thwart their plans, but when they finally succeed in the building's construction, they realize that no one wants to live in the building. After all, they've finally made friends with each other through the mere process of labor. The new house becomes a home for Cherubashka.

There are major differences between *Krokodil Gena* and *Profesor Baltazar*. The mise-en-scène of the Soviet film lacks the exuberance of the Yugoslav series. As David MacFadyen notes, in *Krokodil Gena*, objects are reduced to their essences proper for the “lumpen environment” (89). In *Krokodil Gena*, “the puppets’ eyes blink, their mouths alter shape during speech, and body parts are somewhat more flexible than usual” (88). In *Profesor Baltazar*, the characters do not offer the same psychological depth on their faces. *Krokodil Gena* seeks to squeeze “[t]houghts of ineffable and friendly beauty” into “eight to ten essential minutes” (89). Despite the exuberance of *Profesor Baltazar*, it does not contain the same ambitions to achieve the sublime. MacFadyen situates the Cherubashka films in a cultural world in which “[s]ome even claimed that the magic of quiet contemporary cartoons had now outdone centuries of folk creativity; the quiet imagination of a modern child was potentially richer” (90). For all of the childlike qualities of *Profesor Baltazar* — there are no sexual relations, and so many relationships take on the qualities inherent in those that would be familiar to children — it does not suggest an inherent wisdom or beauty in the childlike, or even the primitive. Instead, it sees

in its child-like world a lack of perfection, an unperfection that began in the playground and that will continue to exist in the world of adulthood. *Profesor Baltazar* offers a vision of a kind world, but it is not a paradise. Balthazar's city must continually be improved, changed, and rebuilt, but it cannot be made perfect, lest it cease to be human.

Conclusion

In his study of landscape painting in the US and Europe, Simon Schama writes,

National identity...would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its topography mapped, elaborated and enriched as a homeland...[L]andscapes can be self-consciously designed to express the virtues of a particular political or social community. (11)

Animated features have used background landscapes as a stage for characters to perform their national identity, in films as disparate and obscure as *Tie shan gong zhu / Princess Iron Fan* (Wan Laiming and Guchan Wan, 1941) in China, *János vitéz / Johnny Corncob* (Marcell Jankovics, 1973) in Hungary, and *The Secret of the Kells* (Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, 2009) in Ireland. The contrast with the Zagreb School should be obvious. It is in the city of the Zagreb School where the citizen, even if he does not realize any mystique or enchantment, negotiates his Yugoslav identity, while avoiding the presentist. We don't have to look far to discover obvious contrasts. The Fleischer and Famous Studio's *Superman* series (1941-1943) depicts an American hero whose physical being mirrors the sturdy, Art-Deco architecture of the New York he inhabits, a city which is often threatened by non-American forces, whether German or Japanese. The futuristic city of Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan atomu / Astro Boy* series (1963-1966), however, consciously effaces its origins in Japan to present a city in which only the future

exists. “In *Mighty Atom*,” Fredrik L. Schodt writes, “Tezuka stripped his view of the future of many uniquely Japanese cultural references, perhaps because he was trying to be ‘modern’” (143).¹⁸ In other words, the Zagreb School has a past and a future, even if it remains always concerned with the human, Yugoslav, and global problems of the present.

The Zagreb School’s city is unperfect just as the Zagreb School’s small man/ordinary citizen is unperfect. Its particular employment of limited animation and stripped-down graphics make the inanimate objects of the Zagreb School’s city always a little broken and even the most elegant of modern objects a little rustic. The limited animation reminds the viewer that the foundation upon which the Zagreb School city is built is always a little less than sturdy and that the problems of the city will never be fully solved. The citizen-subjects grudgingly accept this tragic condition with either a smile or a grimace. The limited animation reminds the viewer that these buildings, as new as they may be, are always old, as old as the people who built them.

In the following chapter, I will study how limited animation, when it articulates the body’s movements, allows the Zagreb School to rethink not only the city but also violence, towards the body, towards civilization, and towards the state. If the city films forces the Zagreb School’s unperfect man to consider his role as a citizen, the Zagreb School’s war films forces him to consider his most essential, most primal qualities.

¹⁸ Schodt uses the title *Mighty Atom*, a literal translation of the series, and not *Astro Boy*, the title under which the series was distributed in the US. In this passage, he is referring both to the animated series and the original comic-book series upon which it was based.

Chapter 4

Inventing Violence, Inventing Death, Inventing War

The Zagreb School's "small man" contains two key elements of Yugoslav identity. He is a prophet of the nuclear holocaust as well as the product of the primitive battlefields of the pre-Hiroshima era. On the global stage, the country's identity as a diplomatic player was indirectly tied to its leadership position in the nonproliferation movement. Titoism is predicated on a myth of Partisan warfare, of many nationhoods coming together. In 1953, the Non-Aligned Movement was born and in 1954, at the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement forced nuclear testing on the agenda under the assumption that such "tests posed a threat to the security of the whole world," including the non-nuclear powers (Lall 2). Nuclear war, by definition, would be a failure of interethnic cooperation and thus of what the Non-Aligned Movement represented. Although I have been unable to find any contemporary accounts that directly link these two overriding thrusts of Yugoslavism, at least as far as the Zagreb School's shorts are concerned, there is a connection between them. It is possible to read the horrors of Jasenovac and the bloodlettings in Slovenia in *Piccolo* (Dušan Vukotić, 1959), in which a petty argument between two neighbors escalates into an all-out war. But when we locate these hints, we discover that they are inextricable from contemporary fears of the nuclear apocalypse.¹⁹

The source of the Zagreb School's depiction of war relates directly to the Zagreb School's depiction of violence and here I will return to Renata Adler's analysis of *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Sub-machine Gun* (Vukotić, 1958), which I discussed in the

¹⁹ The Non-Aligned Movement was led by five nations: Ghana, Egypt, India, Indonesia, and Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia's cultural identity as a European entity that was somehow both east and west, and somehow neither, made it particularly representative of the movement's goals.

introduction: “This film...has the first cartoon character I can remember who, once maimed, stays maimed—a dismal, frayed, brown paper tab dragging himself along” (*A Year in the Dark* 19).

Why was Adler so shocked by this moment? Thomas LaMarre argues that the deathlessness in classical Hollywood animation, the animation which Adler recalls, is a direct result of technology. The camera would most often be fixed in place above cels and a background and so “the art of animation came to hinge upon the lines composing the character,” he writes. “[T]he same plasticity that allowed for a more fluid sense of movement also afforded a degree of flexibility encouraging animators to play with fluidity and elasticity, pushing the deformation and transformation of characters” (131). We can take LaMarre’s point and extend it further to our subject. Perhaps the presence of death in the Zagreb School matches the historical contingency presented by limited animation. Under this model, the conventions of limited animation, namely the precise jump-cuts and reduced geometric shapes, led animators to present more extreme deaths. Technology, of course, is not the sole determinant of aesthetics. But Adler had been exposed to limited animation from the US for several years by the time she saw *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* in 1968, ten years after the film was made. Hanna-Barbera cartoons, after all, never left their characters forever maimed. Still limited animation afforded the Zagreb School possibilities to express a certain kind of death that the plasmatic nature of classical Hollywood animation did not allow. And so we have a rule:

In the Zagreb School of Animation, violence causes suffering and death is final.

But what existed before the Zagreb School?

How did animated characters suffer?

How did animated characters die?

The violence in Looney Tunes and Disney shorts is mean but not brutal. In 1937, the Disney studio sent its animators a memo that reads, according to Norman Klein, like a “Victorian code on the picturesque.” Sharp-pointed sticks, for instance, must never pierce the side of a living character, though an exception can be found in the use of porcupine quills as long as they are used upon the character’s posterior (48-49). In Looney Tunes shorts, the Coyote’s broken bones and Daffy Duck’s charred face signal humiliation, not physical torment. We laugh at the *Itchy and Scratchy* shorts in *The Simpsons* (1989-) because the addition of missing fluids and entrails to the conventions of classical Hollywood animation exposes a great lie. No matter how much the character may squish or squash, no matter how many violations he suffers, the physical suffering will eventually disappear.

In classical Hollywood animation shorts, heroes are resurrected, reborn from one film to the next, and death is an idea, not a fact. The heroes are in a constant state of metamorphosis. Sergei Eisenstein describes the plasmatic body in Disney films which imitates life by refusing to remain static: “[T]he pliable hero, from a purely protean thirst, seeks newer and newer forms of incarnation” (17). If Looney Tunes heroes die, they become immortal angels, as organic and complete as their pre-angelic selves, and just as capable of squishing and squashing, while retaining the same volume. The feature films are different. The film theorist Vivian Sobchack remembers witnessing the mother’s death in *Bambi* (James Algar, et al. . . ., 1942) as a child. “Little sobs, including my own, rose in the audience; animated or not, the violence of that fire and the death of a mommy were real” (2). That “animated or not” misses the point. The hyper-reality of Disney’s animals inspires hyper-identification. The death of Bambi’s mother at the hands of a faceless human’s gun is swift and brutal, but the death occurs off-screen. The viewer does not see her corpse. The power of the moment lies in the anguish of the orphaned doe. The

mother's death elicits sobs because the face of her child is forlorn, his body shaken. He will never be what he once was, his body will become older and less lovable. The death is tragic because it is absolutely necessary for life to continue and a harbinger of future deaths that will occur after the film ends. *Bambi* elevates the very concept of death, aestheticizes suffering, absorbs it into the plasmatic tradition of classical Hollywood animation.

The new violence of the Zagreb School does not elicit easy laughs. The new violence and the new deaths elicit a knowing cackle. But if they don't elicit absolute catharsis, they still provide the opportunity for tears, offset by cruel laughter.

In *Muzikalno prase / The Musical Pig* (Zlatko Grgić, 1965), a pig with the voice of a tenor sings for every member of society. Each of them, including a conductor who resembles one of Don Martin's caricatures in *Mad* magazine and a general who could have been pulled from a political cartoon, first seem moved by the voice — the pig's repertoire includes recognizable tunes from Verdi, Rossini, and Donizetti — but then each reveals that they would prefer to eat the pig than listen to him perform. At the end of the short, the pig believes he has found a true friend in a flautist, with whom he shares a duet. The two walk off into a blank background, singing and playing. The music fades. The flautist returns, walking towards the viewer from a distance, his Foley steps hard and severe. When he reaches the foreground, he removes a bone from his mouth and belches.

The bodies in *Muzikalno prase* are fragile. The colors of their bodies spill over the rough, unsteady lines articulating their bodies. But that fragility does not immediately signal mortality. The pig's final death is unexpected because it is unnecessary. After all, the flautist and the pig could walk off into the distance and enjoy a brand new friendship. But even if the death is unnecessary, it still makes perfect sense. The flautist, like all humans, has an appetite that he

needs to sate. “You didn’t know that people, good people, the absolute best, kindest people, eat adorable pigs? Or that they care more about their bodily needs than more civilized pleasures?” the film seems to scold. And yet one’s heart breaks for this pig in a way that one’s heart does not break for the tourist at his moment of death in *Surogat / Ersatz* (Dušan Vukotić, 1961).

Death in the Zagreb School can be sudden and occur outside of any clear dramatic motive, but it’s not absurd. In Vatroslav Mimica’s *Mala kronika / Everyday Chronicle* (1962), a street-organist and his dog gather coins in a modern city. Men with hats, drawn in the simplified UPA-style, march in horizontal and vertical lines, at perpendicular angles with three-dimensional, photo-realistic cars and trains. The traffic screeches in a contrapuntal rhythm with the street organ. An anonymous citizen dies in the middle of an intersection. The viewer never sees his body. A splotch of red paint declares the death. The city stops to mourn the lost citizen for a few seconds. They remove their hats. A funeral tune plays. The city resumes its rhythms. The dog, the film’s main character, leaves his master and attempts to join human society. He dies in a similar manner, though, and as is not the case with the human victim, the viewer sees his limp still body covered by the splash of red. “The tragic feeling arises from the fact that the death has a predestined dimension,” a writer suggested to Mimica in a 1962 interview. “This death is not...the result of a dramatic release of tension.” The death is simply the unfortunate result of a life based on automation (Bogdanović, “Razgovor sa Vatroslavom Mimicom” 144). Because the film lacks a comfortable narrative frame, the dog’s death, while painful, does not allow for pure catharsis.

This violence has a particular meaning at international film festivals where the Zagreb School exhibited films about nuclear war and the devastation of entire societies. It uses the language of violence it developed to depict the deaths of a highly-cultured pig, an innocent dog,

and a nefarious gangster to describe the destruction of humanity as a whole. Just as violence causes suffering and death is final, the apocalypse, for the Zagreb School, is imminent.

The Zagreb School's films, as noted in previous chapters, often include touches rooted in a Balkan world, albeit a Balkan world that includes many elements from Western Europe and the US, but its depictions of war and the modern technologies of mass death carry few regional markers and often adopt universal iconographies. *Na livadi / On the Meadow* (Nikola Kostelac, 1957) is set in a post-apocalyptic hell that exists in the consciousness of a world that had witnessed Hiroshima. The satire of mass civilian mobilization and deadly bureaucratic incompetence in *Bumerang / Boomerang* (Boris Kolar, 1962) describes the anxieties in the US as well as the Soviet Union much more so than those in Yugoslavia, which held no nuclear weapons. At the end of the satire of army life, *Krek* (1967), Borivoj Dvorniković-Bordo thanks "sergeants all over the world." There are exceptions. The neighborly strife in *Piccolo* has echoes, albeit non-specific ones, of the internecine conflicts of World War II. Mimica's *Tifusari / Typhus* (1963) was the first and one of the very few films of the Zagreb School to depict Partisans.²⁰ Still, most of the wars of the Zagreb School are set in an abstract world, in which all fights become universal, the reasons behind the conflicts are presented as either immaterial, petty, or insane, war is inherently dehumanizing, and military culture suppresses humane instincts.

The limited discussion of Yugoslavia's great trauma, World War II, in which the country had lost one tenth of its population, may be a feature of the Zagreb School, but that silence is not indifference and it does not exist in other cultural productions, especially within the film industry. The Croatian film critic Hrvoje Turković says there was no attempt in the Zagreb

²⁰ The original Croato-Serbian title *Tifusari* — the film dramatizes a poem by Jure Kaštelan — literally translates as "people who have typhus," not "typhus." I will discuss the ramifications of this title later in this chapter.

School to describe in the animation form what could not be described in other media for political reasons (Personal Interview). Within a few years of the war's end, the new iteration of the Yugoslav state was producing *nationalist realist* – the Yugoslav equivalent of Soviet social realism – films. The first of these films were didactic, optimistic memorializations of the National War of Liberation, a conflict in which good and evil are clearly defined, and the battlefield becomes a site for excess and melodrama. Daniel J. Goulding's description of one early example, *Slavica* (Vjekoslav Afrić, 1947), is indicative of the trend. The film is

accompanied by very simple stereotyping of collaborators and satraps; of evil, indolent, pleasure-loving Italian occupiers; of harsh, unfeeling Germans; of exceptionally brave, fair, enthusiastic, ever-victorious Partisans, joining hands and hearts in song and heroic deeds; and of simple, strong fisherfolk, learning for the first time the magic legendary name of 'Tito' and discovering the real meaning of the National War of Liberation...

Goulding, however, describes a slow evolution of war films, which follow the evolution of an increasingly less constricted Yugoslav film industry. *Deveti krug / The Ninth Circle* (Frane Štiglić, 1960) depicts the persecution of Jews. *Partizanske priče / Partisan Stories* (1960) is directed by Stole Janković, whose “credentials as a Partisan fighter and a loyal party member were never in question,” but who nevertheless “deplored films which idealized the war experience and obscured its human costs with shallow heroics” (53). The *crni talas* director Aleksandar Petrović's *Tri / Three* (1965) is a grim study of “three tragic and ethically troubling deaths” (85).²¹ The Yugoslav film industry would continue to produce large-budget films made with the cooperation of foreign sources, such as *Bitka na Neretvi / Battle of Neretva* (Veljko Bulajić, 1969), which stars Yul Brynner, Franco Neri, and Orson Welles, and *Sutjeska / The Battle of Sutjeska* (Stipe Delić, 1973), in which Richard Burton plays Marshal Tito, the first and

²¹ *Crni talas*, or the “Black Wave,” describes a movement of mostly low-budget films produced in Serbia that depicted the grittier aspects of Yugoslav modern life and history.

only time the leader would allow any actor to portray him during his lifetime (*Cinema Komunisto*). Some of the Zagreb School's auteurs would also make live-action war films. Mimica's *Kaja, ubit ću te / Kaja, I'll Kill You* (1967) is a poetic study of a Dalmatian coastal town during the occupation. Vukotić's *Akcija Stadion / Operation Stadium* (1977), which is co-written with the journalist, historian, and Partisan veteran Slavko Goldstein, depicts the student resistance to the Ustaša regime. While the Zagreb School was imagining the *idea* of war, the live-action filmmakers of Yugoslavia's various studios and schools in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia were examining and re-interpreting the histories of World War II in films which were shot on locations where the battles had occurred.

Although this dissertation has argued that the binary between documentary and animation is false, and that a continuum exists in the animation medium between the real and the unreal, the stark difference between the Yugoslav live-action film industry and the Zagreb School's approach to war suggests something vital about the animation medium. The Zagreb School uses the animation medium as an opportunity to rethink the depiction of war, to make the Yugoslav experiences of World War II, which every auteur in the Zagreb School had lived through, universal, as universal as the fears of the nuclear holocaust which affected everyone on the globe both in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

The animation medium has been used to depict wars since at least 1918, when Winsor McCay made *The Sinking of the Lusitania*, an animated political cartoon. Some of these animated war films were used for army training, like those Max Fleischer produced during World War I and Walt Disney produced during World War II. Some of them are gag films, such as the *Private Snafu* series (1943-1946). Some of them are more difficult experiments, like Norman McLaren's *Neighbours* (1952), Margaret Tait's *Colour Poems* (1974), and Raoul

Servais's *Operation X-70* (1971). Some of them are documentaries, as disparate as *The Sinking of the Lusitania* and Ari Folman's *Vals Im Bashir / Waltz with Bashir* (2008). Some depict actual wars fought at the time the films were made. Some depict wars of the past. Some, like most of the war films of the Zagreb School, depict "war" not "a war."

Before the Zagreb School, how did animated characters fight wars?

In her discussion of early war animation in the US, Donna Kornhaber describes a confused set of approaches, in which the whimsical and the horrific, an ideology of realism and an urge for the fantastic lay in tension, sometimes within the same cartoon. Kornhaber describes films such as *Felix Turns the Tide* (Otto Messmer, 1922) and *Bosko the Doughboy* (Hugh Harman, 1931), in which audiences would see "graphic images of slaughtered cats on a battlefield, fancifully rescued by a battalion of hot dogs." Despite the cruelty, the films, as is the case in classical Hollywood animation, depict deathlessness. The films "would present scenes of battlefield death just barely forestalled by elastic bodies capable of sustaining outrageous injuries" (137).

The Sinking of the Lusitania, which preceded both shorts is different. The film, Kornhaber writes, "positions itself in the realm of realism on two levels: in its refusal to shy away from the deaths associated with the event and in its fastidiously detailed depictions of the technologies involved" (135). The bodies in *Lusitania* move with the same fluid motions of McCay's early version of full animation, referring to but not imitating the fantastic stretches and squashes of his *Little Nemo* (1911). The violence committed against these hyper-realistic human bodies — some of whose names are revealed with photographs in the intertitles — is all the more devastating for being part of a fully-realized, documented world. *Bosko the Doughboy* and *Felix Turns the Tide* elicit laughs but stop short of depicting death, and the laughs never turn into

cackles. McCay's depiction of the human body in *Sinking of the Lusitania* suggests that even the most fluid animated body can be mortal, but it avoids the cackle, or any form of laughter.

The cackle of the Zagreb School does not sound all that different from live-action anti-war black comedies of the period, such as *Dr. Strangelove; or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964) and *Catch-22* (Mike Nichols, 1970). And like *Dr. Strangelove* and *Catch-22*, the cackle in the Zagreb School is accompanied by a sad acknowledgement for the fallen world, one depicted in cartoon form in *Lusitania*. The animators of the Zagreb School understand that the erasure of the drawn image could be as shocking a depiction of death as the photograph of real or simulated death. They understand that the presence of drawn blood might be more shocking in the animation medium than, even during the period of the Zagreb School, was still heavily associated with deathlessness, than the photographed blood in a live-action film. The cackle greets a series of animated images, images that are treated as organic, which is another way of saying that they will die. The Zagreb School understands the violation state-sponsored violence enacts upon the animated human body, and understands the hysterical deaths in wartime. But the cackle does not suggest a lack of sentiment. If anything, it sets the stage for a form of sentiment, of mourning.

The Zagreb School animators were not the only animators to depict war in abstract terms. What Karen Beckman writes of the Canadian films *Neighbours* and *Colour Poems* could be said as much of the Zagreb School. The two films do not try “to fix animation in the world of facts, to lock in a single and specific time and place, as some contemporary animated documentaries tend to do. Indeed, *Neighbours* and *Colour Poems* actively resist this rigid approach to both violence and memory,” she writes. “Instead, these films offer formally complex aesthetic experiments that allow their audiences alternative pathways in to the impressions, traumas and afterlives of the

past. In doing so, they participate in the ongoing act of reimagining the present and future by giving us a different — if messier — sense of history” (65). I may add that the cackle of the Zagreb School has much in common with the cackle of *Neighbours*. But whereas *Neighbours* remains in a world defined by post-war capitalist excess, the world of the West, the Zagreb School’s abstractions are more extreme. The animators in Zagreb cackle for the entire world.

In this chapter, I will offer case studies of the Zagreb School’s war films, already mentioned, in chronological order of their production: *Na livadi*, *Piccolo*, *Bumerang*, *Tifusari*, *Krek*, and the sequel to *Krek*, *Manevri / Manouvers* (Dovniković-Bordo, 1971). Finally, I will look at three films of the Zagreb School which were produced at the end of its history. Each of these final three films depicts World War II, the prehistory, so to speak, of both Titoist Yugoslavia and the Zagreb School’s animators.

Each film solicits cackles, but some of those cackles are loud and others are muffled. All of them consciously work outside the conventions of classical Hollywood animation to define and redefine modern warfare.

Na livadi: A Model for Mourning

Kostelac’s *Na livadi / In the Meadow* was made five years after McLaren’s stop-motion *Neighbours*. Both are satires of the early Cold War. The films follow a similar narrative: Two adversaries dispute their rights to a flower that lies on the dividing line between their respective properties. The feud grows violent.

In *Na livadi*, two young boys fight over a flower in a giant field. Two armies mobilize to take up the argument. A bombing campaign destroys the natural landscape upon which the flower once grew. The two boys return to the site of the now dead flower where they warm themselves at a fire that has emerged in its place.

In *Neighbours*, the two adversaries are grown men. Each occupies one side of a lawn in a nondescript suburban landscape. The feud between them remains local to the limited amount of space captured within the frame. The men violently beat each other, as well as their respective wives and babies. They kill each other and in the final scene, they lie in graves side by side, as flowers grow around them. A fence they had conjured in order to set up a border between their respective lawns emerges again to border their graves. In death, the two share the same property.

Kostelac remarked on the similarities between the two films in an interview in the 1970s, noting affinities of themes, specific shots, and camera angles, but claimed that he had not seen *Neighbours* at the time of *Na livadi*'s production (to Pata 38). The similarities, however, are incidental. The two films share a similar narrative, but they tell different stories.

Neighbours is an ugly movie. It opens on a suburban lawn. Two hyper-simplified, cardboard cutouts of houses, set pieces that would be suited to an elementary school play, float into the landscape from either side. Lawn chairs float from the houses and unfold in the foreground, and two grown men, one with a tie, a moustache and a pipe, and the other with a bowtie, a pipe, but no moustache, appear on the chairs, each reading a newspaper. As the feud escalates, the images of these men approach the uncanny. The stop-motion animation forces the viewer to regard each figure in a series of arrested movements, breaking any conception of their bodies as singular fluid beings. As the two men beat each other, McLaren paints their faces in black, red, and white, both to suggest bruising and blood as well as primitive war-paint. The

film's soundtrack, like McLaren's abstract animated shorts, is the voice of a computer's beeps. The effects are alienating. "This 'anechoic,' or echoless, environment contributes to the neighbours' aura of dislocation, suggesting their infinite transposability from lawn to lawn, suburb to suburb; the scene is 'placeless' except in reference to the disputed property line, a spatial abstraction," Mark Kristmanson writes. "In the absence of ambient aural information, the listener is confronted with a transgressive audio apparatus intent on revealing violence in another register" (80). The alienation is also rooted in a denial of aural and visual pleasure. It's not just that the neighbors are dislocated. There is no lawn like theirs anyone would want to inhabit.

Neighbours is comical, but the light laughter of the first few minutes of the eight-minute short is smothered at the seven-minute mark, when the two men pull aside the cardboard cutouts of their respective houses to reveal their respective wives huddling with their respective infant-children. The two men each kick their respective enemies' baby. War exists as much outside war fields as upon them. McLaren's mise-en-scène highlights its low budget as well as the technical skill of the maker who manipulates the objects on screen. The stylization prepares the spectator for the shock of the film's conclusion. The spectator cannot identify with either "neighbor." They can, however, sense a culture of violence, as well as a repressed homoeroticism, inherent in the post-war suburban, capitalist landscape.

If in *Neighbours* McLaren sought, in his words, to "treat a human being as animatable material" (quoted by Kristmanson 45) to make him both grotesque and uncanny, in *Na livadi*, Kostelac does not disturb his viewers by radically redefining the human body. For the first minute of the film, *Na livadi* is a comedy. Two boys enter the landscape like tornadoes, threatening chaos. As tornadoes, they twirl back-and-forth on opposite sides of the border before morphing into their proper human shapes on what is quickly defined as the respective halves of

the landscape that belong to them. Their initial fight over the flower is defined as idiotic and petty, and the thickening and thinning of their lines, and the stretching and squashing of their bodies suggest similarities to Kostelac's *Premijera / Opening Night*, a film about the tension between high- and low- urban culture, which was made the same year in 1957. But the flower immediately expresses pain. The boys choke the poor thing at the top of the stem, its neck. Kostelac transposes pathetic human suffering on a flower.

The human body makes only a couple of appearances at the beginning of the film, as these two devilish children made up of ovals fight over a flower in a deadly dance, and at the end when they reappear to share a flame where the flower once grew. In between, the flower takes on the curvilinear characteristics of personality animation, a personality here made up of two emotional registers, fear and sadness. The architecture which surrounds the flower, the encroaching barbed wire which spreads like an infection on the landscape and the cannons which slump down like the anthropomorphized weaponry of Disney's World War II-era propaganda films lie somewhere between the graphic design of the 1950s and the full animation of the 1930s and '40s. When military helmets float into position to articulate the skeletal face of a soldier, they form a symbol, not a person. The presence of the flower leaves the viewer something to hold onto, a figure with whom to identify, even if the landscape becomes a familiar depiction of an every-battlefield, not the alienated world of McLaren's every-yard.

The original script of *Na livadi* by Mimica and Vladimir Tadej describes a more vicious film, closer in spirit to *Neighbours*, and less mournful than the finished product. Initially there were to be three flowers, not two. In the early combat between the two boys, the flowers dodge stones, but are given a brief, hopeful respite when the two boys attack each other with water jets. The water briefly energizes the flowers, and they grow, with drops hanging off their petals. Two

of the flowers eventually die in the crossfire. The original script focuses more on the physical suffering of the flower as an individual bystander who is forced to witness the death of its two friends and the natural landscape where it lives. The surviving flower seeks respite from the sun to help it grow through the dark smoke that engulfs the battlefield (Mimica and Tadej 40-42).

The change in the treatment of the two boys is more significant. In the original script, they remain part of the story for much longer, whereas in the finished film, large impersonal armies take up the fight. In the original script, the boys' presence remains part of the war machine. Their faces are angrier, much like the neighbors in McClaren's film, although Mimica and Tadej's script does not describe anything like *Neighbours'* war paint. In the finished version of *Na livadi*, ovals and rectangles appear on screen creating a series of abstract images of helmeted soldiers. In the original script, the two boys appear in their respective bunkers, their faces turned into strange robotic masks, behind protective glasses. An early plan for the film reveals a harrowing depiction of a cyborg-ian character, more suited to the science fiction of Servais's anti-Vietnam bizarro film *Operation X-70* or Ralph Bakshi's *Wizards* (1977). In the final film, a childish argument progresses into a nuclear war between state powers. The original script focuses as much on the dehumanization of the larger society but also on the individual. The state turns brats into child soldiers.

The final explosion comes as one of the boys reluctantly pushes a button, under orders from the military machine of which he is part. The script describes a loud noise which announces the final annihilation. The sound could have been rendered as a harsh sound effect, like the noises that accompany Mimica's *Mala kronika*, but instead it is heard as a crescendo in a musical composition by Milko Kelemen. It also seems Mimica and Tadej imagined a wider palette for the film — one boy was to be marked as green and the other as purple — rather than the murkier,

darker colors of the final product. The original script called for a more bizarre, angrier, louder film.

Almost twenty years after he made the film, Kostelac said he pared down the film to the point where it was as simple as possible (to Pata 37). The original script describes a grim horror film, a vision of the modern soldier robbed of his humanity by technology. In the finished version of *Na livadi*, the machinery of war has not transformed the essence of man. The boys' reappearance at the end of the film suggests hope. They have lost their flower, but they are still alive and are willing to share at very least a small flame where they can warm themselves. War has destroyed man's surroundings and killed an innocent bystander. It has destroyed man's material world, but has not obliterated his consciousness.

The finished film muffles the cackles of the original script, the affinities with McLaren's humor in *Neighbours* it would otherwise hold, but the cackle remains, faint but clear in the description of the "strange forest" of barbed wire from the original script that made it into the final film.

Piccolo: The Perils of High Culture

The opening credits of *Piccolo* announce a pop art extravaganza. The screen is split between blocks of green and light purple, cut at once in a vertical line, then horizontally and diagonally. Faint newsprint dot patterns litter the screen. The soundtrack comes from a harmonica, with a light, grating tweet. The story opens on a house divided on each side by green and purple, with one wall separating the two sides. In the far background of the green side, there are other green houses. In the background of the purple side, there are purple houses. It is a small

growing city, like Zagreb at the time of the film's production, with faint black outlines of nearly identical houses. *Na livadi* is a product of a studio that had not fully broken with the conventions of classical Hollywood animation. In *Piccolo*, the colors are brighter than the films Vukotić had made before, the humor is closer to the self-reflective conventions of limited animation. It looks forward to the world he would conjure in *Surogat*, the world which would become most identified with the Zagreb School.

Two men, one short and fat, the other tall and thin, live on respective sides of the house. They are friends. When a storm comes and the short man's roof starts to leak, the tall man cuts the lines of rain which border the short man's side of the house with a pair of scissors. They shake hands. A small bird appears on a tree near the short man's house and sings a song, first harshly and out of tune, marked by a harmonica-shriek on the soundtrack, and then, after clearing his throat with egg yolk, more smoothly. The tall man loves the tune and the short man, in a display of his mastery of the animated world he inhabits, picks up the tree and moves it to the tall man's side. The bird flies away. The tall man buys a harmonica in order to enjoy the sound of music again. The movements of the man and the bird jump from one frame to the next in pace with the simple jumps of the harmonica's tune. The music is grounded in folk life. It is grounded in the body, as imagined by split, quick jumps, which suggest a controlled, but unpredictable rhythm.

When the tall man plays his harmonica, he disrupts the short man's peace. A war begins. The battle escalates as each man attacks the other, using a different instrument as a weapon. Eventually, the two men invite choruses that reflect their respective identities — the short man invites short men and the tall man invites tall men — and they destroy each other in a blast from the Overture of 1812.

The Zagreb School would employ several music genres through its history, including classical music, jazz, and pop music, almost all of it from Yugoslav musicians, and, more often than not, Yugoslav composers. The music can be grotesque and the sound can be purposely grating, but it can just as easily be exuberant, a celebration of the mixtures of the popular music of the era. Kostelac's *Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate* (1959) employs a scat beat. His *Premijera* quotes *Rigoletto* and jazz. The plot of *Proljetni zvuci / Spring Sounds* (Vladimir Jutriša and Aleksandar Marks, 1960) relies on tunes from Felix Mendelssohn. *Piccolo*, though it indulges the audience's desire for visual pleasure, is a self-reflexive film about the possibilities of music to become a weapon. "When music is applied to warlike ends, we tend to believe that it has been turned against its innocent nature," the critic Alex Ross writes. "We resist evidence suggesting that music can cloud reason, stir rage, cause pain, even kill" (65). The film is also a reminder that the animation medium, even the exuberant, utopian, pop art stylizations of the Zagreb School can easily describe a dystopia.

Music, as a cultural force, is presented as a part of the cultural landscape. There's not an obvious source for most of the music in *Piccolo*. The harmonica evokes folk music. The jazz drumming is generic. The piano and cello tunes contain possible references to Chopin and Liszt. In the final minutes, the sources are more obvious. The choruses sing the "Toreador Song" from *Carmen* and the "Anvil Chorus" from *Il Trovatore*.²² Some of the music is played competently. Some of it grates, or at very least is meant to suggest the idea of music grating, and is comically out of tune. The dividing line between the two sides of the house changes shape, at one moment pointed, at another curved to match the rhythm and quality of the instruments. But the

²² A special thanks to Marshall and Jane Brown who assisted me in determining the sources for the music in *Piccolo*.

synchronization between the music and the line changes is not precise. The film pokes fun at the Zagreb School's aesthetic pretensions. Unlike *Premijera*, *Piccolo* does not dramatize a fight between various forms of cosmopolitanism. It is a fight between all sounds, brought down to their lowest, most primitive essence.

It is rare for the Zagreb School to depict any specifically Yugoslav regional, ethnic, or national identity in its films, beyond the occasional Croatian hats. As noted in the previous chapter, although the cities of Yugoslavia underwent a massive population surge in the years after World War II, a surge that involved a massive internal migration of and then a mixing of ethnic groups to the cities, the Zagreb School does not depict the idea of a city as a site of interethnic relationships. Still, the original script, written by Vukotić, suggests a possible reference to regional history and culture in its choice of music and characters. Vukotić did not originally plan for the respective choirs to ape the appearances of the two protagonists. Instead he imagined choirs of gypsies or don cossacks. If one of the choirs had been made up of gypsies, the film would have grounded the story in a stereotypically Balkan context. The use of cossacks may reference the history of the cossack army in Tsarist Russia, or perhaps the Russian division of the Nazi army that fought the Partisans during World War II (Vukotić, "Piccolo" 61).²³ The sidenotes suggest a subliminal reference in the film not so much to interethnic strife, but to something exotic or identifiably "eastern." The erasure of these possibilities in the final film

²³ In regards to this reference, Vukotić's notes in the script are confusing. "The minor warlike chords from the opera *Carmen* reverberate. But not for long. The neighbor's room is filled with a colorless choir. A choir of don cossacks. The room trembled. Everything shook. (If a choir of don cossacks would be a problem, it's possible to replace it with the large group of gypsies from *Il Trovatore*.)" As *Carmen*, like *Il Trovatore*, does not feature choirs of don cossacks, but also gypsies, it's not clear if Vukotić is simply mistaken about the operas or had something different in mind entirely. As the finished film includes both music from *Carmen* and *Il Trovatore*, it's possible Vukotić wished to maintain some of the cultural markers from the original script.

speaks to the approach to universalize the themes of the Zagreb School's films, but the suggestions of the theme remains.

What can we make of these suggestions of Balkan-ness, however faint? Perhaps *Piccolo* speaks to the growing mass culture in Yugoslavia, and the recognition that all culture, high and low, including the culture that produces the films of the Zagreb School, may not be enough to preserve society. It's a universal message, one that recalls the false promises of cosmopolitanism in *Premijera* and *Zbog jednog tanjura*, albeit with more deadly results.

Bumerang: Geometry as Violence

Bumerang, like *Na livadi*, studies the tension between the natural world and the nuclear age. It was produced when Yugoslavia's status in the diplomatic landscape in the non-proliferation movement had been established. In 1961, a year before its release, Yugoslavia hosted in Belgrade the Conference of Heads of State of Non-Aligned Countries. Coming one year after the U-2 incident, the conference focused heavily on nuclear disarmament. In a final resolution, the conference called for an immediate halt to nuclear tests, and significantly, “[p]articipation of nonaligned countries in all conferences on disarmament and especially in international supervision teams” (cited by Mates 256). The flower in *Na livadi* would now have a voice.

Bumerang suggests that the great powers are defined by their possession of the H-Bomb, implicitly setting them apart from the more humane society of Yugoslavia, as it is defined in the Zagreb School's city films. *Bumerang*'s jokes have precedents in a live-action black comedy produced two years before, *Rat / Atomic War Bride* (Bulajić, 1960), a fable about a man in a

totalitarian society who marries on the eve of a nuclear war.²⁴ The hero is all but taken directly from his wedding to a military draft board. A commander forces his men into absurd formations during their training and leads them in finger exercises so they can more easily handle firearms. *Rat*'s heroes, despite the repeated attempts of the military machine to deny them personalities, never lose their humanity. Even the totalitarian dictator, when he shows his actual face at the end of the film, is less a Big Brother than a fat foolish narcissist, a cousin to Jack Oakie's Benzino Napaloni. Still, the film is grounded in Yugoslavia. Shot in Zagreb, the film depicts the new socialist architecture, the Austro-Hungarian buildings, the new sleek cars, and the traditional Catholic church where the young couple are married as the setting for an every-society worth preserving, one that could be destroyed by mass mobilization as easily as it could by the bomb.

The value of the society in *Bumerang* is not as self-evident. The film opens on a flat white background decorated with splotches of circles, each signifying flowers. The camera zooms in on a butterfly dancing in the foliage. The aerial vision of the opening shot has seamlessly morphed into a ground-level depiction of the field. The idyllic scene is interrupted by a vehicle, part military engine and part construction equipment. It bulldozes the field, eradicating it one square at a time. With the equivalent of a hoe, it lays a series of neat black rows upon which it plants mini-missiles. The bodies and objects move within a completely two-dimensional space in a mechanical motion, the sound effects mimicking the hard, industrial world which the characters inhabit. In the manner of naïve art, the perspective is both a direct aerial view of the earth and a direct ground-level line of camera vision at one and the same time. *Bumerang*'s world is not so separate from the early flat graphic video games that would emerge in the 1970s and '80s, like *Space Invaders*. *Bumerang* sets the military in a mise-en-scène of pure, cold,

²⁴ The original Croato-Serbian title *Rat* translates as "War."

stripped-down graphics, separate from the deep-space natural world of *Na livadi*. The geometry traps its subjects, rather than frees them.

The mini-missiles grow like plants into giant missiles in a field. They surround a radar tower, topped by a whirring circle; the rhythm of the whir created by Mladen Prebil's sound effects becomes the most memorable motif of the film, more alienating than Tea Brunšmid's martial drumbeat. The body of a commander enters the frame, a grey head on a rectangular box decorated with medals. He bangs on each missile, and when the sound of one emits a weak echo, he climbs up, opens the top and replaces a small *h* with a large *H*. If the classical score of *Na livadi* can imagine a culture and a whole civilization outside of the warfield captured within the frame, it's hard to imagine any society existing outside that which is depicted in the opening minutes of *Bumerang*.

Still, the outside world impinges on the hyper-militarized landscape. The commander leads a group of men in military exercises. The identical soldiers enter various formations. They form long lines that spill out of the frame. Then they enter into bizarre box formations. When a soldier falls out of place, the commander opens his helmet and replaces a flower, a struggling bird, and a musical note, with a military medal. The butterfly returns and interrupts the exercises, and somehow eludes the attempts first by the commander and then by the entire army to destroy it. In a Monty-Python-esque gag, the commander attempts to kill it with a gun.

The soldiers can't fully deny the existence of higher civilization. The commander orders his men to reassemble the parts of a cannon into a weapon more suitable for killing the butterfly. They reassemble the parts in a quick jump of several frames into farm equipment which attracts the butterfly, and then into a late nineteenth-century sewing machine. Outside society is a collection of such symbols, all of them absorbed into the flat-graphic logic of the film. The

flower of *Na livadi* is out of place next to the military industrial complex. *Bumerang*'s mise-en-scène absorbs the ideals of the culture outside the logic of violence, and traps them within the logic of the military industrial complex.

The funniest sequence of *Bumerang* turns the piece into a kind of sex comedy. The commander studies a monitor screen in a small room beneath the radar tower. He turns a channel and sees the twirling of the radar, and adjusts a knob to zoom out so he can see his subordinate studying the radar image. He switches the channel with a leisurely flick of his foot to reveal a series of missiles, and again to reveal a series of mirror images of the commander himself watching the screen. There appears an infinity reflection of the commanders standing in unison to salute their leader. Finally, he switches the channel to reveal the static signal of the television screen. The transmission cuts to a black screen, the first time the technology itself has failed the system. The screen slowly reveals the silhouette of a stripper, beneath the whirr of lines. The woman dances at various angles, shaking her hips in tight movements, removing her large dress to reveal a vamp's red uniform. She wears a pompadour of yellow hair. She performs sexual acts with her body only possible within the flat graphic form, forcing her tiny circular breasts to revolve around one another, pursing her lips so they are almost as long as her face. The woman strips completely nude, revealing the triangle at her crotch. The commander grows excited, while his subordinate panics and tries to interrupt the broadcast with the image of a bomber on the horizon. He employs low technology, ringing a bell, then operates a mechanical hand which changes the channel and forces the commander to face the existence of a bomber.

The commander orders mass mobilization and a large-scale draft. The larger society here is a black-and-white negative of Kostelac's colorful camera advertisement *Samo Trenutak / Just a Moment* (1955). In fact, almost all the figures could have been borrowed from other films of

the Zagreb School. A line of helmets falls on people from several walks of life, the husband of a young couple, a swimmer, a football player, a glutton, a cop and robber, and a corpse at a solemn, still Catholic funeral. Helmets fall on factory chimneys. The production of baby carriages becomes the production of tanks. The production of beer bottles becomes the production of mini bullets. The production of urns becomes the production of more helmets. And just as this giant new army is prepared to start a nuclear apocalypse, the bomber is revealed to be the shadow of the butterfly. All returns to normal. The commander sits in front of the screen once again. His subordinate sees a new threat on the screen, precipitating one more round of mass mobilization.

Bumerang's flat graphic aerial perspective, a stripping down of all bodies, objects, and natural artifacts into geometrical shapes, questions the value of the society and the world it depicts. Nineteen years before, Disney had imagined a utopian aerial vision in *Victory Through Air Power* (James Algar, et al. . . ., 1943). In Disney's propaganda film, the bird's-eye view of the ground articulates a spherical earth surface and buildings and factories cast long shadows. If *Bumerang* resembles the flat world of *Space Invaders*, *Victory Through Air Power* resembles early versions of *SimCity* and LucasArts's flight simulation games from the late 1980s. Disney's film defines a fully-realized beautiful world, some parts of which need to be bombed to protect the whole of it. There is no master in *Bumerang*, only different kinds of small men. *Bumerang* denies the utopian possibilities presented by the precision of geometrical shapes. The commander's libido is just one small piece of the dysfunctional machine of modern warfare. The diver and the young lover simply enact a mechanical movement contiguous with those they follow in civilian life. All of them lack power.

In the mid-1980s, Paul Virilio would describe the dive bomber's view of the bodies beneath his machine. "[O]ne form suddenly dissolves before the war pilot's eyes, and in an extraordinary fade-in/fade-out another form appears and reconstitutes itself. He has created it, just as a director working on a viewer can edit a scene in an aesthetically pleasing manner" (25-26). Later, he considers the relationship between the treatment of the ubiquitous imagery of the sex object to be taken and the land that must be conquered. "The leer that the conquering soldier casts on a woman's now-distant body is the same as that which he directs at a land turned into desert by war" (29). Virilio invokes *Dr. Strangelove* in his study. Aerial pilots glance through *Playboy* while on their mission, just as they would throughout the Vietnam War. General "Buck" Turgidson (George C. Scott) bids farewell to his lover, "Tell you what you do: you just start your countdown, and old Bucky'll be back here before you can say 'Blast off!'" The aesthetics of *Dr. Strangelove*, like those in *Bumerang*, press the sexual dimension of the war-gasm, from, as James Naremore writes, "the opening credits which show a distinctly phallic refueling rod being inserted into a B-52 as 'Try a Little Tenderness' plays on the soundtrack, to the astonishing climax, when Major Kong (Slim Pickens) exultantly straddles a nuclear bomb that looks like a huge phallus. Throughout nuclear war is a hard-on for the men who wage it" (*On Kubrick* 125; reference to Pickens added). *Bumerang* lacks the orgasmic sensation of the stock footage of nuclear explosions Kubrick places in the final montage of *Dr. Strangelove*. And unlike *Dr. Strangelove*, *Bumerang*'s connections between sexuality and war disintegrate meaning. Nuclear missiles become flowers which become butterflies. It takes the implications of Virilio's point to extremes. All is the same. Nothing is worth saving.

Bumerang, like *Dr. Strangelove*, is beautifully ugly. Weegee's camera in *Dr. Strangelove* draws out the shadows and deforms Turgidson and Strangelove's faces. Of the final bombing

montage, Naremore writes, “the horror mingles with a sort of detached appreciation of the sublime beauty of sun, sky, and bursting clouds” (“Stanley Kubrick and the Aesthetics of the Grotesque” 9). In *Bumerang*, the palette is dense in light putrid greens and blacks, and the movements of the bodies may be witty, but they lack the lyricism of the hero of Kolar’s *Dječak i lopta / The Boy and the Ball* (1960). Such aesthetics call into question either *Dr. Strangelove* or *Bumerang*’s claims as a simple warning. Lewis Mumford would write, “What the wacky characters in ‘Dr. Strangelove’ are saying is precisely what needs to be said: this nightmare we have concocted for our children is nothing but a crazy fantasy, by nature as horribly crippled and dehumanized as Dr. Strangelove himself” (X8). Three years later, Pauline Kael refused a pious, liberal reading. “[*Dr. Strangelove*] was experienced not as satire but as a confirmation of fears. Total laughter carried the day. A new generation enjoyed seeing the world as insane; they *literally* learned to stop worrying and love the bomb” (172).

If *Dr. Strangelove*’s combination of the aerial perspective and the genre of black comedy confused the ethical standards of its critics, *Bumerang* troubles our conception of flat graphics. The use of a truly flat graphic perspective in *Bumerang* calls into question other iterations of flat graphics. In *Surogat*, the simple geometric shapes carry the potential of becoming fun consumer goods. In *Premijera*, the imperfection of the shapes invites the viewer to take an irreverent pleasure in high culture. *Piccolo* may tell us that limited animation can create new, more brutal violence, but *Bumerang* is nastier. In *Bumerang*, total flatness denies humans the internality they need to survive. In *Bumerang*, geometry is violence.

***Tifusari*: Old Violence and New Violence**

The official English translation of Mimica's *Tifusari* -- *Typhus* -- is misleading. In Croato-Serbian, the word for "typhus" is *tifus*. *Tifusari* has no English equivalent; it literally translates as "people with typhus." The opening title card highlights the distinction. *Tifus* appears in large block letters, taking up most of the screen. The remaining *ari* is squeezed in vertically at the right-hand edge of the screen. The film, like the poem by Jure Kaštelan upon which it is based, is as much about "typhus" as a state of mind as it is about the human bodies upon which the bacteria eats. If the human bodies in *Na livadi* and *Bumerang* are transformed into cyborgs by the military machine in the nuclear age, *Tifusari*, set in the pre-Hiroshima era of the Partisans, depicts men as near-skeletons walking in black cloaks, the red star of socialism on their hats. Mimica says that he sees no difference between the right-wing and the left-wing experience of war (Personal Interview). Only *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998), a film which celebrated American heroism in D-Day while also capturing the battle in a brutal docudrama, and which came out many years after Mimica retired from filmmaking, captures the chaos of the battlefield. "The battle has something animal in itself" (Personal Interview).²⁵ Despite the patriotism of Kaštelan's final lines — "For me there is no dawn, / but in death we are partisans / And our dead fight ever harder." — a viewer can easily come to the conclusion at the end of *Tifusari* that there is no war worth fighting and dying for.²⁶

Mimica says he was less interested in World War II or the Partisans as a subject than in the form of the film itself. "The only thing interesting for me in *Tifusari* was the visual experiment, the linocut technique" (Personal Interview). Linocut animation is rare. It uses

²⁵ Mimica also expresses admiration for *Hacksaw Ridge* (Mel Gibson, 2016). Mimica's son Sergio Mimica-Gezzan served as an assistant director on *Saving Private Ryan*.

²⁶ No one has published an English translation of Kaštelan's poem. I am providing my own rough and imperfect translation.

woodblock engraving and printing, an artform associated with a primitive folk past. The technique is time-consuming, and involves the layering and animation of backgrounds, as much if not more so than the animation of bodies. Theodore Ushev, a Bulgarian-Canadian animator who used a digital version of the technique for his film *Blind Vaysha* (2016), notes that it has a nostalgic appeal. His film, an adaptation of a folktale, is about a young woman who sees both the past and the future at the exact same time. “I really wanted to personalize this anxiety of being pressed between the past and the future” (to Desowitz). In an interview Mimica gave in 1962, the year *Tifusari* was released, he talked about the pessimistic films of the Zagreb School. “The moral-ethical conception of the world, which was ascendant until before the second world war, experienced a complete end with the brutalities that arose in that war (to Bogdanović “Razgovor sa Vartoslavom Mimicom” 141-142). *Tifusari* may be set during World War II, but as far as 1962, a point in Yugoslav history when the country had become more industrialized and less (outwardly) obsessed with Partisan warfare, is concerned, the film could just as easily have taken place in the nineteenth, eighteenth, sixteenth, or eleventh century.

Tifusari opens with a long tracking shot across a snowy plane marked in a stark black and white, the lines of the snow articulated in rough lines, as splotches of black emerge from the screen, in quick but smoothly articulated movements. The abstract shapes signify nothing yet, until the cool narration is spoken. “With many steps upon the white snow. The dead to the dead.” The black splotches take on the shape of skulls. “My steps are dead.” The soundtrack is percussive and modernist, a funeral dirge of the future. “All / go / to their / graves.” The black splotches now run in spreading, thickening lines, signifying blood. “All go to their graves / whose sources / are their / sea.” The black now engulfs the screen. Now splotches of the initial white background with the stray lines emerges through the black, before fading again into total

blackness. In an unusual turn for the Zagreb School, the opening credits appear after this prologue. The black melting into the names of the filmmakers.

Colors appear in thick unmixed blocks. The narrator imagines the appearance of happy sky and morning, and flashes of yellow stars quickly appear and disappear against the black. He imagines the blood flowing on the snow, and red emerges to fill in black splotches. He imagines the snow covering the blood, and the white engulfs the blood and the entire screen. In the third verse, shooting rough lines appear on the screen and articulate the background once again, as soldiers now emerge. “The wind. The wind blows. / Neither man nor wolf.” Some soldiers walk in the far background, their faces near skeletal and they wear their army uniforms like ghostly black cloaks. A skeletal hand emerges from the bottom of the screen calling for fire. If the perspective in the opening minutes employed an extreme flatness and heavy abstraction, suggesting at once both an aerial and eye-level perspective, similar to that in *Bumerang*, the remainder of the film presents a perspective that could be captured in live-action cinema.

Tifusari is disturbing in its mimicry of the live-action depictions of the snow-bound sites of war, an animated version of the world Tomislav Pinter’s camera would capture in *Dvostruki obruc / Double Circle* (Nikola Tanhofer, 1963). The extreme whiteness of the screen, when it appears, the blank canvas we find in so many Zagreb School films, is now its own kind of hell.

Tifusari is as much about the apocalyptic past as it is of an apocalyptic present. The skeletons and the landscape recall the memory of a brutal war and even a genocide, but they also suggest what the body of men would look like in a nuclear holocaust. Mimica’s other animated films — *Samac / Alone* (1958), *Mala kronika*, and *Perpetum i mobile / Perpetuo and mobile* (1961) — would examine the terror of modern-life. *Tifusari* reminds the viewer that the new deaths are old and the old deaths are new.

***Krek* and *Manevri*: War and Mass Culture**

Like *Piccolo* and *Bumerang*, Dovniković-Bordo's two *Krek* films, which feature a young soldier and his frog companion, examine the thin line between war and peace.²⁷ If in *Na livadi* and *Bumerang*, nature is the victim of modernity, as represented by the military industrial complex, in *Krek* and *Manevri* modernity, as represented by contemporary, visual media, liberates man from the nightmare of militarism.

In *Krek*, a young enlisted soldier suffers through boot camp. He brings with him a friendly frog named *Krek* who accompanies him during basic training and speaks but one word — *krek* — a variation of the Croato-Serbian language's onomatopoeic rendering of a frog's voice, *kre-kre*. A drill sergeant with a sinister moustache tortures the nerdy enlistee. The frog appears repeatedly to disrupt the drill sergeant's nefarious purposes. The original script describes the two playing the harmonica and keyboards, running and dancing (Grgić and Dovniković 161). In the finished film, the soldier and the frog enter into fantasy worlds made up of photographic collages, cut directly from magazines: naked women, flowers, travel postcards of major European capitals, and consumer goods like champagne bottles and telephones.

Dovniković-Bordo says he based *Krek* on his own experiences serving in the military in Slovenia during the Trieste Crisis in 1953, when he would try to escape a drab, "unnatural

²⁷ *Krek* was originally meant to be a stand-alone film. Dovniković-Bordo was offered the opportunity from Belgrade television to make a series of *Krek* films, but he only made *Manevri* and the larger project was abandoned due to a lack of funding (Dovniković-Bordo to Krelja and Turković 43). In the final version of *Krek*, the young soldier is unnamed. *Manevri* introduces the two main characters as Mek and *Krek*. The original script for *Krek* — initially *Quo vadis Krek* — named the soldier "Mak" (Grgić and Dovniković 161-162).

atmosphere” by reading William Faulkner novels and listening to *Porgy and Bess* (to Krelja and Turković 43). The one time he tried to shoot a rifle was a disaster. “The captain asked me never to do that again to protect his reputation. I was his assistant for culture.” After two months in basic training, his background as an artist for *Kerempuh* earned him a spot in a relaxed club, where he was able to read for most of the day and go into town when he liked (Personal Interview 2017). Dovniković-Bordo uses cut-outs from magazines in *Krek* “[b]ecause a drawing can never be as alluring as a photo...I would only obtain the beauty of civilian life through collages from magazines, which is what a soldier actually dreams about, doesn’t he? Naked women, ads for food and drink, records, cars, exotic places, and so forth.” He denies that his choice of subject matter for the soldier’s fantasy life has any implications of a relationship between a rich world — one represented by the mostly Western magazines from which the images in the film were taken — and a poor one. “These were just exquisite photographs from various walks of life” (to Krelja and Turković 43).

The images Dovniković-Bordo uses would be familiar to many Yugoslav viewers. Foreign magazines were common in Yugoslavia and domestic magazines were heavily influenced by foreign magazines. The images would also have resonated on the international festival circuit as indicative of Yugoslav culture’s respect for the Western world. (Yugoslav magazines had been imitating Western media for well over a decade by the time Dovniković-Bordo made *Krek*, but Dovniković-Bordo found them of poor quality [Personal Interview 2017]). The implications of the images he uses suggest not so much a relationship between a rich world and a poor world, as much as a relationship between an exuberant — in his word “exquisite” — world of heavily commercialized images of the mass market and a world of violence.

The military world of *Krek* is not identifiable with anything particularly Yugoslav or socialist. The film ends with a dedication, written in Croato-Serbian, English, French, and German: “We would like to express our gratitude to the sergeants all over the world for having enabled us to make this film.” Still, as the critic Turković notes, the gags in the film recall stereotypes of military life and the petty cruelty of drill sergeants from American films (Krelja and Turković 43).²⁸ Dovniković-Bordo’s sergeant changes the temperatures of the shower for his young recruit. He demands that he bayonets a dummy, an action that disturbs the young recruit. He forces him on a brutal march which takes him outside the base and through the world. The palette of the *mise-en-scène* is grey, green, and yellow. It is an every-military devoid of humanity.

The magazine world, by contrast, is a montage of Kodak images, disembodied yet fitting together thanks to the presence, from shot-to-shot, of the soldier and *Krek*’s cartoon bodies. The two ride a roast turkey past a circus tent. The screen cuts to a close-up of red lips and then a close-up of a woman’s eye. A champagne bottle emerges from a museum. In another montage, the two ski down a wave of blonde hair and then the diagonal line of a luscious dessert. They drop from beneath a woman’s skirt and then into a bucket of water. They shoot lipstick out of a champagne bottle like missiles onto a woman’s lips. They hop through a photograph of magazines laid out like dominoes. The soldier falls onto the stomach of a nude woman. In the first photographic collage in *Manevri* the image of the nude woman flashes between a cartoonal and a photorealistic rendering. The moment draws a clear line between the stripped-down world of Dovniković-Bordo’s cartoon figures and the equally fantastical world of magazine print culture, which of course included comics like those Dovniković-Bordo himself drew. The world

²⁸ Dovniković-Bordo emphatically denies the connection in the interview.

of the cartoonal soldier and the frog is not and never was that separate from the world of print culture. As surprising as the montages may be, they make perfect sense within Yugoslav culture.

Nudity was as present in the Zagreb School as it was in Yugoslav culture as a whole. Photographs of scantily-clad women were common in Yugoslav magazines. Patrick Ryder Patterson, who documents the history of magazine advertising, notes that there was an objection to the German-style ads featuring such images, but that such criticisms were the exception not the rule (96). He notes an advertising textbook published in 1971 which admirably dissected Western advertising. “It is clear (and telling) that advertisements for luxury items had not been deemed off limits as potential models for the psychological appeals of Yugoslav ads” (97). There were, however, angry criticisms of these ads. Rudi Supek, a leading figure of the Praxis School mentioned in the introduction, decried Yugoslavia’s consumerist culture and claimed it was worse than what existed in the West. Of the presence of nudity in Yugoslav culture, he wrote,

Just try putting a photopgraph [*sic*] of a working girl in a red kerchief or crowd scenes in the Mao-Tse-Tung [*sic*] manner on one of our newsstands amid the display of bare female breasts and bodies, you will immediately notice that you are confronted with two different cultures that exclude each other, and which are easily defined. These are extremes, but just let anybody try to define what values exist between these extremes in our country (“Some Contradictions and Insufficiencies of Yugoslav Self-Managing Socialism” 387).²⁹

Dovniković-Bordo’s films are either an illustration of everything Supek hates or an attempt to humanize socialism on his own terms. Dovniković-Bordo would reuse the image of a small man floating on giant women’s breasts in *Jedan dan života / One Day of Life* (1982), an image of liberation from dehumanizing factory life. Male heterosexual desire, for Dovniković-Bordo, is not just a means of humanizing army life but of humanizing socialism.

²⁹ *Praxis* was a multilingual journal, written primarily by Yugoslav authors influenced by Western Marxism. This article originally appeared in English.

Besides the use of the female object, many of the jokes in *Krek*, and even more so in *Manevri*, echo the humor of *Bumerang*. The presence of nude women in both films remind the viewer of the connection between the world of violence and the world of sex. But the stripper in *Bumerang* reminds the viewer that the bomb is a kind of phallus, that those with the most power in the military industrial complex live by their libido. The nudes in *Krek* and *Manevri* indulge the joy of sexuality. There is no death in the *Krek* films. The very suggestion that *Manevri* would be part of a longer series featuring Mek and Krek suggest that the two characters would not suffer from mortality. Dovniković-Bordo rejects the term “small man” to refer to his own heroes, preferring instead “regular man,” or *obični čovjek*. Mek is not diminished in his fight against the military industrial complex. He finds liberation in his essential being. The films suggest that the presence of the sex object, stripped-down, outright pornographic, saves man from the horrors the Zagreb School had revealed over the previous ten years.

War at the Studio’s End

I am uninterested in presenting the films from the Zagreb School as harbingers of Yugoslavia’s death, preferring instead to read the films in terms of their own time and place. No one, including the animators of the Zagreb School, knew that they would see their country disintegrate in the 1990s. With that said, a study of the Zagreb School’s final films offers a guide for understanding what exactly came before. Although this chapter is occupied with a conception of the Zagreb School as a product of the post-World War II era, I would like to discuss violence in the Zagreb School as the animators conceived it at the very end of their careers, when the

disintegration of the country and the third war that consumed the region in the twentieth century loomed large in the artists' consciousness.

It's difficult to name the final film of the Zagreb School. Its youngest auteurs, now in their 50s and 60s, still make films, with techniques and tools they did not use in the early years of their career. We can link the Zagreb School's end with specific moments in Yugoslav history. Nineteen eighty, the year of Tito's death, also saw the release of Joško Marušić's *Riblje oko / Fish Eye*, a horror film about a village overrun by gigantic human-eating fish, arguably the last great film of the Zagreb School. Dragić's *Slike iz sjećanja / Pictures from Memory* (1989), the last film the auteur made in Yugoslavia before his emigration to Germany, is a more obvious coda. The film is a memoir of the Dragić's childhood in Slavonia, from the late 1930s through World War II, and into the late 1940s when Yugoslavia was pulled between the influences of Stalinism and American mass culture. Like many of Dragić's films it employs AI animation to depict a smooth transition between heavily disparate shapes and images. Groups of Slavonian folk singers perform on farmland, as the shadows of bombers descend. "Our generation had no childhood, and now we don't have an old age," Dragić says (to Ajan, "Linija riječi" 421). However, Zlatko Pavlinić's *Anno Domini*, made in 1991, on the eve of the Balkan wars, offers a more conscious break, an active rejection of the Zagreb School's history.

Like many of the Zagreb School's films, *Anno Domini* features a generic small man, articulated with a white simple body and a thick black line. He spends most of the one-minute film within a simple blank frame. A metronomic tick of the years from 1940 to 1991 appears at the bottom left of the screen. After he lives through the chaos of World War II, from 1940 to 1943, his white body against a black background as he dodges gun shots and explosions, the screen cuts to white. By 1946, he is enjoying the sunrise. His body, sharp-lined and red in face,

which for a few previous frames had been nearly defeated on the ground, reduced to an infantile crouch, has now morphed into a gentle personality articulated with a curvilinear pen. He stands with a friendly slouch. In 1947, a paunchy gentleman with a moustache, a Serb caricature, enters the frame carrying the red flag of socialism. Between the turbulent years of 1949 and 1951, as Tito's break with Stalin troubles the country's security, the Serb caricature hugs him, picks his pocket, and extracts a wad of bills, exiting the screen, waving a gun, shooting a large bullet in the small man's general direction. The small man now stands solemn and statuesque. The routine is repeated between 1954 and 1958 and again between 1960 and 1967. Now, the Serb shakes the small man upside down and extracts one final coin, at which point the small man grows angry, his arms and legs, contorting and waving wildly; a pause on any frame reveals the co-presence of several limbs reflecting various versions of the body in motion. The Croatian Spring is depicted as a non-violent screaming match, as the Serb caricature exits the screen in tears. In 1970, a giant hand enters the frame, grabs the small man, pulls him off-screen where he beats him and returns him to the frame and places him in jail. The jail cell fades in 1976, and the final years of Titoism are depicted as one final opportunity for the Serb caricature to grab yet more cash, this time accompanied by a violent, mechanical thrashing. In the 1980s, the small man fights back with force, breaks the staff of the red flag, and as tensions reach their highpoint in 1990 and 1991, the background cuts to black once again, and the chaotic shooting of the opening seconds returns. The small man rips apart the entire background to reveal a beautiful Croatian landscape, with a church in the far distance. An apple falls from a tree and knocks him out, but he smiles happily as a circle of stars appears above his head.

The small man in *Anno Domini* shares a personality and, for most of the film, a social position with a long lineage of Zagreb School heroes. He is similar in concept if not form to the

protagonists of Dovniković-Bordo's *N.N.* (1977), *Škola hodanja / Learning to Walk* (1978), and *Dva života / Two Lives* (1988). The violent gags of *Anno Domini* attempt even if they don't quite match the timing of Dragić's *Idu dani / Passing Days* (1969) and *Tup Tup* (1972). But Pavlinić shouts his hero's Croatian nationality, rather than merely suggest it with a small Croatian hat. Pavlinić's *Sreća / Happiness* (1976) is the closest he comes to depicting one of the School's small men, here in a tragic-comic surreal fable about a man who rejects marriage and children. Pavlinić's other films include *Ivica and Marica / Hansel and Gretel* [1980], a modern-day parody of the German fairytale, and *Kako su ljudi ostali bez mozga / How People Came to Have No Brains* [1977], an adaptation of a Croatian fairytale. Both of them are relatively conservative in their stylizations. Their look may be identifiable with an idea of Croatia, but they do not represent the stylizations most identified with the Zagreb School. Pavlinić's use of this small man is an act of appropriation of a figure related to one political philosophy for a diametrically opposed belief system.

The hero of *Anno Domini* accepts a binary the previous films reject. He does not wear a Croatian hat, but his Croatian-ness is fully articulated. He is still a "small defiant fellow," but here he is saying NO to the history of Yugoslavia, declaring a break with the political philosophies, which are at times material and at others existential, that lie underneath the Zagreb School. In *Anno Domini*, the small man's crises cease to be existential. They are entirely material, external, related directly to the piece of land within defined borders that he occupies. The blank canvas against which he performs does not exist in a Nowhere/Everywhere. It is instead a thin, easily removed cover for Croatia.

There is another candidate for the final film of the Zagreb School, one that recalls a period which preceded the Zagreb School's birth, and does not offer any kind of break with the

Zagreb School's Yugoslavism. Pavao Štalter and Zlatko Bourek's *Wiener Blut* was made almost a quarter-century after *Anno Domini* and released in 2015, when its creators were in their late 80s. The film shares its title with the Strauss waltz which makes up much of its soundtrack, as well as with the successful Nazi-era film adaptation of Strauss's operetta from which the waltz was taken. The film tells the story of an elderly Jewish woman comfortable with the interwar culture of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire who is swept up and killed in a camp. In every frame, images of interwar modernity are juxtaposed, actively degraded alongside imagery of mass death. In the film's opening, men and women, some naked with large, flappy breasts, others dressed in business suits, walk in an infernal Central European city, upon a red-tinted street, their faces near-skeletal masks. Inside a café, Otto Dix-like men with no eyes shoot themselves in the head, next to naked courtesans. Another naked woman with one leg, appears on a wheelbarrow, playing the violin. In the theater, the woman sits among passive men in suits, watching a violinist morph between a human and a skeleton, playing a screeching tune as a soundtrack for the Auschwitz prisoners who appear on stage.

Wiener Blut's stylizations announce it as a part of its creators' oeuvres. Like Štalter's *Maska crvene smrti / Mask of the Red Death* (1968), an adaptation of the Poe story, and *Posljednja stanica / The Last Station* (1987), it borrows heavily from Dix and George Grosz, is paced like a funeral dirge, and follows a narrative about figures who mistakenly believe the finer elements of civilization will protect them from mass death. Like Bourek's *Ručak / Dinner* (1978), it indulges body horror and the grotesque. Both auteurs had made films about Croatia's past. Bourek had celebrated Slavonian culture in *Bečarac / Dancing Songs* (1966). Štalter had examined turn-of-the-century Zagreb in *Kuća Br. 42 / The House No. 42* (1984). Still, *Wiener Blut* is an exception to the rules of the Zagreb School. Neither filmmaker had examined World

War II in their animation, during which Bourek's own parents had been killed in the Holocaust. *Wiener Blut* is, in fact, the only one of the School's films to examine the Holocaust. Fittingly, it was released on the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II and the twentieth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre.

By the time of *Wiener Blut*'s release, the deaths in the Zagreb School and death in the animation medium had long ceased to be new. The small man had died.

Conclusion

For the past year, I have been purchasing original animation cels from the Zagreb School on eBay. Some of these cels represent characters in motion. Some show the same character in different stances. Others are portraits. They portray the characters in complete stillness. They stare directly at the viewer. Each of them are unaware of their mortality. They do not know that in the films they star in, some of them will die, their deaths declared by their sudden disappearance or a flash of red paint.

In a sense, all of these characters die several thousand deaths before their final demise in any given Zagreb School film. They present themselves in one stage of movement, one pose, and then, after a few frames, they will never take on that pose again. The character that they once represented will disappear, replaced by another being. In this sense, the characters aren't all that different from the heroes of classical Hollywood animation. If we take this interpretation to extremes, we could say that the deathlessness in classical Hollywood animation never truly existed. Mickey Mouse dies several thousand more deaths in a single short than does the flower in *Na livadi*. The fact of these deaths translated into the real world. It was common practice in

Disney and Warner Bros. for animators to wash cels, effectively erasing an entire way in which a character presented himself, and then draw something completely new. A Disney short may hide these thousand deaths. The Zagreb School declares these deaths loudly.

The Zagreb School did not use a multiplane camera, but the basics of its technology differed little from what existed at Disney and Warner Bros. The animators used fewer drawings because they had a lower budget, but often, the animators chose to be more primitive than necessary. They turned the animation technology into something rougher, more primal. The godly Animator may have created Mickey Mouse, but it was clear that humans created the characters in the Zagreb School.

In their depiction of nuclear war and the other new deaths that were presented by the military industrial complex, they maintained this approach to technology. Their depiction of the new threat the bomb presented, the new deaths it had already created, required them to turn the animation medium back in time. The animation medium, the medium of film most associated with the idea of cinema giving life to an object and the medium most associated with technological advancement would now be a medium that would describe exactly what death would look like in the post-World War II era. They simply stripped the medium down to reveal the many deaths that were already there and that the film-going public had ignored.

Conclusion

Limited Animation, the Jump Cut, and the Zagreb School

The term “limited animation” is at times apt and at others a misnomer. The term suggests the under-realized and under-imagined, hence its poor reputation for those who know it most from Saturday morning cartoon shows. The full animation of *Pinocchio* (Ben Sharpsteen, et al., 1941), by contrast, leaves little for the viewer to imagine for themselves. The full animation of *Pinocchio* fills up the screen as much as the viewer’s imagination. Every line and every color is explained. Although often placed in opposition to Disney, the stylizations of United Productions of America (UPA) were often used in pursuit of a similar goal. “Stripped down and direct, UPA backgrounds do not ‘stage the character’ and ‘support the action’ so much as they lay down a graphic field for UPA’s clear, explicit, simplified foreground action” (Frierson 54). In this sense, both the so-called limited animation of UPA and the full animation of Disney are “limiting,” in that they are designed to limit the viewer’s rights to imagine much outside the frameworks of the films they watch. The films obey their own conventions. Disney’s hyperrealism and UPA’s flat graphics are each closed systems.

For the Zagreb School, limited animation is the means by which films achieve the ideal of unperfection. The films’ premises rely on the idea that the small men/ordinary citizens are never fully realized and can never be completely understood. Their cities are always in the process of recreation and one always senses that there is vaster, infinite city that exists outside the borders of the frames of the films. The Zagreb School’s approach to death is always marked by a discomfort, born of the inexplicable, a discomfort that provokes a cackle. In *Koncert za mašinsku pušku / Concerto for Sub-machine Gun* (Vukotić 1958), blood and entrails are

articulated by brushstrokes and breaks in the paper, the viewer is faced with the shock of not only violence but also the finality of death, a shock and an inexplicability that classical Hollywood animation has always attempted to either deny — in the case of Looney Tunes and Disney shorts — or enfold into a clear and comforting narrative — as is the case in *Bambi* (David Hand, et al..., 1942) and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (William Cottrell, et al..., 1937). That inexplicable quality can be located in parables of nuclear war and mass mobilization, like *Bumerang* (Boris Kolar, 1962) and *Piccolo* (Vukotić, 1959).

The films of the Zagreb School are deliberately suggestive, always imperfect. And yet, the imperfect man, born out of limited animation, achieves an idea of fullness which Disney and UPA do not attempt to achieve. The imperfect man is attuned to all his bodily functions and with the full range of human experience. His attempt to absorb so much, while knowing that any attempt will fail, is the source of his imperfection.

The Zagreb School's films are also grounded in the real, by which I mean the real world of the studio. The imperfect bodies of the animators, as Mihail Ostrovidov's camera captures them in *Tisuću jedan crtež / 1001 Drawings* (Vukotić, 1960), are the sources of these animated characters' bodies and of their universes. And if the animators' bodies are lit in Vukotić's film so that they always maintain an ideal of their humanity at peace with the machine, they are mirrors then of the animated bodies, which no matter how much they suffer, are able to adapt themselves to the technological apparatus in the narratives of their films as well as the apparatus that gave them birth. The small man/ordinary citizen is an iteration of this studio life, of this labor, which is meant to collapse the distinctions between the consumer and the producer, the man of leisure and the man of work.

At the end of this dissertation, I would like to point back to Renata Adler's review of a screening of the Zagreb School shorts at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, discussed extensively in the Introduction, and of her interest in the character in *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* who once "maimed stays maimed" (*A Year in the Dark* 19). Instead of pointing to the result of the execution, I would like to examine that which occurs between the point before which the character is violated and the point after in which he is maimed, and concentrate on the very moment of maiming. I would like to examine what occurs between the frames in the animated film, the site, Norman McLaren once claimed is the site of animation. I would like to locate the method of maiming: the jump cut.

The jump cut is suggestive of violence in live-action film. Jean-Luc Godard and Martin Scorsese each used the technique to suggest the fracturing of their anti-heroes' internality and environment in *À bout de souffle / Breathless* (1960) and *Taxi Driver* (1976), respectively. If the editing technique is shocking in live-action film, it is more or less naturalized in the animation medium if we consider it the means by which we create stop-motion animation. There is no violence in *The Haunted Hotel* (Segundo de Chomon, 1909), just a fascination with the cinema of attractions. The viewer is at first jarred, but is soon drawn into the logic of the film, not alienated. But we can see moments in which the jump cut serves as a means of violation in the animation medium. In *The Barber of Seville* (Shamus Culhane, 1944), Woody Woodpecker threatens a large man with the suggestion of murder, at a tempo sped up with quick rhythmic jump cuts in action. Tom Klein calls the scene "a speedway of insanity" and an "assault on the visual" (45). In Norman McLaren's *Neighbours* (1952), jump-cut stop-motion articulates the extremity of the films' brutality. In one shot, the face of the two neighbors are clean and unmarked. In the next they soiled in black and red, suggestive of blood and warpaint. The shock

that Adler experienced when confronted by *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* relies not only on the extremity of violence in the film, but on the decision of the Vukotić to take the jump cut to its logical extremes that are only hinted at in *The Barber of Seville* and made elaborate in *Neighbours*, which still uses the material of the live-action photographed image. Just as the jump cut can break the live-action film, can remind the viewer that they are watching a series of photographs of bodies that no longer exist and that can be broken at any time by a cruel editor, so can the animated filmmaker break a drawing, turn figures we assumed were deathless and plasmatic into something mortal and limited in their abilities to morph.

But — and this is the most important marker of the Zagreb School — the jump cut, in keeping with the tradition of *The Haunted Hotel*, though it breaks time and space and unity, and *breaks* life, can also *create* life. When in *Surogat / Ersatz* (Vukotić, 1961) the tourist gives birth to a beach ball or a woman, he pumps the object up, and it grows via a steady quick jump-cut beat from frame to frame. When he kills the object, he deflates it, and it shrinks without the jump, disappearing at a smoother rhythm. The husband in *Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate* (Nikola Kostelac, 1959) greets the day, and declares his existence both as a husband and as a citizen of the city by throwing out his limbs and jumping from one extreme pose to the next. The young soldier's dreamlife in *Krek* (Borivoj Dovniković-Bordo, 1968) is articulated through a montage of drawings and photorealistic drawings. The jump cut is violent. The name suggests that the material of the film strip is being violated, cut into pieces without any fully thought out reasoning. But the Zagreb School reminds us that the violence in the jump cut can give life as much as death.

The Zagreb School's jump cut reminds us that some transitions are meant to be jarring and unexplained. In *Premijera / Opening Night* (Kostelac, 1957), a coat-check man runs through

a lobby and hats and coats suddenly disappear from various still bodies only to appear in a sudden jump, ordered in rows on a high wall in the background in the next frame. The gag is funny because the viewer can't fully imagine what took place between these frames. They know the beginning of the mini-narrative and they know the end. But the shapes of the bodies, the physics of the universe, and the perspectives of the wall make it impossible to fully understand the process by which these hats and coats were placed so high on the wall, to imagine the movement. At some point, the bodies of the Zagreb School exist in a space the viewer cannot fully contemplate. Just as the jump cut depicts the inexplicable death, so does it articulate the inexplicable life, and the movement that cannot ever be fully known or understood.

I will contrast the project of the Zagreb School and its use of the jump cut with the project of *Chelovek s kino-apparatom / Man with a Movie Camera* (Dziga Vertov, 1929). Vertov's film is an attempt to create a new Soviet city with a series of stop-motion tricks, images of bodies and different cities all placed against each other, in an attempt to create an energy necessary to invent a new man as well as a new way of seeing, a way of being that would fully integrate the human body with the machine. About one third of the way through the film, it stops suddenly. The moving live-action images, the horses, the small children, an old lady's face filled with wrinkles, all stop, turned from moving figures to still photographs. We see filmstrips of these figures, a series of photographs, and are reminded that we are watching not human bodies but a series of photographs of human bodies. It's up to a greater intelligence to give life to these beings, here in the figure of Elizaveta Svilova, the editor, playing the role of a Fate, combining images, running them through a spool on the editing table, cutting where they need to be cut, letting them move forward when they need to move forward. The moment is particularly shocking. The stillness of a photograph of a live-action figure disturbs a viewer who sees in the

live-action image a figure who will never be still. To become still is to die, to cease to exist. The extremity of that difference between life and death in *Chelovek* is indicative of Vertov's ambition. Just as his technology would create a new man, so would it create a new idea of death and life in the film medium, tying it directly, consciously to the apparatus.

Stasis, in the form of the freeze, historically does not have the same power in the animated film. "These freezes do not typically signify a break in the temporal flow (as is frequently the case in live-action freezes); rather, they slow it down" (Thompson "Implications of the Cel Animation Technique" 117). When Bugs Bunny or the Road Runner stand completely still, the viewer is not upset nor surprised. But stasis in the Zagreb School is upsetting, for stasis, as has been noted in *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* as in *N.N.* (Dovniković-Bordo, 1977), is representative of death. As Adler noted, when a body is maimed in *Koncert* it stays maimed. And yet even these moments of stasis, these moments of death, are never quite as brutal or as extreme as the mini-death suffered by the photographed images in Vertov's film. We expect characters to stand still in an animated film. We just don't expect that stasis to be representative of death. Nor do we expect the jump cut in the animated film to be quite so brutal, quite so extreme, quite so deadly.

The jump cut in animation is created by different means than the jump cut in live-action film. As in *Chelovek*, the editor in the Zagreb School could cut the film in a way to suggest the cut, but so can the key animator, even, presumably, an in-betweener. Every artist and inker in the studio which articulates a slight unperfect difference of a figure from one frame to the next is a potential jump cutter. Every figure in Zagreb Film is a potential Fate.

When we consider these elements together, we see that in the jump cut, the Zagreb School has discovered all the ambiguities articulated by Adler's review as a series of dialectics

between life and death, violence and healing, the naturalized and the new, and, yes, the real and the unreal. The death of the bank robber in *Koncert za mašinsku pušku* has much in common with the death of any figure in a live-action film. Our shock at his death is not all that different from the shock of the stillness in *Chelovek*.

But of course, the animators of the Zagreb School were not motivated by the same ambition that motivated Vertov. They were creating a small man and an ordinary citizen, not a new man. They were documenting a figure they knew already existed outside the studio on the trams and buses of Zagreb as well as inside the studio of Zagreb Film. They were not using the images of those citizens to create something that didn't exist before just as they only rarely attempted to overhaul the technology of the animation medium. The jump cut, for them, was not a tool of the cinema of attractions. It was a tool of the cinema of the laborer. The Zagreb School humanized technology. The Zagreb School did not technologize the human.

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Ručak / Dinner. Directed by Zlatko Bourek, Zagreb Film, 1978.

Samac / Alone. Directed Vatroslav Mimica, Zagreb Film, 1958.

Samo trenutak / Just a Moment. Directed by Nikola Kostelac, 1955.

Satiemania. Directed by Zdenko Gašparović, Zagreb Film, 1978.

Saving Private Ryan. Directed by Steven Spielberg, Amblin Entertainment, 1998.

The Secret of the Kells. Directed by Tomm Moore and Nora Twomey, Cartoon Saloon, 2009.

The Sinking of the Lusitania. Directed by Winsor McCay, Jewel Productions, 1918.

Sisife / Sisyphus. Directed by Marcell Jankovics, Pannonia, 1974.

Slavica. Directed by Vjekoslav Afrić, Avala Film, 1947.

Slike iz sjećanja / Pictures from Memory. Directed by Nedeljko Dragić, Zagreb Film, 1989.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Directed by William Cottrell, et al..., Walt Disney, 1937.

The Specialist. Directed by Boris Kolar and Don Arioli, National Film Board of Canada and Zagreb Film, 1971.

Sreća / Happiness. Directed by Zlatko Pavlinić, Zagreb Film, 1976.

Steamboat Willie. Directed by Ub Iwerks, Walt Disney, 1928.

Steklyannaya garmonika / The Glass Harmonica. Directed by Andrey Khrzhanovskiy, Soyuzmultfilm, 1968.

The Story of the Animated Drawing. Directed by William Beaudine and Wilfred Jackson, Walt Disney, 1956.

Surogat / Ersatz. Directed by Dušan Vukotić, Zagreb Film, 1961.

Susret u snu / Encounter in a Dream. Directed by Nikola Kostelac, Zagreb Film, 1957.

Sutjeska / The Battle of Sutjeska. Directed by Stipe Delić, Bosna Film, et al..., 1973.

Svi crteži grada / All the Pictures of the City. Directed by Ivo Vrbanić, Zagreb Film, 1959.

Svi na izbore / Everyone, Go to the Polls. Directed by Walter Neugebauer, Jadran Film, 1945.

Šagrenska koža / Le Peau de Chagrin. Directed by Vlado Kristl, Zagreb Film, 1960.

Škola hodanja / Learning to Walk. Directed by Borivoj Dovniković, Zagreb Film, 1978.

Tie shan gong zhu / Princess Iron Fan. Directed by Wan Laiming and Guchan Wan, Xinhua Film Company, 1941.

Tisuću jedan crtež / A Thousand and One Drawings. Directed by Dušan Vukotić, Zagreb Film, 1960.

Tri / Three. Directed by Aleksandar Petrović, Avala Film, 1965.

The Trial. Directed by Orson Welles, Astor Pictures Corporation, 1962.

Tup Tup. Directed by Nedeljko Dragić, Zagreb Film, 1972.

Vals im Bashir / Waltz with Bashir. Directed by Ari Folman, Bridgit Folman Film Gang, et al..., 2008.

Veliki Miting / The Great Meeting. Directed by Walter Neugebauer, Jadran Film, 1950.

Victory Through Air Power. Directed by James Algar, et al..., Walt Disney, 1943.

Wiener Blut. Directed by Pavao Štalter and Zlatko Bourek, Zagreb Film, 2015.

Wizards. Directed by Ralph Bakshi, Bakshi Productions, 1977.

Yellow Submarine. Directed by George Dunning, Apple Films, 1968.

Začarani dvorac u Dudincima / The Haunted Castle in Dudince. Directed by Dušan Vukotić, Duga Film, 1952.

Zagrebačka škola crtanoog filma / The Zagreb School of Animation. Directed by Zoran Tadić, Zagreb Film, 1991.

Zbog jednog tanjura / All Because of a Plate. Directed by Nikola Kostelac, Zagreb Film, 1959.

Znatiželja / Curiosity. Directed by Borivoj Dovniković, Zagreb Film, 1966.

Zolotaya antilopa / The Golden Antelope. Directed by Lev Atamanov, Soyuzmultfilm, 1955.