



comiXconnection
networks and backgrounds



comiXconnection – networks and backgrounds

Jörn Nuber / Beate Wild (Eds.)



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strip, bandă desenată, képregény, cmpun – the alternate names for the medium of comics vary as widely as the forms it takes in Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Hungary and Serbia. The history of its development is directly reflected in these countries' political histories and their societies' openness to this form of art and communication. Thus, the line between mainstream and alternative also varies from country to country.

The exhibition *comiXconnection* introduces independent comics from these five countries in the broadest sense of the term, highlighting the differences and possible connections between them.

The collection of essays accompanying the exhibition illuminates the background of a cultural niche that has yet to be discovered by a larger audience. The authors, coming from all countries involved in the exhibition, are partly intellectual observers of the local scenes, partly themselves graphic artists, gallery owners, editors or organizers of exhibitions and workshops.

Through an insider's lens they comment on the historical development of regional structures and conditions of art production. They report on diverse activities and develop theories and meta-theories about the *independent comic* genre in its particular contexts.

The collection conveys an understanding of the form and function of a vast, autonomous field of art and should be seen as an invitation for further debate and discussion.

6

A Century of Independent Comics

Independent comics and left-wing politics in Slovenia 1914 – 2013

Iztok Sitar

24

Alternative Comics in Serbia through the History of its DIY Media

Aleksandra Sekulić

30

no names, dates, no repeat, delete, bad copy, no paste and titled ... innocence protected

illogical chronology of nineties in comic, comix in nineties

Radovan Popović

42

Guerilla Publishers and Strip-Tease Artists

Contemporary Croatian comics scene

Bojan Krištofić

54

When We Were Gnomes

Croatian dystopia in SF comics

Vjeran Kovljanić

64

Authorship in Contemporary Hungarian Comics Culture

The rebirth of Hungarian comics

Zoltán János Tóth

74

The Aesthetics of Chaos and Testimoniality

Attila Stark's *Kulo City* in the context of the *Roham* magazine

Márió Z. Nemes

86

A New Chapter in Slovene Comics

Responses to the altered political and economic reality in independent Slovenia

Ciril Horjak & Jasmina Hlaj

102

Well Fertilised Soil

An attempt at outlining the most important trends in the publishing of translated comics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Jakob Klemenčič

108

On Publishing Comics

A birthday suit view of the use vs. exchange value particular to this rare commodity

Octav Avramescu

110

The Individual in the Network

Independent comics in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and Romania

Jörn Nuber

118

Itinerant Edition

Workshops/Groups/Festivals

Johanna Marcadé

126

Biographies



Stoletje neodvisnega stripa

Neodvisni strip in politična levica na Slovenskem 1914 – 2013

Iztok Sitar

Malo je primerov v svetu, da bi se stripovska zgodovina nekega naroda začela z neodvisnim, v bistvu ilegalnim in protirežimskim levičarskim stripom, kot se je to zgodilo na Slovenskem s Smrekarjevimi in Bambičevimi satiričnimi stripi. Po drugi strani pa najbrž ni medija, ki bi bil pri nas tako stigmatiziran s strani uradne kulture, dasiravno je v veliki meri sam kriv za to, saj je nemalokrat hodil po tankem robu med umetnostjo in kicem, pa najsi gre za komercialni strip v visokonakladnih časopisih in revijah ali neodvisni strip v neuglednih fotokopiranih fanzinih.

Sicer pa, poskusimo najprej definirati in ločiti relativno širok pojem *neodvisnega stripa* (pod katerega lahko štejemo avtorski strip, protirežimski strip, protiklerikalni strip, alternativni strip, underground, samizdate, mini knjižice, fanzine itd.) od tako imenovanega *komercialnega*. Splošno znano je dejstvo, da se je strip rodil iz povsem komercialnih razlogov boljše prodaje časopisa. Luč sveta je ugledal v Ameriki, 5. maja 1895. leta v Pulitzerjevem New York Worldu v obliki rumenega dečka v risani zgodbi z naslovom *At the Circus in Hogan's Alley*. Ker novorojenček še ni znal govoriti v oblačku (ta je kasneje postal zaščitni znak stripa), ga je srečni očka Richard Felton Outcault oblekel v do tal segajočo rumeno spalno srajco (po kateri je kasneje dobil tudi ime *Yellow Kid*), ki je bila kot nalašč za to, da je lahko nanjo pisal svoje duhovite in neredko tudi jedke komentarje. Dasiravno je sam porod potekal brez težav, pa se je cirkus preselil iz Hoganove ulice v celotno mesto, ko je medijski mogotec William Randolph Hearst iz New York Journala hotel dobiti skrbništvo

A Century of Independent Comics

Independent comics and left-wing politics in Slovenia 1914 – 2013

Iztok Sitar

There are few nations in the world whose comics history began with independent, essentially illegal and anti-establishment left-wing comics, as was the case in Slovenia with the satirical comics of Smrekar and Bambič. On the other hand, there probably is no medium as stigmatised by our official culture – even if that is largely its own fault since it has often walked the fine line between art and kitsch – be it commercial comics in large circulation newspapers and magazines, or independent comics in disreputable photocopied fanzines.

However, let us first attempt to define and distinguish the relatively broad term *independent comics* (among which we can count authorial comics, anti-establishment comics, anti-clerical comics, alternative comics, underground, samizdat, mini booklets, fanzines, etc.) from so-called *commercial comics*. It is a well-known fact that the comic strip was born out of purely commercial reasons – better newspaper sales. It saw the light of day in America, on 5 May 1895 in Pulitzer's *New York World*, in the form of a yellow boy in a drawn narrative entitled *At the Circus in Hogan's Alley*. As the newborn had yet to learn to speak in speech bubbles (which later became the comic strip's trademark) its proud dad Richard Felton Outcault dressed it in an oversized yellow nightshirt (which later gave it its name *The Yellow Kid*) that served as the perfect canvas for his humorous and often caustic commentary. Although the birth itself went smoothly, the circus soon spread from Hogan's Alley into the whole city when media mogul William Randolph Hearst of the

nad vse bolj popularnim malčkom, ki je dvigoval naklade konkurenčnim Pulitzerjevim časopisom in ga v umazani igri tudi dobil (takrat je nastal tudi izraz rumeni tisk, ki označuje senzacionalizem in mrhovinarstvo v novinarstvu¹) Sprva socialno in družbeno kritični komentarji na Kidovi majici so kmalu zvodeneli in se spremenili v bolj ali manj zabavne dialoge ter s tem zapravili vlogo stripa kot izključno lahkega zabavnega čitalnika za široke množice. Za razliko od komercialnega stripa, ki je bil, kot smo videli, „odvisen“ od časopisov, pa je imel neodvisen strip popolnoma drugačen, avtorski pristop tako v vsebinai, pri kateri ne gre več za golo zabavanje bralcev z dnevнимi humorističnimi pasicami ali pustolovskimi stripi na nedeljskih tablojih² in v samostojnih zvezkih, ampak bodisi za satiro na aktualno družbeno politično dogajanje ali povsem intimno, največkrat avtobiografsko pripoved; kot tudi v nekonvencionalni risbi, katere namen nista estetika in komercialna všečnost širšemu stripobralstvu, temveč je prilagojena sporočilnosti samega stripa v širokem likovnem razponu od skiciozne, nedodelane risbe, preko grobih, ekspresivnih potez s čopičem do liričnih mehkih linij, ki so bolj ali manj stilizirana lastnost, a vsekakor zelo oddaljena od suhoparnega akademizma, ki je prisoten v klasičnem stripu. Druga značilnost neodvisnega stripa je naklada, ker stripi niso bili zanimivi za visokonakladne časopise in revije, da o knjižnih izdajah sploh ne govorim, ali pa so bili zaradi družbene kritike ali potencirane spolnosti usmerjeni na manjšo, bolj specifično publiko, so izhajali v manjših nakladah, pogosto v samozaložbah ali pa v fanzinih, ki jih je navadno izdajala skupina entuziastov. Tretja značilnost neodvisnega stripa pa je politična orientiranost tako avtorjev kot njihovih izdelkov, saj so bili v večini primerov, če že niso bili nevtralni, blizu levici in celo skrajni levici, kar pa je bil samo še razlog več, da so izhajali v stripovskem Undergroundu. Toda, kot bomo videli kasneje, te zahodnjaške tržne zakonitosti niso povsem samoumevne tudi za slovenski strip.

Satirični enostranski strip *Izjemno zanimiv primer elefantizaze* Hinka Smrekarja (ta je bil naravnost virtuozen risar, odlično je obvladal anatomijo in imel je globok smisel za kompozicijo), je prišel v javnost leta 1914, na sam predvečer prve svetovne vojne. Smrekarjevo delo ima vse atribute neodvisnega stripa, če začnemo pri samem avtorju, ki je bil izrazito levičarsko usmerjen (kar je kasneje plačal tudi z življnjem³), majhni nakladi (strip ni izšel v časopisu, ampak je bil tiskan na letaku), ter seveda satirični vsebinai s pornografskimi elementi, ki pridejo še posebno do izraza v mojstrski Smrekarjevi risbi. Zanimivo je tudi, da je strip napisan v nemščini, s katero Smrekar kot velik rođoljub še potencira satiro na Avstrije (Slovenija je bila namreč do leta 1918 v sestavu Avstroogrške monarhije). Po koncu vojne, leta 1919 je Smrekar pri Umetniški propagandi izdal bogato

New York Journal attempted to gain custody of the ever more popular toddler who was boosting circulation of Pulitzer's competitive newspapers; in a dirty game he won it (the term *Yellow Press*, which labels sensationalism and vulturous journalism,¹ was also coined at this time). The at first socially critical commentaries on Kid's nightshirt were soon watered down and turned into more or less fun dialogues, thus sealing the role of the comic strip as exclusively light entertainment reading for the masses. As opposed to commercial comics, which were, as we have seen, 'dependent' on newspapers, independent comics had a completely different authorial approach both in content as well as in unconventional drawing. The content was no longer concerned with just entertaining readers with daily humour or adventure strips in Sunday editions² and independent volumes, but either satirised the current socio-political situation or dealt with intimate, mostly autobiographical stories. Likewise, the purpose of the drawings was no longer aesthetics or commercial likability for a wider comics readership; instead it was adapted to the concept of the comic itself and covered a wide artistic range from sketchy, non-detailed drawings through rough, expressive brushstrokes to lyrical soft lines, which are a more or less stylised feature but nevertheless far removed from the dry academicism present in classical comics.

The second characteristic of independent comics is circulation. Because comics were of no interest to large circulation newspapers and magazines, not to mention book editions, or were aimed at smaller, more specific audiences due to their social criticism or heightened sexuality, they had smaller circulations and were often self-published or published in fanzines (usually produced by a group of enthusiasts). Finally, the third characteristic of independent comics is the political orientation of the authors and their works. In most cases they were, if not neutral, close to the left and even extreme left, which was merely an additional reason for them to be published in the underground scene. However, as we shall see later on, these western market laws are not entirely self-evident when it comes to Slovene comics.

The satirical one-page comic *Izjemno zanimiv primer elefantizaze* by Hinko Smrekar (a truly virtuosic artist with an excellent command of anatomy and a deep sense of composition) came out in 1914 on the eve of the First World War. Smrekar's work has all the attributes of independent comics: small circulation (the comic was not published in a newspaper, but printed on a leaflet); satirical content with pornographic elements, which come to particular expression in Smrekar's masterful drawings; and the author himself was also decidedly left-wing (for which he later paid with his life³). It is also interesting that the comic was written in German; Smrekar as a great patriot used it to heighten

ilustrirano knjižico na 24 straneh, Črnovojnik v kateri na satiričen in hudomušen način opisuje svoje vojaške zgode in nezgode, od vpoklica v vojsko do pristanka v norišnici in jetnišnici v letih 1915/16 in ki je bila predhodnik današnjih stripovskih zvezkov in fanzinov. V Črnovojnku se prvič pojavi tudi stripovski oblaček in ta je, kot vemo, zaščitni znak stripa in ga je kot drugi stripovski avtor uporabil Milko Bambič šele leta 1927 v alegorijskem političnem stripu Zamorček Bu-ci-bu. Strip je izšel v tržaškem Našem glasu, pripoveduje pa o zamorskom kralju, ki je s svojo aroganco in netoleranco popeljal svoj zamorski rod v propad. Italijanski fašisti so v tem, sicer otroškem stripu videli asociacijo na Mussolinija in so ga po štirih nadaljevanjih prepovedali, tako da ga lahko navkljub relativno visoki nakladi in objavi v uradni reviji glede na politično satirično ost in kasnejšo prepoved ter avtorjevo usodo⁴ uvrstimo v neodvisni strip. Po osvoboditvi so se jugoslovanski narodi na referendumu z veliko večino odločili za socialistični politični sistem in Jugoslavija se je gospodarsko ter kulturno tesno naslonila na Sovjetsko zvezo, tako da je bil strip kot produkt imperialističnega Zahoda vse do spora z Informbirojem⁵ nezaželen v dnevnem tisku. V času ruskega embarga je Jugoslavija na široko odprla vrata na Zahod in tako si je strip ponovno in tokrat dokončno pridobil domovinsko pravico. Leta 1952 je prišlo do prave ekspanzije ameriškega in evropskega stripa v jugoslovanskem časopisu, kar je dalo stimulacijo tudi domačim avtorjem, ki so se kaj kmalu začeli poskušati enakovredno kosati s tujimi⁶.

Drugi val neodvisnega stripa je pljusknil v Slovenijo direktno iz Amerike v podobi Crumbovega undergrounda. Šestdeseta leta so bila v znamenju levičarske ekspanzije, anarhizma in Che Guevare, študentskih nemirov in protestov proti vietnamski vojni, Beatlesov in psihodeličnega rocka, hipijev in otrok cvetja,



Hinko Smrekar, Črnovojnik

the satire aimed at the Austrians (Slovenia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918). After the end of the war, in 1919 Umetniška propaganda published Smrekar's richly illustrated 24-page booklet called Črnovojnik, in which he in a satirical and humorous way describes his military adventures and misadventures – from his conscription to ending up in a mental hospital and then prison in 1915/16 – and which is considered the forefather of today's comic books and fanzines. In Črnovojnik the speech bubble appears for the first time, which is, as we know, the comic's trademark. In 1927, in the allegorical political comic strip Zamorček Bu-ci-bu, Milko Bambič was only the second comic strip author to use it. The comic was published in the Trieste monthly Naš glas and tells the story of an African king whose arrogance and intolerance led his people to ruin. Italian fascists saw in this otherwise children's comic a link to Mussolini and banned it after four episodes. Considering its politically satirical point, subsequent ban, and its author's fate⁴, we can therefore place it among independent comics despite its relatively large circulation and the fact that it was published in an official magazine. After liberation the Yugoslav nations held a referendum and voted with a great majority in favour of the socialist political system. Yugoslavia thus leaned heavily on the Soviet Union both economically and culturally, which meant that comics, a product of the imperialist West, were disdained in the daily press until the conflict with the Informbiro⁵. In the time of the Russian embargo Yugoslavia opened its door to the West and thus comics once again, and this time once and for all, gained their right of abode. In 1952, the first expansion of American and European comic strips into Yugoslav newspapers occurred, which also stimulated domestic authors who soon started to try and rival foreign ones.⁶

The second wave of independent comics came directly from America and splashed onto our shores in the form of Crumb's underground. The sixties were the decade of left-wing expansion, anarchism and Che Guevara, student unrest and protests against the Vietnam War, the Beatles and psychedelic rock, hippies and flower children, the sexual revolution and free love, marihuana and LSD, and – Robert Crumb. Comic strips published by Slovene newspapers drew inspiration from American adventure comics of the forties and fifties, and in America Robert Crumb shook the comic strip scene with the underground, liberated comics from all taboos of sex and violence and lacked any semblance of respect for politics, the church or traditional family values. Crumb appeared in the mid-sixties with Fritz The Cat, in 1967 established his own newspaper Zap Comix,⁷ and with Mr. Natural, Devil Girl and other completely bonkers characters forever changed the perception of comics. Crumb's international voice was heard in Yugoslavia as well, where it caught the very



Kostja Gatnik, Fatamorgana, ©Kostja Gatnik

talented ear of a young fine arts student – Kostja Gatnik (1945). Gatnik made his first appearance in print at the age of twenty with a cowboy parody called Silver Kid, in which Crumb's influence was not yet felt, for it came to real prominence only in 1969 in works published in the student magazine Tribuna and the establishment's comics bulletin Pavliha. There Gatnik found fame with his short, graphically impressive, usually one page long socially critical comics, in which he tackled not only the universal themes of the sixties such as eroticism, rebellion, hippies and drug addiction, but in accordance with Yugoslav nonalignment policy also and mostly dealt with Slovene small-town narrow-mindedness, the Catholic Church, the domestic political reality from corruption to inflation, and national themes such as alcoholism. With these he so endeared himself to his readers that some of his comics became a part of national folklore, and his works were readily quoted by both workers and school professors (in Yugoslavia a similar status was enjoyed only by Alan Ford).⁸

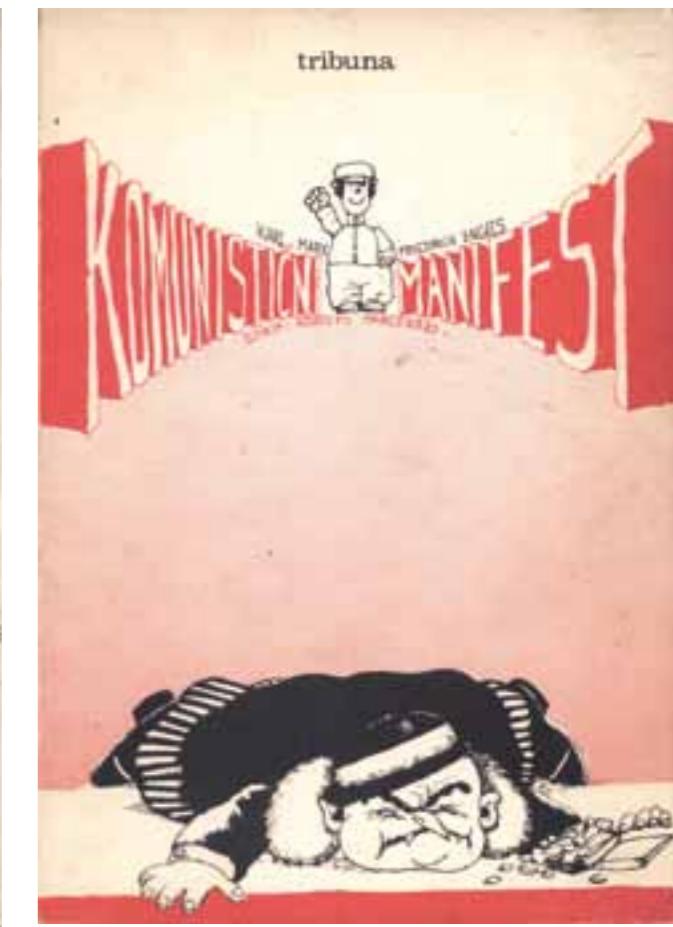
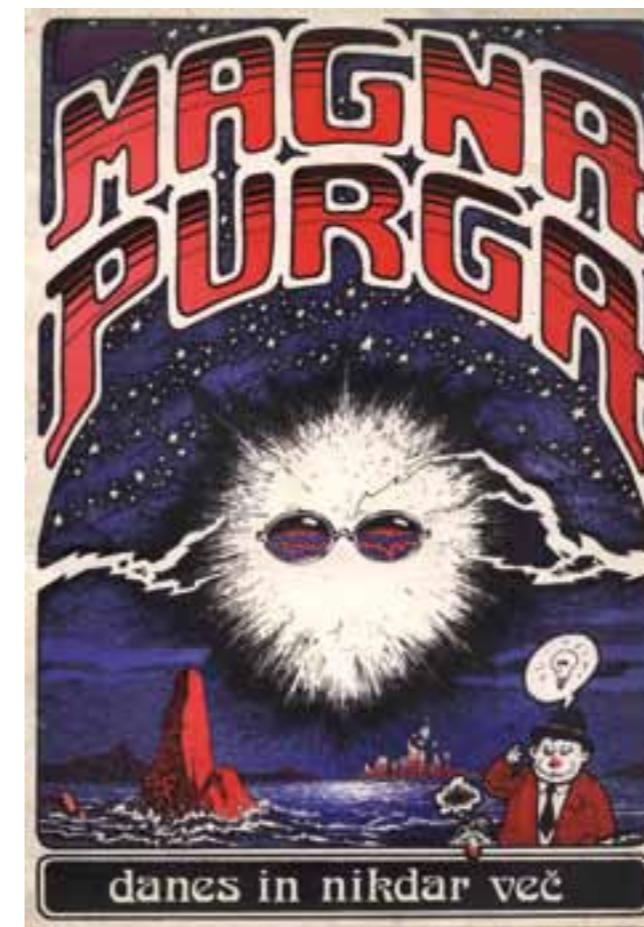
Unlike West European and American independent comics, which were financed primarily with the help of the authors themselves and through the sale of fanzines, Slovene independent comics in Yugoslavia were effectively never completely independent. Even Gatnik's underground comics were published in large circulation newspapers, and in 1977 the Student Cultural Centre (Studentski kulturni center – ŠKUC) in Ljubljana published them in comics album format under the title Magna Purga. ŠKUC did represent a singular opposition to the establishment of the time and the mainstream in general, but was nevertheless financed by the state; likewise, Stripburger later in independent Slovenia. Magna Purga completely altered the perception of comics at the time as shallow entertainment for the working class, and placed it on a pedestal of art in Slovenia and the whole of Yugoslavia. With Kostja Gatnik and his Magna Purga, Slovenes in the seventies took up the leading position in the extremely strong Yugoslav comics scene⁹ – which had not happened before nor has happened since – and rivalled European and American comics of the time. In 1979, after the (un)expected success of Magna Purga (because it sold out immediately, the comic was reprinted the next year) rival student newspaper Tribuna, sticking to the old, tried and tested Slovene saying 'kuj želeso, dokler je vroče' – 'strike while the iron's hot', published a comics version of Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* by Italian alternative author Rodolfo Marcenaro. Even though the Slovene authorities observed with gritted teeth this transformation of the seminal work of communist theory which had an almost cult status in the socialist system into an already stigmatized form such as comics (even though the author was an Italian communist), their grimace quickly turned into a smile.

zaplankanosti, Katoliške cerkve, domače politične stvarnosti od korupcije do inflacije ter tradicionalno domačih tem, kot je alkoholizem, s katerimi se je bralcem tako priljubil, da so nekateri njegovi stripi ponarodeli, njegove citate pa so s pridom uporabljali tako delavci za šankom kot profesorji za katedrom (podoben status je v Jugoslaviji imel samo še Alan Ford)⁸.

Za razliko od zahodnoveropskega in ameriškega neodvisnega stripa, ki se je finančiral predvsem s pomočjo samih avtorjev in prodajo fanzinov, pa slovenski neodvisni strip v Jugoslaviji v bistvu nikoli ni bil čisto neodvisen, namreč tudi Gatnikovi undergruond stripi so izhajali v visokonakladnih časopisih, leta 1977 pa jih je Študentski kulturni center (ŠKUC) v Ljubljani, ki je sicer bil svojevrstna opozicija takratnemu režimu in mainstreamu nasploh, vendar pa ga je finančirala država, prav tako kot kasneje v samostojni Sloveniji *Stripburger*, natisnil v knjižni obliki pod imenom *Magna Purga*, ki je popolnoma spremenila takratno pojmovanje stripa kot plehke zabave za delavski razred in ga v Sloveniji ter celotni Jugoslaviji postavila na pedestal umetnosti. S Kostjem Gatnikom in *Magno Purga* smo Slovenci v sedemdesetih letih prevzeli primat na izjemno močni jugoslovanski stripovski sceni⁹, kar se nam ni zgodilo ne prej ne pozneje in se enakovredno kosali z evropskim in ameriškim stripom tistega časa. Po (ne)pričakovanem tržnem uspehu *Magne Purge* (ker je bila takoj razprodana, so naslednje leto strip ponatisnili) so pri konkurenčem študentskem časopisu Tribuni, držeč se starega in preizkušenega slovenskega pregovora, da se že lezo kuje, dokler je vroče, leta 1979 izdali *Komunistični manifest* Marxa in Engelsa v stripu italijanskega alternativnega avtorja Rodolfa Marcenara. Čeprav je slovenska uradna politika s stisnjjenimi zobmi gledala preobrazbo temeljnega dela komunistične teorije, ki je imelo v socialističnem sistemu malodane kulturni status, v že tako stigmatizirano formo, kot je strip (čeprav je bil avtor italijanski komunist), pa so se ji usta razširila v nasmeh, ko je videla, kako hitro je naklada 5000 izvodov pošla in rade volje dovolila ponatis s 15.000 izvodi, češ, če ljudje že ne berejo dolgočasnega Komunističnega manifesta, pa naj vsaj strip! Dasiravno imam sam osebno precejše pomisleke glede adaptacij knjižnih del v strip, ki redkokdaj, še pogosteje pa nikoli ne dosegajo kvalitete izvornega dela (isto velja za filmske metamorfoze stripov ali knjig), kajti strip je povsem avtonomen umetniški medij s svojimi zakonitostmi in specifičnimi lastnostmi, ki se popolnoma razlikujejo tako od književnosti kot od filma, pa sem bil ob Komunističnemu manifestu v stripu prijetno presenečen: Marcenaru je namreč uspelo pretvoriti dokaj dolgočasno in mestoma nerazumljivo znanstveno delo v iskriv, satiričen in predvsem duhovit povzetek s sijajno stilizirano risbo, zato sploh ni čudno, da sta ga predvsem mladina in študentarija vzeli za svojega.

when they saw how quickly the comic's 5,000 copies sold out and willingly allowed a reprint of 15,000 copies, as if to say: 'If the people aren't reading the boring *Communist Manifesto*, they might at least read the comic!' Although personally I have considerable scruples about comics adaptations of literary works, which are rare and often never on a par with the original work (the same applies to film transformations of comics or books), because comics is a completely autonomous artistic medium with its own laws and specific characteristics entirely different from literature as well as film, I was pleasantly surprised by the comics version of the *Communist Manifesto*. Marcenaro managed to transform a rather boring and occasionally incomprehensible scientific work into a vibrant, satirical, and above all witty summary with brilliantly stylized drawing. It is therefore no wonder that youths and students embraced it above all else.

After *Magna Purga*, nothing was the same. With it Slovene comics finally lost their innocence and became a fully grown and paid-up member of the urban subculture. Ten years after publication of the cult comics album, Ivo Štandeker,¹⁰ a humanities student, launched the column *XX stoletje* (*XX Century*) in *Mladina*, in which he sailed far and wide across a fictitious comics world, and at the same time also on the pages of *Mladina* in *Novi slovenski strip* (*New Slovene Comic*) created a real one, which no longer had recourse to imaginary themes and heroes, but in a naturalistic way reflected the harsh social reality whose protagonists were ourselves. One of the first artists who began drawing for *Mladina* was Zoran Smiljanić (1961). Smiljanić, as early as 1983 in a photocopied fanzine of the Music Lovers Club in Kranj, published some 'new wave' comics. Among these, *Hiša Metoda Trobca* (*The House of Metod Trobec*, based on a song by Carniolan punk musician Sašo Novak) garnered the most attention. This was a two-part parallel interpretation of the same event: a socialist interpretation with the naturalistic perspective of lumen-proletarian and serial killer Metod Trobec, and a capitalist interpretation with the Hollywood perspective of a fictitious fascist. The condemnation of fascism in all its forms was otherwise a constant in Smiljanić's earlier comics. In 1986 in *Katedra* (a student newspaper published in Maribor, which was considered an opposition newspaper just like *Mladina*) he published the comic strip *1945*. Its protagonists are quintessential bad guys, three Chetniks fleeing from the Partisans across Slovenia towards the West and killing anything and everything that happens to cross their path. *1945* is considered to be the first partisan naturalistic comic, in which the protagonists are no longer merely black and white, but also and chiefly all shades of grey. A year after Smiljanić's debut in *Mladina*, the then anonymous Tomaž Lavrič (1964), today most definitely the leading name in Slovene comics, started drawing *Diareja*



Kostja Gatnik, *Magna Purga*, ©Kostja Gatnik/ŠKUC
Ro Marcenaro, *Komunistični manifest*, ©Tribuna
Mladina, ©Mladina

Po *Magni Purgi* ni bilo nič več tako kot prej. Z njo je slovenski strip dokončno izgubil svojo nedolžnost in postal odrasel ter polnopraven član urbane subkulture. Deset let po izidu kultnega stripovskega albuma je študent humanistike Ivo Štandeker¹⁰ v Mladini osnoval rubriko *XX stoletje*, s katero je po dolgem in počez prekrižaril fiktivni stripovski svet in hkrati na straneh Mladine z *Novim slovenskim stripom* ustvaril realnega, ki se ni več zatekal k domišljijškim temam in junakom, ampak je naturalistično odslikaval surovo družbeno stvarnost, katere glavni junaki smo bili mi sami. Eden prvih, ki je začel risati za Mladino, je bil Zoran Smiljančić (1961), in ta je že leta 1983 v fotokopiranem fanzinu kluba ljubiteljev glasbe iz Kranja objavil nekaj novovalovskih stripov, od katerih je največjo pozornost vzbudila *Hiša Metoda Trobca* (to je narisal po pesmi kranjskega pankera Saša Novaka), dvodelna vzporedna interpretacija istega dogodka, socialistična z naturalističnim pogledom lumpenproletarja in serijskega morilca Metoda Trobca in kapitalistična s holivudskim pogledom fiktivnega fašista. Obsodba fašizma v vseh njegovih oblikah je sicer stalica Smiljančevih zgodnejših stripov, leta 1986 je v mariborski *Katedri* (študentskem časopisu, ki je ravno tako kot Mladina, veljal za opozicijskega) objavil strip *1945*, v katerem so glavni junaki *bad guys*, trije četniki, ki pred partizani preko Slovenije bežijo na Zahod ter spotoma pobijejo vse živo, kar se jim znajde na poti in ki velja za prvi partizanski naturalistični strip, v katerem protagonisti niso več samo črni in beli, ampak tudi in predvsem sivi v vseh njenih odtenkih. Leto dni po Smiljančevem debiju je v Mladini začel takrat anonimni Tomaž



← Tomaž Lavrič, *Rdeči alarm*, ©Tomaž Lavrič
↑ Marjan Amalietti, *Vesele počitnice*, ©Dediči Amalietti

(*Diarrhoea*), a stylized, artistically minimalist comic strip freed from all interior and exterior ballast with a clean-lined protagonist. It would be a struggle to place *Diareja* into any genre. On the one hand, it does fall into humorous satirical comics in relation to its script; on the other hand, it blurs the borders between political caricature and comics and each week without mercy comments on Slovence (before that also Yugoslav) political anomalies. Thus, it is also a unique record of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the birth of a new country, and certainly lends a more authentic perspective on the semi-past history than all the establishment's historical textbooks combined. Ten years after the autobiographical *Rdeči alarm* (*Red Alert*, 1996, considered one of the best Slovene comics of all time due to its naturalistic script spiced up with juicy slang dialogues, masterful drawing with strong contrasts and dynamic framing, and self-published just like the anti-war *Bosanske basni* (*Bosnian Fables*, 1997) that opened the doors to the West¹¹ for him), he returned to the heart of domestic politics with satirical melodrama *Sokol in golobica* (*The Hawk and the Dove*). With its main protagonist Janez Janša, a symbol of the far right, he mercilessly laid bare Slovenia's nationalistic and chauvinistic politics.¹²

Janša first appeared as a comics protagonist as early as 1991 in *Afera JBTZ* (*GBTZ Affair*), a political thriller by Dušan Kastelic (1964) in which the author shatters the myth of the Slovenian Spring, locks petty thieves behind bars, and generally puts things in their place. As a supporting character, however, Janša



Lavrič (1964), danes vsekakor prvo ime slovenskega stripa, risati *Diarejo*, stiliziran, likovno minimalistični pasični strip, osvobojen vsega balasta interierja in eksterierja z glavnim junakom čiste linije, ki bi ga težko uvrstili v katerikoli žanr, scenaristično po eni strani sicer spada v humoristično satirične stripe, po drugi strani pa briše meje med politično karikaturo in stripom in vsak teden neprizanesljivo komentira slovenske (prej tudi jugoslovanske) politične anomalije in je tako tudi svojevrstna kronika razpada Jugoslavije in rojstva nove države, ki nam vsekakor podaja bolj avtentičen pogled na polpreteklo zgodovino kot vsi režimski zgodovinski učbeniki skupaj. Po avtobiografskem *Rdečem alarmu* (1996), ki z naturalističnim scenarijem, začinjenim s sočnimi slengovskimi dialogi, mojstrsko risbo z močnimi kontrasti in dinamičnem kadriranjem velja za enega najboljših slovenskih stripov nasploh in ki ga je ravno tako kot protivojne *Bosanske basni* (1997), ki so mu na stežaj odprla vrata na Zahod¹¹, izdal v samozaložbi, se je s satirično melodramo *Sokol in golobica* po desetih letih vrnil v osrčje domače politike in z glavnim protagonistom Janezom Janšem, simbolom skrajne desnice, do obist razgalil slovensko nacionalistično in šovinistično politiko.¹²

Sicer pa se Janša kot junak stripa pojavi že leta 91 v političnem trilerju Dušana Kastelica (1964) *Afera JBTZ*, v kateri avtor razbije mit o slovenski pomladi, spravi kurje tatove za zapahe in nasploh postavi stvari na svoja mesta. Kot stranski junak pa se Janša pojavi tudi v znanstveno fantastični melodrami *Štiri tisoč* (2001) Iztoka Sitarja (1962), v kateri brezkompromisno razgalja slovensko desničarsko politiko s pojavi nacionalizma, šovinizma, rasizma, homofobije, ksenofobije, nestrpnosti do drugače mislečih, manjšin, žensk in drugih anomalij. To pa ni prvi strip, ki se ukvarja z družbenopolitično tematiko, že prej je izdal tudi antikatoliške *Črne može, bele kosti*, par let kasneje pa še verjetno najbolj ateističen strip do zdaj, *Zgodbo o bogu*, ki nam na samo šestdesetih straneh, verjetno pa bi jih bilo lahko še manj, polnoma logično in argumentirano prikaže neobstoj boga (za kar je, denimo, Richard Dawkins potreboval dobrih 400 strani s precej bolj kilavimi argumenti). Značilnost neodvisnega stripa pri nas je poleg družbeno politične angažiranosti tudi erotični in pornografski strip kot samostojna zvrst in čeprav Slovenci od prvega satiričnega pornografskega stripa Hinka Smrekarja dolgo časa nismo imeli predstavnika tega žanra, smo z Marjanom Amaliettijem (1923 – 1988) konec devetdesetih let dobili vrhunskega avtorja, ki je s stripom *Pet očeva Neninog deteta* (verjetno najbolj feminističnim stripom pri nas) z izvrstno zgodbo o dveh puncah, ki ju posili pet tipov in nato vzameta pravico v svoje roke, namesto da bi nebogljeno čakali na policijo, in jih enega za drugim kastrirata, postavlji slovenski strip v klub emigriranih stripovskih držav, toda žal samo stripovskih; v realnosti smo namreč še vedno na dnu enakopravnosti. Amalietti je kasneje

also appeared in the science fiction melodrama *Štiri Tisoč* (*Four Thousand*, 2001) by Iztok Sitar (1962). In it Sitar uncompromisingly exposes Slovenian right-wing politics – its nationalism, chauvinism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia, intolerance of opposing opinions, minorities and women, and other anomalies. However, *Štiri Tisoč* is not his first comic strip to tackle socio-political themes. Prior to it he had already published the anti-Catholic *Črni može, bele kosti* (*Black Men, White Bones*), and a couple years later his probably most atheistic comic so far, *Zgodba o bogu* (*The Story of God*). It uses a mere sixty pages (this probably could have been even fewer) to prove to its reader in an altogether logical and reasoned manner the nonexistence of God (for which Richard Dawkins, for example, needed a good 400 pages of rather more feeble arguments). A characteristic of Slovene independent comics, besides socio-political engagement, is also erotic and pornographic comics as an independent genre. Although Slovenes for a long time after the first satirical pornographic comic strip by Hinko Smrekar lacked a representative of this genre, we gained an excellent author at the end of the nineties – Marjan Amalietti (1923 – 1988), an author who with his comic *Pet očeva Neninog deteta*, probably the most feminist Slovene comic, and its excellent story about two girls who after being raped by five men take justice into their own hands instead of helplessly waiting around for the police and castrate them one at a time, placed Slovene comics into the circle of emancipated comics countries. Sadly though, emancipated only in relation to comics; in reality we are still at the bottom of the equality scale. Amalietti later also drew an entirely pornographic comic strip entitled *Vesele počitnice*. In contrast to the previous comic, here the story is entirely secondary to the drawing, which naturalistically shows different sexual variants in all possible and impossible positions. An interesting and revealing fact, however, is that both comics were published in album format only after the author's death, the first in 1989 and the second in 1990 on the very eve of the Yugoslav Civil War.

Far away from the comics front line – with *Afera JBTZ*, *Točno opolnoči* (*At Midnight Sharp*), 1991¹³ and *Bosanske basni* in the firing line – in the depths of the legendary Ka 4's underground in the second year of the war, an (un)wanted child of the comics scene was born – *Stripburger*.¹⁴ Following a difficult birth, it developed from a prematurely born child, who few thought would survive at all (No. 1, 1992), into a well-built and lively kid (No. 4/5, 1994), and soon enough became the standard-setter for new independent Slovene comics, immune (at least in the beginning) to both politics and social climate, as well as the tradition of classic picture storytelling. Although comic critics labelled *Stripburger* an underground magazine, it did not consider itself a representative of the genre and Crumb's *Zap* was as

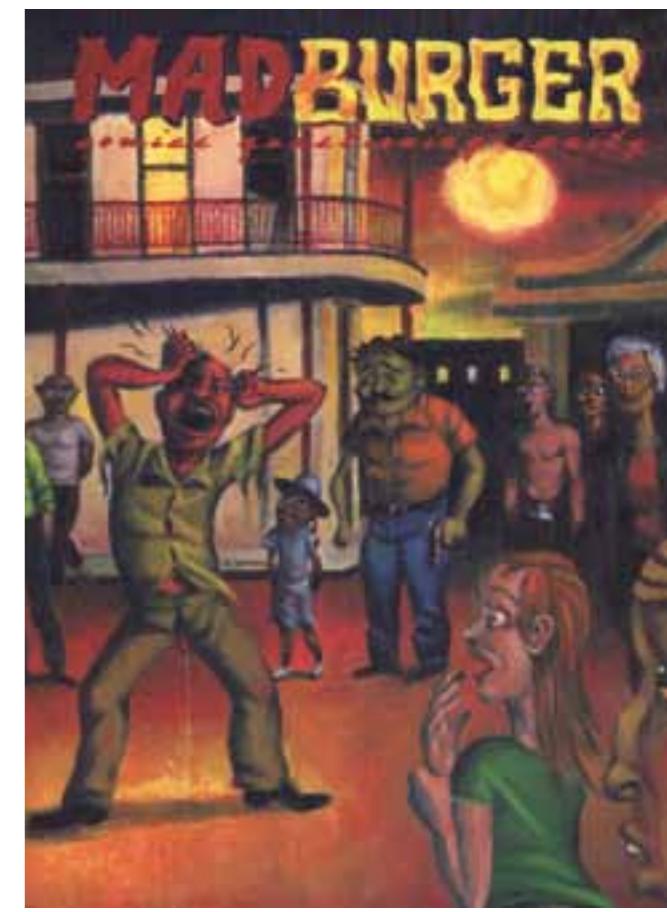
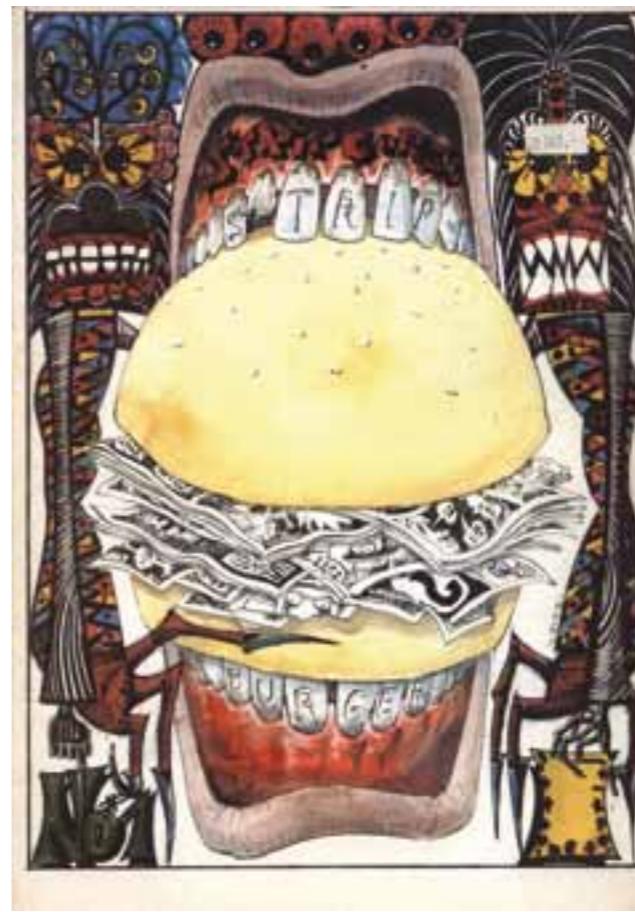
nariral tudi povsem pornografski strip *Vesele počitnice*, v katerem za razliko od prejšnjega zgodba ne igra nobene vloge, ampak je popolnoma podrejena risbi, v kateri nam naturalistično prikaže različne spolne variante v vseh mogočih in nemogočih položajih. Zanimivo in zgovorno pa je dejstvo, da sta oba stripa v albumski obliki izšla še po avtorjevi smrti, prvi leta 1989 in drugi 1990, na sam predvečer državljanske vojne v Jugoslaviji.

Daleč od stripovske frontne linije z Afero JBTZ, *Točno opolnoči*, 1991¹³ in *Bosanskimi basnimi* v prvih bojnih vrstah se je v globokem podzemlju legendarnega Ka 4 v težkih porodnih krčih v drugem letu vojne rodil (ne)zaželen otrok stripovske scene, *Stripburger*¹⁴, ki se je iz nedonošenčka, za katerega so le redki mislili, da bo sploh preživel (št. 1, 1992) razvil v stasitega in živahnega otročaja (št. 4/5, 1994) in kaj kmalu postal zastavonoša novega neodvisnega stripa pri nas, (vsaj v začetku) imunega tako na politiko in družbeno klimo kot tudi na tradicijo klasičnega pripovedovanja zgodb v slikah. Čeprav so stripovski kritiki označili *Stripburger* za underground magazin, pa se sam ni imel za predstavnika tega žanra in Crumbov *Zap* mu je bil enako tuj kot Moebiusov *Métal Hurlant*¹⁵, zato pa se je lahko popolnoma poistovetil z revijo *RAW*¹⁶, ki sta jo v New Yorku izdajala Art Spiegelman in Francoise Mouly. *RAW* je bil ustanovljen kot protitež Crumbovu *Zapu*, Spiegelmu se je namreč zdel po eni strani preveč naturalističen, po drugi strani pa preveč intelektualističen, zato je z *RAW*om prikazal svoj pogled na alternativni strip, v katerem ni več toliko pomembna risarska izvedba stripa kot ideja sama. Isti koncept so uporabili tudi uredniki *Stripburgerja*¹⁷ in za razliko od političnega in protirežimskega stripa v Smrekarjevi dobi ter protikomformističnega undergrounda v času Gatnika in študentske revolucije, ki se je napajal predvsem iz psihadeličnega roka in hipijevske filozofije, so se *Stripburgerjevi* avtorji dobesedno posvetili avtorskemu stripu, saj so bili najbolj zastopana zvrst v magazinu tako imenovani osebnoizpovedni strip, katerega glavni predstavnik v svetu je bil Spiegelmanov *Maus*¹⁸. Hkrati je bil *Stripburger* tudi valilnica kadrov, saj so malone vsi slovenski avtorji, rojeni po sedemdesetem letu, začeli svojo stripovsko pot pri njemu, nekateri so sicer kasneje svojo kariero gradili na bolje plačanemu komercialnemu stripu, večina pa jih je ostala zvesta svoji prvi ljubezni, saj niso bili finančno odvisni od stripa, ampak so imeli druge poklice in so se s stripom ukvarjali ljubiteljsko. Zanje je značilen zgolj in edino povsem avtorski pristop z večinoma osebnoizpovedno in avtobiografsko tematiko, v likovnem pogledu pa prisegajo na čim bolj nekonvencionalno risbo ter eksperimentalni pristop tako v risbi kot v samih stripovskih izdajah.

Tako je *Stripburger* poleg matičnega lista v tradicionalno magazinski formi produciral tudi celo vrsto posebnih izdaj v obliki tematskih koledarjev, kompilacij mini knjižic¹⁹, stripov po motivih

foreign to it as Moebius' *Métal Hurlant*.¹⁵ It could, however, identify entirely with the magazine *RAW*¹⁶ published in New York by Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly. *RAW* was established as a counterpoise to Crumb's *Zap*; Spiegelman considered it on the one hand too naturalistic, but on the other hand too intellectual, which is why he used *RAW* to present his perspective on alternative comics, in which the artistic execution is no longer as important as the idea itself. *Stripburger's*¹⁷ editors adopted the same principle, and unlike political and anti-establishment comics in Smrekar's time and the anti-conformist underground rooted mostly in psychedelic rock and the hippy philosophy in the time of Gatnik and the student revolution, *Stripburger's* authors focused fully on authorial comics; the most represented genre in the magazine were so-called confessional comic strips, whose chief representative in the world was Spiegelman's *Maus* (*Mouse*).¹⁸ *Stripburger* was also a cradle of skilled workers, for nearly all Slovenian authors born after 1970 began their comics journey at *Stripburger*. Some did later build their careers on better-paid commercial comics, but most remained faithful to their first love because they were not financially dependent on it, but had other occupations and worked in comics as amateurs. Characteristic for them is an entirely authorial approach with mostly confessional and autobiographical themes. In an artistic sense they swear by a drawing, which is as unconventional as possible, with an experimental approach in both drawing and the comics editions themselves. Thus, besides the central bulletin in traditional magazine form, *Stripburger* also produced a whole series of special editions in the form of thematic calendars, compilations of mini booklets,¹⁹ comics based on beehive panel motifs, city posters, wall graffiti, and of course virtual comics. In Europe, however, it became most recognizable by its integral thematic volumes, by means of which it transformed from a passive observer of the domestic and international social situation (which it was in the beginning) into a critical and insightful protagonist with a left-wing view of the world and in which it explored a wide range of social phenomena from sex (*XXXburger*) to war (*Warburger*).²⁰ In thematic volumes, just as in regular volumes, foreign authors – mostly from Europe as well as America, and to a lesser extent from other continents – collaborated alongside domestic authors. Thus, *Stripburger* in fact became an international²¹ magazine of independent authorial comics and as such a legitimate successor of the legendary *RAW*. This did not go unnoticed by spoiled international comics critics; in 2001 at the Angoulême International Comics Festival *Stripburger* won the prestigious Alpha-Art award for best fanzine.

In the very first volume, Jakob Klemenčič (1968), one of *Stripburger's* most prolific authors, published his first comic page, and with eccentric, morbid and degenerate figures indicated



Stripburger, ©Stripburger / Forum Ljubljana

Madburger, posebna številka revije *Stripburger* o norosti, ©Stripburger / Forum Ljubljana

Jakob Klemenčič, *The Lonesome Life of Everyman the Foetus*, ©Jakob Klemenčič

panjskih končnic, mestnih plakatov, zidnih grafitov in seveda virtualnih stripov, v Evropi pa je postal najbolj prepoznaven po integralnih tematskih številkah, s katerimi se je od pasivnega opazovalca družbenega stanja doma in po svetu, kakršen je bil na začetku, prelevil v kritičnega in pronicljivega protagonista z levičarskim pogledom na svet in v katerih je obravnaval cel spekter družbenih aktivnosti od seksa (*XXXburger*) do vojne (*Warburger*)²⁰. V tematskih izdajah so, ravno tako kot v rednih, poleg domačih avtorjev sodelovali tudi tuji, predvsem iz Evrope kot Amerike, v manjši meri pa tudi z drugih celin, tako da je Stripburger postal dejansko internacionalna²¹ revija neodvisnega avtorskega stripa in s tem legitimni naslednik legendarnega RAWa, kar je opazila tudi stripovska razvajena mednarodna kritika in mu leta 2001 na angoulemskem festivalu podelila prestižno nagrado Alph-Art v kategoriji najboljšega fanzina.

Že v prvi številki je svojo prvo stran stripa, s katerim je nakazal bodočo usmeritev s čudaškimi, morbidnimi in degeneriranimi figurami, objavil Jakob Klemenčič (1968), eden najbolj produktivnih Burgerjevih avtorjev in s *Skrivnost stare ribogojnice* v dvojni drugo-tretji številki zakoličil svoj ekspresivni črnobelji slog risanja z mojstrskimi kontrasti, ki je postal njegov zaščitni znak in ga tudi kasneje ni veliko spremenjal. Po scenaristični plati se od ostalih loči predvsem po trdni strukturi stripovske zgodbe, kar je pri alternativnih avtorjih prej izjema kot pravilo. Scenaristično zelo močan je tudi Matjaž Bertoncelj (1971), Stahanov slovenskega stripa, kot ga je duhovito označil Max Modic, namigoč na kvantiteto njegovega dela (do zdaj je namreč izdal že deset dokaj obsežnih albumov); Bertoncelj v mausovskem slogu risbo popolnoma podredi tekstu in velja za najprepričljivejšega pripovedovalca osebnoizpovednih avtobiografskih zgodb, največkrat omejenih na stran ali dve. V četrtoleti številki je svoj prvi strip *Ko zaprem oči* (1994), ki je bil v bistvu uvertura v kasnejši album *Antique* (1996), objavil tudi Miloš Radosavljevič (1968) in z eksperimentalnim grafičnim fotorealizmom postavil temelje takoimenovane žežljevske šole, ki pa žal ni imela pravih naslednikov. V Stripburgerju je debitiral tudi Marko Kociper (1968), ki je kmalu nadaljeval kariero v časopisnem in revijальнem tisku in po robustnih začetniških stripih v Mladini prišel do polnega izraza v Poletu z *Erotičnim almanahom* (2005) in mačičstičnim antropomorfnim *Jazbecem* (2009). Sicer pa je imel vsak avtor, ki je objavljaj v Stripburgerju, svoj lasten pristop k stripu, tako je multimedialni umetnik Andrej Štular (1967) v *Lustrih* (2000) prikazal izjemno grafiko in oblikovanje strani, Damjan Sovec (1970) se je posvetil izključno grotesknemu stripu, Ciril Horjak (1976) se je s stilizirano skiciozno risbo posvetil fiktivnemu avtobiografskemu stripu (*Ride* 2004, *Mostovi* 2007), Primož Krašna (1976) pa v ekspresivnem lesoreznem slogu adaptacijam Cankarjevih črtic, Matej Kocjan (1978) je v svojem

his future path. With *Skrivnost stare ribogojnice* published in the double second/third volume he cemented his expressive black-and-white drawing style with masterful contrasts, which became his trademark and remained relatively unchanged over time. On the scriptwriting side of things he differs from others mostly in the firm structure of his story, which is usually an exception rather than a rule with alternative authors. Also very strong with respect to his scriptwriting is Matjaž Bertoncelj (1971), the Stahanov of Slovene comics as he was wittily dubbed by Max Modic, who was hinting at the sheer quantity of his work (so far he has already published ten rather extensive albums); Bertoncelj in the manner of *Maus* entirely subordinates the drawing to the text and is considered the most convincing narrator of confessional, autobiographical tales, most often limited to one or two pages. Miloš Radosavljevič (1968) published his first comic strip *Ko zaprem oči* in 1994 in the fourth/fifth issue, which was essentially an overture to the later album *Antique* (1996), and with his experimental graphic photorealism laid the foundations for the so-called Žeželj school, which sadly lacked any real successors. Marko Kociper (1968) also made his debut in *Stripburger*. He soon continued his career in newspaper and magazine print, and following robust first comics in *Mladina* reached his full potential in *Polet* with *Erotični almanah* (*Erotic Almanac*, 2005) and macho anthropomorphic *Jazbec* (*The Badger*, 2009). Every one of *Stripburger*'s published authors had their own individual approach to comics. Multimedia artist Andrej Štular (1967) demonstrated his outstanding graphics and page design in *Lustri* (*Chandeliers*, 2000); Damjan Sovec (1970) devoted himself exclusively to grotesque comics; Ciril Horjak (1976) used stylized sketchy drawing for his fictionally autobiographical comics (*Ride* 2004, *Mostovi* (*Bridges*) 2007); and Primož Krašna (1976) employed an expressive woodcut-based style for his adaptations of Cankar's sketch stories. Matej Kocjan (1978) in his most ambitious project used a Kafkaesque atmosphere and dynamic drawing to offer his perspective on the student confession *Pagatova izpoved* (*Pagat's Confession*, 2005). Izar Lunaček (1979) adopted the best manner of American anthropomorphic comics for his extensive philosophical biography of a tortoise in *Oklepaj* (*Bracket*, 2007). Primož Bertoncelj (1980) with his stylized comic strip *Joker* (1995) became a representative of *comics of the absurd*,²² and Gašper Rus (1983) with a classic comics approach and innovative composition tackled a biographical adaptation of Vinko Möderndorfer in *Omejeni rok trajanja* (*Limited Sell By Date*, 2008), however with *Gugalnica* (*Swing*) from the same year which addresses the Slovene national problem of suicide and was written by Žiga Valetič, he became one of the few authors of graphic novels. David Krančan (1984) used an enviable graphic technique to transform Andraž Polič's haikus *Na prvem tiru* (*On the First Track*, 2008) into comic strip



Miniburger, ©Stripburger/Forum Ljubljana

najambicioznejšem projektu skozi kafkovsko atmosfero in dinamično risbo podal svoj pogled na študentovsko *Pagatovo izpoved* (2005), Izar Lunaček (1979) pa je v najboljši maniri ameriškega antropomorfnega stripa zrisal obsežno filozofsko biografijo želvaka *Oklepaja* (2007), Primož Bertoncelj (1980) je s svojim stiliziranim *Jokerjem* (1995) predstavnik *stripa absurd*,²² ki je pripeljal strip do – absurd, Gašper Rus (1983) pa se je v *Omejenem roku trajanja* (2008) s klasičnim stripovskim pristopom in inovativno kompozicijo lotil biografske adaptacije Vinka Möderndorferja, z letosnjico *Gugalnico*, ki govori o nacionalnem slovenskem problemu, samomoru in jo je nariral po scenariju Žiga Valetiča, pa se je uvrstil med redke avtorje grafičnih romanov, David Krančan (1984) je v zavidljivi grafični tehniki v strip prelil haiku Andraža Poliča *Na prvem tiru* (2008), dočim se je Žiga Aljaž (1983) odločil za pionirski pristop k digitalnemu stripu s svojim interaktivnim *Stripgeneratorjem*, s katerim si je lahko vsak, še tako risarsko neveč bralec ustvaril z že izbranim izborom likov in drugih elementov popolnoma svoj strip.

Na začetku novega tisočletja začnejo v Stripburgerju kontinuirano objavljati svoje stripe tudi dekleta. Sicer je že v osemdesetih

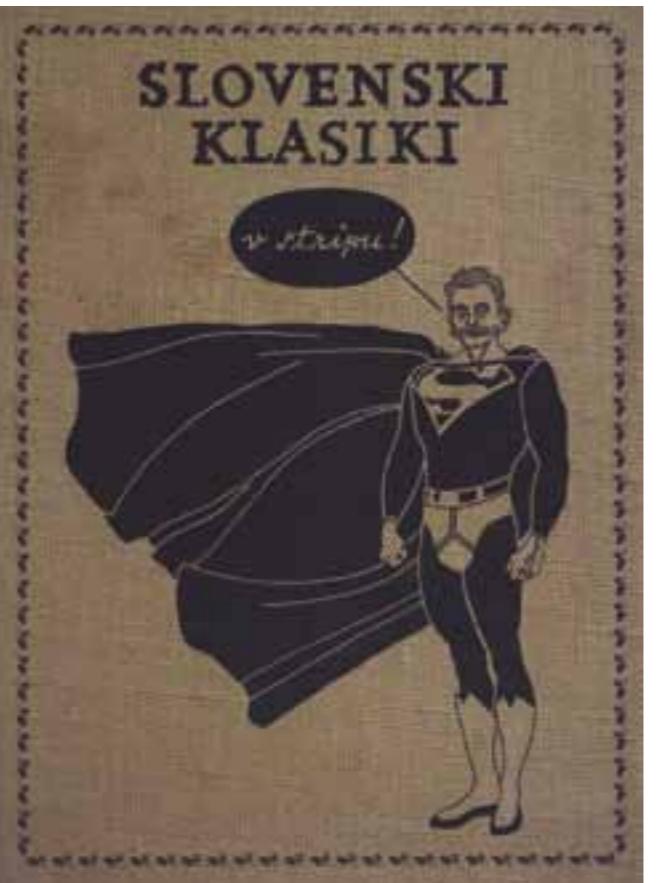
form, while Žiga Aljaž (1983) decided upon a pioneer approach to digital comics with his interactive *Stripgenerator* with which anyone, no matter how lacking in drawing skills, could create their own comic using a choice selection of characters and other elements.

At the beginning of the new millennium women started to regularly publish their comics in *Stripburger* as well. Helena Klakočar (1958) had already published distinctly artistic comics in the eighties in the Zagreb *Polet* and *Mladina* from Ljubljana, to which she in 1999 added the award-winning autobiographical travel sketchbook *Passage en douce*, however the trend of women's comics²³ did not appear until a group of female art students including Saša Kerkoš, Mina Žabnikar, Andreja Kocjan, and Kaja Avberšek came onto the scene. Among the most interesting authors is definitely Saša Kerkoš (1977) who made her debut in 2001 at the fifth International Festival of Young Independent Artists *Break 21*, where she presented the initial pages of her biographical American urban adventure *Harlem Story*, which was published a year later in album format – the first in Slovenia authored by a woman. Exceptional naturalistic



Strip Bumerang, ©Studio Risar

letih v zagrebškem Poletu in ljubljanski Mladini izrazito likovne stripe objavila Helena Klakočar (1958), ki jih je leta 1999 nadgradila z nagrajeno avtobiografsko potopisno skicirko *Passage en douce*, vendar pa se je trend ženskega stripa²³ pojavil šele z ekipo likovnih študentk Saše Kerkos, Mine Žabnikar, Andreja Kocjan in Kaje Avberšek. Med najbolj zanimivimi avtoricami je vsekakor Saša Kerkos (1977), ki je debitirala leta 2001 na petem mednarodnem festivalu mladih neodvisnih ustvarjalcev Break 21 s predstavijo prvih strani stripa biografske ameriške urbane pustolovštine *Harlem story*, ki je leto dni kasneje izšel tudi v albumu, prvemu izpod ženskega peresa pri nas. Zgodobno odlikuje izredna naturalistična dramaturgija, povsem sproščena krokijska risba in nekonvencionalen pristop z eno samo sliko na vsaki strani brez kakršnega koli odvečnega teksta. Izrazito eksperimentalen pristop je imela tudi Mina Žabnikar (1978) s stripom *Caffe Time* (2001) in *Ljubezensko pismo Josipa Ostija* (2002) z odlično kompozicijo, vizualno privlačno tipografijo, ki se povsem vključi v krhko senzibilno risbo in sijajno dramaturgijo. Žabnikarjeva se s stripom sicer ni veliko več ukvarjala, se je pa zato toliko bolj Andreja Kocjan (1978), ki je leta 2001 objavila svoj prvi sanjski strip *Svit Drimz* v tehniki praskanke in nadaljevala s stripi v različnih grafičnih slogih, ki jih je leta 2008 zmišlala v sploh drugem ženskem albumu pri nas, *Mikseru*.



Slovenski klasiki v stripu, ©Mladina / Forum Ljubljana

dramaturgy, completely relaxed sketch-like drawing, and an unconventional approach with only one image per page devoid of superfluous text distinguish the story. A distinctly experimental approach was shared by Mina Žabnikar (1978). Her comics *Coffee* (2001) and *Ljubezensko pismo Josipa Ostija* (*Josip Osti's Love Letter*, 2002) display excellent composition, visually attractive typography perfectly integrated into the brittle sensitive drawing, and brilliant dramaturgy. Žabnikar did not work much with comics after that, however Andreja Kocjan (1978) did. In 2001 she published her first dream comic strip *Svit Drimz* in scratchboard technique, and continued to produce comics in various graphic styles which she joined together in 2008 in the second Slovene album by a woman – *Mikser (Mixer)*. That same year Kaja Avberšek (1983) made her debut in *Stripburger*. With her minimalist drawing she has collaborated on all experimental projects in recent years: *Pozdravi iz Striponije* (*Greeting from Cartoonia*, 2009), *Ču ču čaki* (2010) and the children's *Pojoči grad* (*The Singing Castle*, 2010); with her innovative graphic approach she illustrated the cover of the celebrated *Slovenski klasiki* (*Slovenian Classics*).

Tomaž Lavrič conceived *Slovenski klasiki* as early as 1992 on the pages of *Mladina* with his satirical adaptations of Slovenian relics,

Istega leta je v *Stripburgerju* debitirala Kaja Avberšek (1983) in s svojo minimalistično risbo sodelovala tudi pri vseh eksperimentalnih projektih v zadnjih letih: *Pozdravi iz Striponije* (2009), *Ču ču čaki* (2010) in otroški *Pojoči grad* (2010), z inovativnim grafičnim pristopom pa je likovno opremila znamenite *Slovenske klasike*.

Slednje je že leta 1992 na straneh Mladine spočel Tomaž Lavrič s satiričnimi adaptacijami slovenskih relikvij, od klasičnih romanov do zimzelenih melodij, brez kakršnegakoli rešpekta do nacionalno domoljubnih simbolov od goveje juhe do državne himne in jih z nemajhno pomočjo ostalih petinšestdesetih avtorjev zaključil leta 2009 s šepehno 200 stransko knjigo, ki je hkrati postala svojevrstna antologija sodobnega stripa in ki jo je kulturniška srejela odprtih rok, saj je bila kmalu po izidu razprodana.

Nenazadnje smo v zadnjih nekaj letih poleg precejšnjega števila albumov domačih ustvarjalcev dobili tudi temeljna dela svetovnega stripa v slovenskem prevodu²⁴, pa tudi temeljni deli s področja ustvarjanja stripov *Kako nastane strip* in *Kako razumeti strip* (2011) Scotta McClouda, ki sta, kot pove že naslov, ključnega pomena za razumevanje stripa kot samostojne likovno-literarne umetniške zvrsti. Vsekakor velja omeniti tudi sijajno protikapitalistično teoretsko delo *Kako brati Jaka Racmana* (2007), v katerem Ariel Dorfman in Armand Mattelart brezkompromisno razgaljata rasistično – imperialistično ideologijo v otroških Disneyjevih stripih. Nekaj let pred Jakom Racmanom, leta 2004, pa smo na obrobju (kamor strip v institucionalni slovenski kulturi seveda sodi) Ljubljane dobili tudi prvo specializirano trgovino s stripom *Strip.art.nica Buch*, na internetu pa prvi stripovski forum *Striparno.com*.

Decembra 2006 smo kot alternativo(!) *Stripburgerju* dobili tudi komercialno revijo klasičnega stripa *Strip Bumerang*²⁵, ki ga zgolj z lastnimi sredstvi brez kakršnekoli državne pomoči ali privatnih dotacij ureja entuziast Vojko Volavšek in je tako edini čisto pravi neodvisni strip pri nas, kar je svojevrsten anahronizem, namreč, na Zahodu se je underground, ki je dejansko vzniknil iz kletnih fotokopirnic, ril pod tabuji malomeščanske družbe in spodbopal njene železobetonske temelje, finančiral izključno iz lastnih virov, pri nas pa je bil *enfant terrible* slovenske kulture tako v času Titove Jugoslavije kot samostojne Slovenije bolj ali manj prisesan na državne jasli. Paradoxalno je tudi, da smo imeli v času samoupravnega socializma, ki je bil že a priori bolj naklonjen levičarskim, protiklerikalnim, protinacionalističnim in protifašističnim temam veliko manj družbeno kritičnih stripov, ki so obravnavali naštete anomalije, kot zdaj v kapitalističnem sistemu.

from classical novels to evergreen melodies, devoid of respect for national patriotic symbols ranging from beef soup to the national anthem. He finished the project in 2009 with no small help from sixty-five other authors; the end result was a bulky 200 page book that became both a singular anthology of modern comics and was at the same time accepted with open arms by the cultural community, selling out soon after publication.

Last but not least, over the last few years we have received in addition to a considerable number of albums by domestic artists Slovenian translations of the seminal works of international comics,²⁴ and also seminal works in the field of comics production, *Kako nastane strip* (*Making Comics*) and *Kako razumeti strip* (*Understanding Comics*, 2011). These two works by Scott McCloud are, as their titles suggest, crucial for the understanding of comics as an independent literary-art form. It is certainly also worth mentioning the brilliant anti-capitalist theoretical work *Kako brati Jaka Racmana* (*How to Read Donald Duck*, 2007), in which Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart uncompromisingly lay bare the racist-imperialist ideology in Disney's children's comics. Moreover, a few years before Donald Duck, we received in 2004 our first specialized comic book shop, *Strip.art.nica Buch*, on the outskirts (where comics in the institutionalized Slovene culture naturally belong) of Ljubljana, and on the Internet our first comics forum *Striparno.com*.

In December 2006 as an alternative(!) to *Stripburger*, we also received a commercial magazine of classic comics, *Strip Bumerang*,²⁵ edited by enthusiast Vojko Volavšek entirely through the use of his own resources without any form of state subsidy or private donations. It is therefore the only truly independent comics magazine in Slovenia, which is a singular anachronism. In the West, the underground, which sprung up from basement photocopies, burrowed its way under the taboos of bourgeois society and undermined its cast-iron foundations, was financed solely through personal means. In Slovenia, however, the *enfant terrible* of the Slovene culture in the time of Tito's Yugoslavia as well as in the time of independent Slovenia was more or less still run under government auspices. It is also paradoxical that in the times of self-regulating socialism, which was a priori more inclined to left-wing, anticlerical, antinationalist and antifascist themes, we had far fewer socially critical comics that dealt with the above-mentioned anomalies than we do now in the capitalist system.

Everything considered, one might think that Slovenian comics have never had it better; however, in a time of economic and financial crisis they have not been spared either. In the printed media, they are the first in the line of fire and editors have no

Glede na vse našteto bi morda kdo pomislil, da se stripu v Sloveniji ni še nikdar godilo bolje, vendar v času gospodarske in finančne krize tudi stripu ni bilo prizanešeno, še več, v tiskanih medijih je prvi na udaru in uredniki se mu z lahkoto odpovejo, tako da je trenutno v Sloveniji zelo malo časopisov in revij, ki bi objavljale stripe, kar pa je po drugi strani lahko velika priložnost za nov zagon neodvisnega stripa.

1 Po velikem uspehu *Yellow Kid* je tudi drugi časopisni mogotec in Pulitzerjev konkurent Hearst v svojem New York Journalu uvedel stripovsko prilogu, v kateri je zbral najboljše humoristične risarje tistega časa: Swinnertona, Opperja, Dirksa in Outcaulta; he had lured the latter to his side with a higher salary. Pulitzer, of course, would not give in and tempted Outcault back, only to have Hirst once more, and this time once and for all buy him back for the *Journal*. Thus Pulitzer relinquished Outcault, but not *Hogan's Alley*, for which he held the copyright. *The Yellow Kid* was therefore published in both magazines simultaneously, but under different titles, which became common practice in later litigation. From here the term *Yellow Press*, used to describe sensationalism in journalism, also stems.

2 On 5 November 1907 the first daily comic strip, *Mutt and Jeff* by Bud Fisher, was published. Daily comic strips later became common practice in daily newspapers. They were published six days a week, and the Sunday edition dedicated a whole comics page (usually four tiers) to it.

3 Hinko Smrekar se je rodil leta 1883 in Ljubljana, kjer je končal gimnazijo in se leta 1901 vpisal na študij prava na fakulteto v Innsbrucku, ki pa ga ni dokončal. Na Gasparjevo pobudo se je pridružil umetniškemu društvu *Vesna* na Dunaju, kjer je spoznal Ivana Cankarja, kateremu je kasneje opremil in nariral naslovnice za večino njegovih knjig. Poleg tega se je ukvarjal tudi z knjižno ilustracijo in časopisno karikaturo. Svoje karikature v eni ali večih sličicah je pogostog bil priateljem in znancem, tako da je veliko njegovih originalnih del izgubljenih. Smrekar je bil velik rodoljub in svobodomislec, ki v času fašistične okupacije (1941 – 1945) ni skrival svojega prepričanja, ampak je javno razstavljal protestne karikature in satirične risbe po nekaterih ljubljanskih izložbah in jih tudi osebno širil med ljudmi. 29. septembra 1942 ga je prijela italijanska patrulla in pri njemu našla propagandne letake Osvobodilne fronte. Dva dni zatem so ga brez sojenja ustrelili v Gramozni jami. Kako zaveden Slovenec je bil priča tudi anekdota, da so ga bile fašistične oblasti pripravljene izpustiti na prostost, če sam zaprosi za pomilostitev, kar pa je Smrekar z gnušom zavrnil.

4 Milko Bambič se je rodil leta 1905 in Trstu, kjer je po končani osnovni šoli obiskoval nemško realko, kasneje pa se je vpisal tudi v zasebno slikarsko šolo. Attended the German Realschule, and later enrolled at a private art school run by the Rendić brothers. In 1927 he tried to enrol at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts, but was turned down due to political reasons (as a teenager he was already contributing to the Slovene left-wing print in Italy with illustrations and caricatures, he was also a sympathizer and supporter of the illegal anti-fascist organization (the first in Europe!) TIGR, which fought for the annexation of Trieste, Istria, Gorica and Rijeka to its motherland Yugoslavia. After the publication of *Zamorček Bu-ci-bu* he was first arrested and then deported to Yugoslavia. He died in 1991 in his native Trieste.

5 Informbiro je kratica za INFORMacijski BIRO, ki je združeval evropske komunistične stranke pod vodstvom Sovjetske zveze (1947 – 1955). Spomladi leta 1948 je prišlo do spora med sovjetsko in jugoslovansko komunistično partijo. Konflikt se je razširil na meddržavne odnose in Jugoslavija se je znašla na robu vojne s Sovjetsko zvezo in satelitskimi socialističnimi vzhodnoevropskimi državami. Vzrok spora je bil v hegemoniji Sovjetske zveze nad celotnim socialističnim blokom, Tito pa je želel enakopraven položaj in lastno pot v socializem. Spor se je dejansko končal s Stalinovo smrtno leta 1953, uradno pa leta 1955, ko se je prišel njegov naslednik Nikita Hruščov v Beograd opravičiti predsedniku Titu.

6 Eden prvih je bil Miki Muster (born in 1925 in Ljubljana). In 1952, Tedenska tribuna began publishing the adventures of his cunning fox Zvitorepec drawn in the manner of Disney. Zvitorepec, however, soon overshadowed its role model, for people preferred reading it to Disney's heroes. Zvitorepec ran between 1952 and 1973.

difficulty giving them up. Therefore, there are currently very few newspapers and magazines in Slovenia that publish comics, which could on the other hand also be a great opportunity for independent comics to gain new momentum.

7 Zap Comics je izhajal od leta 1967 do 2004, izšlo je 15 številk.

8 Leta 1970, samo leto dni po italijanski premieri, je v Jugoslaviji izšla prva številka satiričnega in črnomornega Alana Forda Grupa TNT Magnusa in Bunkerja v sijajnem prevodu in adaptaciji Nenada Brixyja ter na mah osvojila bralce do Vadarja pa do Triglava. Zanimivo je, da strip ni uspel nikjer drugje v Evropi in svetu, razen v Italiji in Jugoslaviji. V rodnih Italijih je bil sicer samo eden od dokaj uspešnih stripov in nič več, v Jugoslaviji pa je z neusmiljeno kritiko tako kapitalizma kot stalinizma doživel kulturni status in se s svojimi citati, ki so jih znali na pamet tako mulci pri fuzbalu kot častniki na orožnih vajah („ako želiš pobijediti, ne smiješ izgubiti“) in ki so aktualni še danes, zapisal v zgodovino jugoslovenskega stripa.

9 Glavnino jugoslovenskega stripa sta tako po kvaliteti kot tudi kvantiteti dvojni srbski in hrvaški produkcija že od leta 1935 dalje. Sicer pa jugoslovenska stripovska scena ni bila močna samo doma, ampak tudi v tujini, tako po številu stripovskih izdaj kot po kvalitetnih avtorjih smo bili v samem vrhu evropskega stripa, poleg Francije, Belgije, Italije, Anglije in Španije.

10 Ivo Štandeker se je rodil leta 1961 v Mariboru, umrl pa je kot vojni dopisnik v Sarajevu leta 1992. Velja za najboljšega stripovskega teoretičnika v Sloveniji, njegovi eseji iz rubrike XX. stoletje, ki je izhajala v Mladini od 9. 1. 1987 do 2. 2. 1990, so bili leta 1993 ponatisnjeni v posebni številki Problemov.

11 Po Bosanskih basnih, ki so bile izdane v Franciji, Italiji, Španiji in na Hrvatskem, je Lavrič v tujini objavil še Nove čase (Fr, It, Srbija), Glista na begu (Fr, It, Hr), Ekstremne športne (Šp, Hr), Sleplo sonce (Šp), trilogijo Lomm (Fr), trilogijo Evropa (Fr, Hr, Šp), Dekalog po scenariju Faranka Girouda (Fr, Šp, It, Portugalska, Belgija, Nemčija) in Appoline po scenariju Jeana Davida Marvana (Fr).

12 Zanimivo je, da so desničarski mediji zaradi napačne interpretacije kovali protidesničarski strip v zvezde, podobno kot so kleriklci v Prešernovem času hvalili njegovo protiklerikalno Nebeško procesijo.

13 Leta 1988 je Romeo Štraki (1962) v Mladini objavil strip Točno o polnoči, v katerem je nostradamovsko napovedal vojno v Sloveniji, leta 1992 pa je Zoran Smiljančić objavil strip 1991, ki nam prikaže vojno v Sloveniji skozi oči „zadnjega okupatorskega vojaka“ kot se je strip prvotno imenoval, ki ga je JLA ob odhodu „pozabilo“ v Sloveniji.

14 Prva številka Stripburgerja je izšla septembra 1991, do konca leta 2012 je izšlo 58 številk.

15 Revijo novovalovskega stripa *Métal Hurlant* so leta 1974 v Parizu ustavili Moebius, Drillet, Dionnet in Farkas, izhajal je do leta 1987. MH je bil eden najplivnejših stripovskih projektov, izpod njegova pliča je izšlo polno danes svetovno znanih stripov, v Jugoslaviji je po njegovih stopinjah hodila zagrebška stripovska skupina Novi kvadrat, vplival pa je tudi na Tretjo generacijo slovenskih stripov.

16 RAW je izhajal od leta 1980 do 1991, izšlo je 11 številk.

17 Uredniški odbor so v začetku sestavljali Boris Bačić, Jakob Klemenčič in Katerina Mirović, kasneje pa so se jim po rotacijskem sistemu pridružili še drugi avtorji v SB.

18 Maus je začel v nadaljevanjih izhajati v RAWu leta 1980 do 1991, ko je izšel v knjižni obliku, naslednje leto je Spiegelman dobil zanj Pulitzerjevo nagrado.

19 Med Stripburgerjevimi avtorji so bile izjemno popularne knjižice majhnega formata, od A6 do A7, takoimenovane *mini comics*, ki so vsebovale od 16 do 24 strani. V začetku so jih avtorji izdajali v samizdatu kot fotokopirane fanzine povsem domače izdelave (med njimi sta predvsem Jakob Klemenčič in Primož Krašna), v letih 2000 in 2004 pa sta izšli pri Stripburgerju kompilaciji desetih miničev različnih avtorjev, izdanih v ličnih škatlicah, ki so jih reklamirali kot *Big Stories in Small Format*.

20 Poleg XXXburgerja in Warburgerja so izšle še tematske številke Handyburger, Madburger, Ekoburger, Workburger in druge, predvsem pa velja omeniti še dve številki Stribureka, v katerih je predstavljena relativno nepoznana stripovska scena vzhodnoevropskih držav.

7 Zap Comics ran between 1967 and 2004, 15 volumes were published.

8 In 1970, only a year after its Italian premiere, the first issue of *Alan Ford and the TNT Group* by Magnus and Bunker, brilliantly translated and adapted by Nenad Brixy, was published in Yugoslavia. It instantaneously won over readers from Vardar to Triglav. It is interesting that the comic did not succeed anywhere else in the world apart from Italy and Yugoslavia. Although in native Italy it was merely one in a line of fairly successful comics and nothing more, it reached cult status in Yugoslavia with its ruthless criticism of both capitalism and Stalinism, and went down in the history of Yugoslav comics with its quotes, which both kids playing footy and officers during firearms exercises ('ako želiš pobijediti, ne smiješ izgubiti' – 'to win you cannot lose') could recite by heart and which remain current to this day.

9 The bulk of Yugoslav comics from as early as 1935 onwards, both in quality and in quantity, were made up of Serbian and Croatian comics productions. Otherwise, the Yugoslav comics scene was strong not only at home, but also abroad; both in number of comics publications as well as in quality, authors were at the pinnacle of European comics alongside France, Belgium, Italy, England, and Spain.

10 Ivo Štandeker was born in Maribor in 1961; he died in 1992 working as a war correspondent in Sarajevo. He is considered to be the best comics theoretician in Slovenia, his essays in the column *XX Century*, which was published in *Mladina* between 9. 1. 1987 and 2. 2. 1990, were reprinted in a special issue of *Problemi* in 1993.

11 Following *Bosanske basni* (*Bosnian Fables*), which were published in France, Italy, Spain, and Croatia, Lavrič also published *Novi časi* (*New Times*) in France, Italy, and Serbia; *Glista na begu* (*Larvae on the Run*) in France, Italy, and Croatia; *Ekstremni športi* (*Extreme Sports*) in Spain and Croatia; *Sleplo sonce* (*The Blind Sun*) in Spain; trilogy *Lomm* in France; trilogy *Evropa* (*Europe*) in France, Croatia and Spain; *Dekalog* (*Le Décalogue*), written by Farank Giroud, in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Germany; and *Appoline*, written by Jean David Marvan, in France.

12 It is interesting that right-wing media sung the praises of anti-right-wing comics due to false interpretation; similarly, clerics in the time of Prešeren praised his anti-clerical *Nebeška procesija* (*Heavenly Procession*).

13 In *Mladina* in 1988, Romeo Štraki (1962) published the comic strip *Točno ob polnoči* (*At Midnight Sharp*), in which he in a Nostradamus-like fashion predicted the war in Slovenia, and in 1992 Zoran Smiljančić published the comic strip 1991 showing the war in Slovenia through the eyes of 'the last occupying soldier' (which was the comic's initial title), which the Yugoslav People's Army 'forgot' in Slovenia when it left.

14 The first volume of *Stripburger* was published in September 1991; 58 volumes had been published by the end of 2012.

15 *Métal Hurlant*, a New Wave (French: *La Nouvelle Vague*) comics magazine, was established in 1974 in Paris by Moebius, Drillet, Dionnet and Farkas; it ran until 1987. It was one of the most influential comics projects; it took many comics artists under its wing and brought them world fame. In Yugoslavia Zagreb's group of comic book creators *Novi kvadrat* followed in its footsteps. It also influenced the Third Generation of Slovenian comics artists.

16 RAW ran between 1980 and 1991; 11 volumes were published.

17 The editorial board consisted of Boris Bačić, Jakob Klemenčič and Katerina Mirović. They were later joined in rotating order by other *Stripburger* authors.

18 *Maus* was published in RAW in instalments between 1980 and 1991, when it was published in book format. The following year Spiegelman received a Pulitzer Prize for the work.

19 Extremely popular among *Stripburger*'s authors were small-format booklets, from A6-size to A7-size, so-called *mini-comics* which contained 16 to 24 pages. In the beginning, authors published them in samizdat as entirely home-made photocopied fanzines (among them Jakob Klemenčič and Primož Krašna led the way). In 2000 and 2004, however, *Stripburger* published two

21 Vse tematske izdaje so v angleškem jeziku, ravno tako so stripi v matičnem Stripburgerju objavljeni v slovenščini, srbohrvaščini in angleščini.

22 Za začetnika *stripa absurd* v Sloveniji velja vsestranski likovni umetnik Bori Zupančič (1949), sicer virtuzni risar, kar je razvidno že iz njegovega prvega stripa za Nedeljski dnevnik, klavstrofobično mišjo štorijo *Tam veste kjer ste* (1975), v kateri se z duhovitimi dialogi, ki jih pripelje do absurdna, in sijajno kompozicijo norčuje poleg ostalega še iz stripa samega.

23 Za začetnico ženskega *stripa* v Sloveniji velja slikarka in ilustratorka Melita Vovk (1928). V šolskem letu 1973/74 je v Cicibanu objavila serijo napol edukativnih stripov *O ljubezni*, v katerih govorji o najstniških problemih takratne mladine. Z netipično kompozicijo, ki ne priznava zakonitosti kvadrata in skiciozno, na pogled nedodelano risbo, je prva slovenska striparka zakoličila stil, ki so ga uporabljale avtorice pri SB šele čez trideset let.

24 Omeniti velja vsaj s pulitzerjem nagrajen strip o holokavstu, *Mausa* Arta Spiegelmana, pretresljiva dokumentarna strip o vojni v Bosni *Goražde* in *Posrednik* Joa Saccia, avtobiografijo iranske gastarbajterke v Franciji *Perzpolis* Marjane Satrapi, poetično ljubezensko zgodbo *Odeje* Craiga Thompsona, epileptično biografsko trilogijo *Na božastni poti* Davida B., najstniško uporniški *Svet duhov* Daniela Clowesa, biografijo *Kafke* izpod peresa legendarnega Roberta Crumba, stigmatične *Stigme* Lorenza Mattottija in svojevrstno adaptacijo Flaubertove klasične *Gemma Bovery* angleške ilustratorke Possey Simmonds, protirasični mladinski roman v stripu *Moje vzporedno življenje* Johana Unengeja, jugoslovenski vojni potopis *Bosanski sploščenec* Maxa Anderssona in Larsa Sjunnesson ter lani še kulturno protivojno *Vojno v jarkih* Jacquesa Tardija.

25 *Strip Bumerang* je revija klasičnega avanturističnega stripa po vzoru novosadske Stripoteke. Objavlja predvsem francoske albumske stripe različnih žanrov, občasno pa izdaja tudi tematske številke slovenskih avtorjev. Od leta 2006 do konca leta 2012 je izšlo 60 številk.

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Irena Čerčnik (1996) *Od Tisiglavce do Stripburgerja*, Slovenski strip, GSU, Celje

Max Modic (1996) *Po vseh teh letih še vedno sam*, Slovenski strip, GSU, Celje

Špela Štandeker (2006) *Sodobni slovenski strip*, Strip in animirani film, GSU, Celje

Jakob Klemenčič (2006) *Knjige že, literature pa ne*, Strip in animirani film, GSU, Celje

Iztok Sitar (2007) *Zgodovina slovenskega stripa 1927 – 2007*, UMco, Ljubljana

Damir Globočnik (2009) *Začetki slovenskega stripa*, Forum št. 5/6, Ljubljana

compilations of ten mini-comics by various authors. They were issued in neat little boxes and advertised as *Big Stories in Small Format*.

20 Besides *XXXburger* and *Warburger*, thematic volumes of *Handyburger*, *Madburger*, *Ekoburger*, *Workburger*, and others were published. Also worth mentioning are in particular two volumes of *Stripburek*, which showcase the relatively unknown eastern European comics scene.

21 All thematic editions are in English. Comics in the main *Stripburger* are also published in Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian and English.

22 All-round artist Bori Zupančič (1949) is considered to be the pioneer of *comics of the absurd* in Slovenia. His virtuosity was evident as early as in his first comic strip, *Tam veste kjer ste* (1975), a claustrophobic story with mice as protagonists published in Nedeljski dnevnik, in which he uses witty dialogues, stretched to the absurd, and brilliant composition to make fun of, alongside other things, comics themselves.

23 Painter and illustrator Melita Vovk (1928) is considered to be the pioneer of women's comics in Slovenia. In *Ciciban*, in the school year 1973/74, she published a series of semi-educational comics entitled *O ljubezni* (*About Love*), in which she talks about the problems of teenagers at the time. With unusual composition that renounces the law of the square and a sketchy, at first sight unfinished drawing style, the first Slovene female comics artist cemented a style that *Stripburger*'s female authors would employ 30 years later.

24 It is worth mentioning at least the Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel about the Holocaust, Art Spiegelman's *Maus*; the shocking documentary comics about the war in Bosnia, Joe Sacco's *Goražde* and *Posrednik* (*The Fixer*); the autobiography of Iranian Gastarbeiterin in France, *Perzpolis* (*Persepolis*) by Marjane Satrapi; the poetic love story *Odeje* (*Blankets*) by Craig Thompson; epileptic biographical trilogy *Na božastni poti* (*Epileptic*) by David B.; the teenage rebellious *Svet duhov* (*Ghost World*) by Daniel Clowes; the biography of *Kafka* penned by the legendary Robert Crumb; the stigmatic *Stigma* (*Stigmata*) by Lorenzo Mattotti; the singular adaptation of Flaubert's classic, *Gemma Bovery* by English illustrator Possey Simmonds; the anti-racist youth novel in comics form *Moje vzporedno življenje* (*My Spare Life*) by Johan Unenge; Yugoslav war travelogue *Bosanski sploščenec* (*Bosnian Flat Dog*) by Max Andersson and Lars Sjunnesson; and last year's still cult anti-war *Vojna v jarkih* (*War of the Trenches*) by Jacques Tardi.

25 *Strip Bumerang* is a magazine of classic adventure comics following the model of *Stripoteka* from Novi Sad. It publishes mostly French comics albums of various genres, and occasionally also thematic issues of Slovene authors. 60 issues have been published between 2006 and the end of 2012.



Tomaž Lavrič: *Slovenski klasiki*, ©Tomaž Lavrič



Alternative Comics in Serbia through the History of its DIY Media

Aleksandra Sekulić

The culture of enthusiasm and radical amateurism represent essential conceptual tools for understanding the specific independent, authorial, alternative *comic-strips* production in Serbia over the last 30 years. This production is nowadays encountering new possibilities of archiving and thus being accessible through different interfaces, which also presents a challenge of being thus involved in the official memory of institutional culture. In the socialist Yugoslavia, fanzine – as a medium of ‘graphic language of resistance’ (Triggs, 2009:69) – was the product of a specific cultural movement opposing the official aestheticization and professionalization. It resulted in particularly widespread practices which can be adequately termed as *radical amateurism*. Radical amateurism could be interpreted precisely as a counter-position to the presupposed professionalism of then dominant cultural elites. According to Aldo Milohnić – who perceives those amateur practices as a constituent part of the neo-avant-garde art practices of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, as well as the alternative culture of the 1980s in the former Yugoslavia – radical amateurism was ‘aesthetically unburdened by the media and materials used in their work’, but nevertheless ‘participating in a spontaneous ideology of immediate radical intervention in cultural, social and political spheres of Yugoslav society’ (Milohnić 2012:6). As a continuation of those immediate radical interventions, *comic-strip* fanzines in the past two decades in Serbia could be seen as the indicators of historical and political transformations within the paradigm of alternative culture.

The Continuities

Enthusiasm, as the main driving force of amateur cultural production, was embedded within the institutional framework of socialist Yugoslavia that was designed to provide for everyone’s artistic creativity in their leisure time. Although amateur practices and organizations were constituted as a part of the official cultural policy of democratization, we can differentiate from its framework the rise of *radical amateurism* since the 1960s. This can be used as an umbrella term for the opposition to the presupposed professionalism of the cultural elites and as a part of the neo-avant-garde art practices of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the alternative culture of the 1980s. Within the wider notion of culture of enthusiasm – immanent to the cultural projects of socialist countries in the process of democratization of culture – radical amateurism as a practice sheds light on the ongoing process of distancing from the proclaimed public policy of democratization. The adjective *radical* denotes here the conscious choice of taking the position of amateur as opposed to the tendency of elitism in the socialist art and culture. Although the practices of radical amateurism, nevertheless, can be understood as a process of developing the parallel and increasingly autonomous infrastructure, until 1990s they were still using some of the remaining public infrastructure of the existing youth culture institutions. The movement of cinema clubs, unburdened by the academic or official rules of art production, represents an example of self-organized production which was open for different kinds of experimentation. The concept of state policy of cultural democratization through a wide range of measures – among which was an important production of youth media, established and run by youth organizations and student alliances – transformed over the decades into a complete ignorance of the actual youth culture, overtly neglected by the official culture and education. Initially, youth magazines and student press provided the space for young *comic-strip* artists, and it was only after their progressive disappearance that fanzines became the dominant form of alternative cultural production.

The liberalization of the youth magazines followed after the wave of 1968 student protests, enabling thus the formation of a new generation of authors. The first exhibition of alternative comics was held at Belgrade’s Students Cultural Centre – an institution established as a result of those protests – in 1975. According to Slobodan Ivković, one of the participants at the time, Studio for New Comics (Studio za novi strip) was established then, and lasted until 1980. During this period Studio organized various events, and was also publishing *Zeleni Zamorac*, taken to be the first known fanzine. The fanzines were printed and distributed by very rudimentary means using various copying techniques. Making fanzines with *Gestädtn* and photocopy

(Xerox machine) remained the primary forms of fanzine production during the 1980s and the 1990s. The culture of fanzines – just like that of rebellious youth and students press from the 1960s – was continued and developed along the new music trends (*punk*, *new wave*), multiplied and disseminated within the framework of the unofficial cultural production, exerting thus a relatively large and lasting influence. One of its outcomes is the *comic-strip* fanzine, a form that enabled rapid development of an entire generation of *comic-strip* authors in Serbia during the 1990s, intensifying in vernacular production in the contemporary conditions of digital capillarization of alternative culture practices.

Fanzine

‘When I started to make comics, I already had an experience of fanzine making as a teenager in the years 1979/1980. It was a self-made production of photocopied magazines, still a novelty at the time, and a part of the new wave iconography. Anyway, this self-published fanzines opened a way to start collaboration with the national rock music magazine called *Džuboks*, and also with several other magazines published by the socialist State in order to promote the creative effort of the youth.’ Aleksandar Zograf, 2011 (*pers. comm.*)

Fanzine production has not been systematically collected and preserved in any of the existing cultural institutions, so their categorization classification has been articulated by the *comic-strip* community itself. The general term *comic-strip fanzines* in this case includes magazines made in the manner of production and distribution of fanzines (*Striper*, *Mutanat*, *Tit bit* and others); self-made graphic magazines in the fanzine form published under emerging labels (*Momci*, *Phantom works*, *Morcina*, *Feathered Friends*); comic fanzines by authors and collectives directly stemming from punk fanzine culture (*Krpelj*, *Debilana*, *Titov zabavnik* or *Zadružar*); products of workshops and collective works (*Kuhinja*, *Čovek iz bunara* and so on); and, finally, experimental forms which are the result of the process of cross-fertilization in the field of the new media (which can be found at the *Studiostrip* platform, e.g. *Gorski vijenac*, *Bolji život*, *Bizar*, *Tvrđi strip*, *Hororretard*, *Intimna Mašina* etc.).

The D.I.Y. (DoItYourself) concept of alternative culture’s unofficial economy, most clearly visible in the fanzine culture, has made the strongest impact after its appearance in Yugoslavia during the 1980s as a characteristic of *punk* – the music and social movement. DIY emancipated the *comic-strip* production from the mayhem of the official publishing in the 1990s and enabled comics fanzine to become a medium that is opening a new public space for new authors and audience. The rare *comic-strip* magazines that featured alternative comics or those that

implied higher production and editorial policy standards have also become visible in the context and framework of an alternative culture, underground, and consequently, in terms of their range and role in the development of the entire scene, can in most cases be considered as fanzines. The term alternative comics is, by itself, a result of the efforts in the beginning of 1990s to describe the difference and the specificity of a production deeply intertwined with alternative music and alternative culture as a more general term used in the US. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, civil wars, the economic and cultural sanctions and isolation, the alternative culture has increasingly defined itself as an *alternative* in the framework of a culture dominated by the nationalist model, in an autistic and closed media system, and has therefore developed parallel structures of production and dissemination, open, but yet limited in their range. The alternative *comic-strip* scene managed to create its own audience and the new generation of authors through initiatives based on enthusiasm, supported, strengthened, and developed within the collaborative events of alternative culture. During the 1990s, this *comic-strip* scene developed performative aspects of its activities, through public workshops, exhibitions with music, film and video content, as well as the promotions of magazines. After 2000, the new uplift was produced by more intensive communication and increased mobility, articulation of Internet initiatives and portals, and easier organization of international events.

Printed and performative comic-strips: editions and events

The type of magazine production which has enabled production and public context for alternative comics builds upon the rich and interesting tradition of comics’ presence in the mass and especially printed media, popular and youth culture in the former Yugoslavia. In conceptualizing the fanzine culture as a practice of alternative culture in general terms, we must take into account the fact that comics were available and distributed through the official culture: children and youth magazines in schools, newsstands, book fairs. The fanzine culture was performed through the alternative culture and that practice lead to empowerment of the initiatives which haven’t relied on the infrastructure of production and distribution of the official culture. We can surely note the decentralized production, through the emerging local initiatives and development of the local scenes, the communities gathered around collaborative production and various events. The variety of *schools*, specific interconnections among local musical, video, literary and other communities with the *comic-strip* communities and authors contributed to the unpredictable, erratic and varied scene of alternative *comic-strip* production especially in 1990s.

The magazines such as *Patagonija* from Vršac or *Lavirint* from Čačak, as well as a handful of other print media, have enabled

alternative comics to become included in the general overview of all current comics production outside the usual fanzine editions, making the alternative visible and accessible to wider comics public. The *Striper* magazine, based in Belgrade, with its production and distribution strategy that evidently exceeded the fanzine level, also became a channel for its international promotion, primarily through cooperation with the *Stripburger* magazine, and subsequently through a network of international magazines and festivals. Velocity and unboundedness of Internet distribution as the key factor for international visibility of this production has been amply served its purpose in the case of Aleksandar Zograf, whose work has been printed and distributed worldwide at the time when Yugoslavia was undergoing the worst period of international isolation, wars and crises.

Comic-strip festivals have provided an opportunity for the scene to be developed and they have facilitated production through various workshops and editions. One of the best examples is the *GRRR! Festival* in Pančevo, founded upon the initiative of and organized by Saša Rakezić alias Aleksandar Zograf. This author helped to launch the local scene in the 1990s and by organizing this festival in the 2000s, brought together a large number of authors, collectives, publishers and initiatives from Serbia, the region and around the world. The workshop *Kuhinja* (The Kitchen) and other activities instigated the local scene to make joint appearances (Stevan Markuš, Zontag, Mr. Spiral & Lulu, Letač, Vuk Palibrk, Napred u prošlost group and others). The *GRRR! International Authorial Comics Festival* was held for the first time in 2002 in the cultural center Pančevo. It has introduced the concept of a festival-city, traveling programs and exhibitions throughout cultural institutions' venues, but also pastry shops, shop windows, marginal city venues, city radio etc. The *comic-strips* were an essential component of the local cultural policy adopted as such already in 1992 by cultural institutions. There is also a significant continual work on development of historiography of comics in Serbia, in cooperation with comics historian Zdravko Zupan. The *GRRR!* continues to exist through events and discussion programs within Elektrika Gallery in Pančevo, in lively cooperation with Pančevo initiatives *Klopka za pionira* and *Ceger Fanzine*, numerous local and regional groups and *Turbo Comix* organization, and is probably the most active center of continual public presentation, promotion and exposition of alternative comics in Serbia today.

One of the key events in Belgrade – the *XER Festival* which was organized in 1998 by *Striper* magazine and Radovan Popović – established a model of flexible festival of the comics and all kindred activities and (re)connected an initial network of cooperation in the region of former Yugoslavia. This was as a reaction to slightest possibility for regional gathering in the conditions of dominant discouragement of such endeavors. Its

intervention was recognized as an intrusion into dominant politics of ignoring the regional, ex-Yugoslav context, which left a huge gap in official culture and education. Gathering authors from ex-Yugoslav region and establishing a point of visibility for the connections which were functioning – more or less all the time, even during the wars – through the fanzine networks, comics communities and alternative culture continuities, this manifestation revealed a potential for re-constituting the common context of alternative culture. The festival catalogue, the *XER Files*, brings articles reporting from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, as well as presenting products of workshops and documents from exhibitions that have been held at the festival.

'Despite the war propaganda, blockade, non-functioning of postal and traffic relations, contacts have not been completely cut off. Probably the most intensive contacts have been maintained by people engaged in alternative culture. The desire is to rebuild and strengthen existing bridges ...' (Zivanovic and Popovic 1999-4)

This regional project anticipated the intensification of the joint production in the region of former Yugoslavia, due to the deterritorialization of the scene, numerous communities interconnected and flowing across the official borders.

The promotions of *Striper* magazine, conception and distribution of which has its origins in fanzine tradition, have enabled the scene in Belgrade to be established as a dynamic field of new expression and experiment, making way for new authors (such as Danijel Savović, Saša Mihajlović, Milan Pavlović Mr. Stocca, Nikola Vitković and Momci group, Neda Dokić, Ivan Grubanov, Maja Veselinović, Lazar Bodroža, Seljak, Burek and many other younger authors). The Cyber-Rex Platform has provided digital infrastructure for development of new interfaces and comics formats inspiring thus some long-term projects and cooperation between the demo scene and the comics. The scene has certainly been given a boost with its participation in the Low-Fi Video movement, established in 1997 as an independent organization (Miloš Kukurić, Igor Basorović, Aleksandar Gubaš). The aim was to produce programs that would screen video and film works accumulated by open call, promoting thus the idea of video as an accessible technology for *democratization of art* and rejuvenation of tenets of Yugoslav film amateurism. The Low-Fi Video has swiftly evolved into a movement gathering together hundreds of participants and became included in the *microcinema* movement.

One of the main manifestations of this movement was Yugoslav Cheap Film Festival, in Subotica, where the rich local tradition of fanzines (*Entropija*) and alternative culture made a welcoming basis for growth of the new community, drawing from the overall

osmosis among media and disciplines. Probably best illustrated by the work of Damir Rijowitch and Damir Šmit, whose parallel and intertwined opuses within both Low-Fi Video movement and the comics scene are probably the best example, but also a number of other comics authors coming from Subotica (Damir Pavić Septik, Miroslav Lazendić, Leo von Punkerstein etc), and through this manifestation the whole range of new local scenes gained visibility and a place in the community. The festival displayed this cross-connecting and collective work as workshops, performances, exhibitions of comics.

The usual workshop mentor at those events was Danilo Milošev Wostok, who has managed to initiate workshop and exhibition events on the local scene of his hometown of Vršac. Since the first exhibition of comics in Vršac in 1992, the comics scene has swiftly developed and been recognized locally in only in a couple of years. Wostok and Grabowski gathered a group around the *Krpelj* fanzine production (Grabowski, Zlikovac, Lola and others), who have produced an impressive number of fanzines and developed activities nearing an audio-visual performance, continuing therefore to (re)animate the audience's making use of social networks. It was this author who was the first to explore and test the possibilities of new interfaces for fanzine activism and alternative comics, the so-called *facebook librarianship*, thereby establishing new lines of communication between older and topical production and drawing unexpectedly large audience. In a public discussion at *Novo Doba Festival* 2010 in Belgrade, he explained how using Facebook tools to connect various content and communicate it to new audience, so uploading, displaying, arranging and sharing fanzines which had just a symbolic print run (couple of copies at the time) can be a practice of further empowerment of self-organized publishing and struggle against institutional and market restrictions in production, increasing quality of communication with the audience and self-organized cultural memory model.

The establishment of the *Studiostrip* web portal in 2001 marks the move to a new form of independent electronic publishing, which has stemmed from the overall activity of the *Kosmopolovci* collective and exponentially accelerated both production and distribution, continuing the activity of *Striper* magazine in the new circumstances. Parallel to the electronic emancipation of the publishing of alternative comics as public good, there were magazines which created and maintained basic audience through the conventional publishing infrastructure. The *Grafička zavera* magazine, editions of SKC (Students Cultural Centre) Belgrade and SKC (Students Cultural Centre) Novi Sad provided in the 2000s occasional or regular insights into topical productions. The journal for literature and culture *Reč* was among the first in the 1990s to open a space for affirmation of alternative authorial comics and has enabled permeation (?!).

of new literary production in Serbia with experiments which alternative comics were conducting in narrative and visual modes. The cooperation of journal editor Dejan Ilić with alternative comics scene has reached its peak in an edition which represents joint production of publishing house Fabrika knjiga and Studiostrip, and in which authors are given a rare opportunity to publish comic books (Aleksandar Opačić, Lazar Bodroža, Radovan Popović and others), as well as that opportunity was given later in *Symposion* magazine in Subotica. However, the dominant alternative comics media – the fanzine – has continued to blossom in previous years and to experiment with new interfaces – digital distribution.

The work of the *Kosmopolovci* group from Belgrade since their inception in 2001 has indicated vast and varied possibilities for symbiosis among the computer demo scene, music, video and comics production within the framework of an Internet platform, for intensive cooperation with the international scene and regional authors, also for organizing joint events, the example of which is *N.O.M.A.D. – Electronic Art Festival*. One of the most important activities of *Studiostrip* section, the work of which can fully be seen on the *Kosmopolovci* platform, is regional cooperation, especially with the group *Komikaze* from Zagreb, which encompasses numerous tours, workshops and exhibitions. The intertwining scenes in Belgrade and Zagreb introduced several joint interfaces, and this symbiosis has been intensified in the last couple of years with the appearance of *Turbo Comix* organization, which in Belgrade in 2009 launched the *New Era – Festival of Non-Aligned Comics (Novo Doba Festival)*, continuing regional and international cooperation facing new demands. After comics exhibitions and workshops she organized in cooperation with the French Cultural Center in Belgrade and the Elektrika Gallery in Pančevo, Johanna Marcade established in Belgrade, together with Bruno Tolić, the *Turbo Comix* organization. One of the first editions of this production was the book issued in 2009 *Stripovi/Stripovi – Contemporary Comics in Croatia and Serbia*. These two scenes, by now intricately connected, are also associated with Lisa Mangum, comics historian, and Katie Wozniacki, the author. The New Era Festival was created in close cooperation among Turbo Comix (organizers), Studiostrip and Metaklinika with Komikaze group from Zagreb as well as initiatives from Belgrade, Pančevo and Subotica, namely *Klopka za pionira*, Studiostrip, Metaklinika, Ceger Fanzine and the young generation of activists such as Bojana Petković, Vuk and Vladimir Palibrk and others. One of the numerous reasons for this designation is an allusion to increasingly obvious internationalization of alternative comics in Serbia, starting from regional cohesion to increasing number of authors and theoreticians from other countries who are becoming its actors and historians.

After 2000, comics workshops have occasionally been recognized and supported through local cultural policies as an interesting way of communicating with youth. This form of open public happening acquired its shape already in the 1990s at festivals such as Yugoslav Cheap Film Festival (*JFFJ*) and was subsequently developed by Serbian Electrical Film Festival (*SFF*), *N.O.M.A.D.* and others. In the process of work on its own production, *Kosmoplovci* collective promotes workshop work, both collective and team work, thus resembling/evoking comics collectives and labels (like Syndicate Bill McLurre) who have authored science fiction comics and been included in Yugoslav youth magazines. In addition to workshop activities enabling new generation and the youngest authors to meet the international scene, Turbo Comix group has launched an interesting form of *performative distribution*, implying a tour of various towns in Serbia and the region, staging a series of events assembling large audience and many authors in the live, public process of producing screen prints, multiplying of various comics forms, workshops and exhibitions.

Alternative

At the time of resuscitating samizdat and fanzine culture created by *punk*, the idea that one's own expression of rebelliousness is possible and accessible to everyone has remained the basis of subsequent history of what can be termed alternative comics. By demonstrating such an open structure, experiment and critical attitude, alternative comics deserved their status of an alternative mostly owing to the new social circumstances and their position within the cultural and social system, rather than owing to their formal or stylistic prerogatives as they pertain to official art disciplines. After 2000 *subversiveness* of alternative comics has been affirmed largely through their continuous struggle for availability of culture as public good, and their flexibility, incontestable in exploring new possibilities and interfaces in integrated media systems. Evoking the specific modes of production of public good, this practice can claim continuity with the radical interventions by which the culture they stem from is best remembered by.

This overview is drawing on the initial research undertaken as the beginning of a thoroughgoing historiographic work, that was supported by the National Library of Serbia in 2010, presented at the conference Independent Comics Worldwide at the University of Liege in November 2011.

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illogical chronology of nineties in comic, comix in nineties

Радован Поповић

Месецима, данима, минутима се мучим са овим текстом, замолио сам другове да ме не зову, искушењу сам рад, а фебруар ове године није преступан. Један дан, таман колико ми фали да завршим овај текст. Можда мало више, година или још која деценија. Можда да само укључим аутоматског пилота и сечем/лепим оно што се од мене очекује. Прошла је четвртина века година од деведесетих, сугестивном аутосугестијом уз помоћ контролисане аутоцензуре покушавам да се сетим, у ствари, транспортујем у деведесете. Нема шансе.

Свако има своју причу о деведесетим, ово је сигурно најобјективнија из моје перспективе, с обзиром да је ја писем, центар концентрације, метадоговор између времена и простора, та граница, тачка луцидности, ни тачка, ништа, то. Какофонија прича из деведесетих која је почела чим су почеле деведесете, чак и пре, претећи са стадиона и масовних окупљања национал-социјалиста, када су домаћи филмови и ријалити шоуови заменили позиције, кад је крст тешком муком заменио петокраку, најављујући повратак никадашњег морала, када су се сећање и свест срели у исти луп веровања, сужеверовања у лаж, када су побегли сви који је требало да остану и они који су могли, и обратно, јер су и једни и други увидели однос снага и реални исход сукоба оних који верују у победу, слепу победу у слепом сукобу, и

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illogical chronology of nineties in comic, comix in nineties

Radovan Popović

I have been struggling with this text for months, days, minutes, I have asked all my friends not to call me, I am easily tempted, and this year February does not have 29 days. One day, exactly what I am lacking to finishing this text. Maybe a little bit more, a year, or a few decades. Maybe I should just go on autopilot and cut/paste what is expected of me. A quarter of a century has passed since the nineties, I am trying to remember, or better said, transport myself to the nineties using suggestive autosuggestion and controlled self-censorship. But no dice.

Everyone has their own story from the nineties. From my perspective this is certainly the most objective, considering that I am writing it, the center of concentration, meta-agreement between time and space, that limit, the lucid point, not even a point, nothing, it.

The cacophonic stories from the nineties, that started with these years, and even before, threatening from the stadiums and mass gatherings of national-socialists, when domestic movies and reality shows switched identities, when the cross took the place of the five pointed star with much struggle, announcing the return of morals which never before existed, when memories and consciousness met in the same loop of belief, superstitions, believing in lies, when all those that left should have stayed and all those that stayed should have left, because both sides

оних који не верују у сукоб, тако да немају шансу за победу која је из њихове перспективе и онако Пирова, када су се са неба спустили милосрдни анђели и из огња успели убоги демони, да се сретну на једној хоризонталној раскрсници путева, вертикално, на брдовитом Балкану, земљи песника или ратника/ништа између/, полуострву где је полубаук полуокружио полуевропу и растројио саставне делове атома на бесконачно мали број бесконачног нечега, бавити се стрипом, ауторским, личним, овде је било ствар доброг, личног, самоуког васпитања и вере у лепше сутра.

Заиста, како не бити циничан и врло лако се иронично одмакнути од флоскула типа – организовано бављење стрипом, економско социјалне појаве, јако издаваштво, добро тржиште, врхунски професионализам, ... где у McLuhanовом смислу ..., надахнути аматери праве прогрес ... бизнис је препуштен професионалцима, дакле стручњацима, мењачерима, ... све су то постулати бизниса у индустрији забаве ... и/или једноставно не полујети, ако под тим подразумевамо јавно емитовање и објављивање несвесног, што би била најтачнија дефиниција онога чиме смо се ми бавили и шта смо радили у размасима између редова, а што је једна од дефиниција лудила, да цитирам Wostoka, црног папу домаћег андерграунда.

Рат, криза, несташница, наоружани мужјаци, жене у црни, санкције, опет рат, тотална депресија, још санкција, јефтине и јаке дроге, претња бомбардовањем, још један рат, глад, беда, још јаче дроге, још црња берза, наоружани дечаци, девојчице на продају, препродаја унутрашњих органа, отимање, отимање унутрашњих органа, апсолутна корупција, сви медији у рукама нациста, руља на улици, сви заједно – за рат, против рата, за краља, за Тита, против још једног изгубљеног рата, за победу, против пораза, против полиције, једни против других, свако за себе, још један рат, најзад испуњено обећање још једног бомбардовања, сирене, деца плачу, дрога је скоро бесплатна, још јача, најјача, Алиса на колодвору испред зоолошког врта, папагај који једе сам своје груди, мајмуни који плачу, сами, гладни, проклети, робови сви, свих порока и пророка, нове секте преузимају медије, нико не примећује да је филм црно бели, *noir*, све је дозвољено, све је на продају, наоружани попови у турбо џиповима возе двеста на сат у супротном правцу кроз центар Београда, у крви више од шест процената алкохола, мушкице крваре на шофершајбнама, улице пуне кућних, изгладнелих, дојучерашњих кућних љубимаца, тумарају у мраку у по бела дана, црни пас који се зове Бели, бели пас на чијој кућици пише Црни/ црни пас Бели и бели пас Црни. Да је бели пас био бео, а црни пас црн, ничег не би било.

realized the power ratio and the real outcome of the conflict between those who believed in the victory, blind victory in a blind conflict, and those who didn't believe in conflict, and thus stood no chance of winning, which from their perspective is a bitter win, when merciful angels descended from heavens and wretched demons ascended from hell fire, meeting at a horizontal crossroad, vertically, in the hilly Balkans, the land of poets or warriors/and nothing in between/, a peninsula where a half-boggle half-circled half-Europe, and dispersed atoms into a limitlessly small number of limitless nothings, making comic strips, one's own, personal, here was a matter of good, personal, self-taught upbringing and faith in a better tomorrow.

Indeed, how does one avoid being a cynic and ironically distancing oneself from platitudes such as 'organized work in the field of comic strips', 'economic and social phenomena', 'strong publishing', 'good market', 'top professionalism', '... where in McLuhan's sense', 'inspired amateurs are making progress', 'business is left in the hands of professionals, experts, managers', '... these are all business postulates in the entertainment industry ...' and/or simply to not lose one's mind, if by that we mean public broadcast and publishing of the unconscious, which would make the most precise definition of what we were doing in between the lines, which is one of the definitions of madness, to quote Wostok, the black pope of domestic underground.

War, crisis, poverty, armed males, women in black, sanctions, war again, total depression, more sanctions, cheap and strong drugs, bombing threats, yet another war, hunger, misery, yet stronger drugs, black market, armed boys, girls for sale, sale of human organs, kidnapping, stealing human organs, absolute corruption, all media in the hands of the Nazis, mobs in the streets, all together – for war, against war, for the king, for Tito, against another lost war, for victory, against defeat, against the police, against each other, each one for themselves, still yet another war, the promise of bombing finally realized, sirens, children crying, drugs almost free, even stronger, the strongest, Alice at the train station in front of a zoo, a parrot eating its own chest, monkeys crying, alone, hungry, damned, all enslaved, by all vices and prophets, new cults take over the media, no one notices the film is black and white, *noir*, everything goes, everything is for sale, armed priests in turbo-charged sport utility vehicles drive 200 km/h in the opposite direction in downtown Belgrade, over 6% alcohol in their blood, flies bleeding on the windscreens, streets full of what until yesterday were someone's pets, stamping in the dark in the middle of the day, a black dog named Whitey, a white dog whose house says Blacky/a black dog white and a white dog black. If the white dog had been white and the black one black, none of that would have happened.

Обрнута сразмерност са смислом, тако нормална, перспектива савршена, однос црног и белог у потпуној равнотежи. Сваког тринаестог у месецу, сваке године, те девете деценије, последње у последњем веку, неформални самити актера домаћег ауторског стрипа, промоције издања у једном примерку, размена стрип издања, новац испод части, изложбе оригиналa, фотографија, илустрација, фрустрација, пројекције, концепти, радионице стрипова и радионице фанзина ... радионице хемије. Сусрет аутора стрипова и фанзина, самокритичара и пиратских издавача са простора непризнатих, признатих и фантомских држава бивше Југославије, бивших градова, дневни стрип фанзини. Наставак у следећем броју, нема разилажења, спавамо једни код других, једемо шта има, пијемо шта немамо, злоупотребљавамо емоције до крајњих граница издржљивости тела. Ум је искључен, али је неум укључен. Класичан механизам обртања несрће у сопствену корист, наравно уз жртву која се подразумева и о којој се не прича, као и о онима који су се жртвовали, који су жртвовани, нестали, побегли, изгубили се у ходницима сећања, у кадровима аутобиографских стрипова заснованим на фиктивним догађајима, пустим сновима и паралелној јави.

Србија је била центар планетарне енергије у том тренутку, енергије негативне у овом случају, црне тачке, умешале су се нечисте сile. Србија је иначе позната по екстремном сујеверју, балканском специјалитету, тешкој и богатој локалној митологији, која не постоји само у руралном миљеу већ и у урбаним легендама. Народ ставља црне навлаке на прозоре, крију свој страх, невидљиви авиони погађају све што кошта, војска се већ сакрила у болнице и обданишта, школе, нови рат, исти рат, само се противници мењају, сваки пораз у претходном, нови је повод за следећи, хронолошки, црно бели магови и простастролози вриште са ТВ екрана, погођена је телевизија, моја прва бомба, био сам у клубу удаљеном сто метара од зграде телевизије када је погођена. Након што сам сишао са бубњева и прескочио једног од неколико басиста, срушio сам миксету, сломио звучник и отишао за шанк, понео колико могу да донесем, све је бесплатно било те ноћи, поделили смо све фанзине и стрипове свакоме ко није имао новца да плати или је платио пиће, отрови, фанзини, стрипови, оригинални и живот за ћабе. Сео сам на степенице, уживао у буци машина. Пријатељ поред мене је заспао, пробудио га је ударац са неба над Београдом. Шта је било, изашли смо напоље, погодили су телевизију, хистерично се смејемо, уплашили смо се да нећемо моћи да престанемо, касније смо установили, исто као што смо установили да није смешно, јер нам је пријатељ, случајни пролазник и трећи човек саопштио колико је људи

Reverse reciprocity with a meaning, so normal, a perfect perspective, black-white ratio in full balance. Every 13th of the month, every year, in the last decade of the last century, informal gatherings brought together domestic comic strip authors, publication launches held with one copy, the exchange of copies, money offensive, exhibitions of the original copies, photographs, illustrations, frustrations, projections, concerts, comic strip and fanzine workshops ... chemistry workshops. The gatherings of comic strip and fanzine authors, self-critics and illegal publishers from unrecognized, recognized, and phantom countries of ex-Yugoslavia, ex cities, daily comic strips and fanzines. To be continued in the next issue, no going away, we sleep at each other's place, we eat what we have, drink what we don't have. Classic mechanism of turning misfortune into one's own benefit, of course with a sacrifice that goes without saying, but is not to be mentioned, just like we don't mention those who were sacrificed, who were victims, missing, escaping, got lost in the halls of memory, frames of autobiographical comics based on fictional events, futile dreams and a parallel reality.

Serbia was the center of planetary energy at the time, negative energy in this case, a black point, dark forces intervened. Serbia is generally famous for extreme superstition, a Balkan specialty, rich and heavy local mythology, which does not only exist in the rural areas, but in urban legends as well. People put black drapes on their windows, hiding their fear, invisible planes hit everything of value, the military was already hiding in hospitals and kindergartens, schools, a new war, the same war, only the opponents are different, each one a defeat in the one before, each new one a reason for the next, chronologically, black and white magicians and astrologist scream from your TV, the television building has been hit, my first bomb, I was in a club a hundred meters from this building when it was hit. After getting up from my drums, jumping over one or several bass players, I knocked down a mixer, broke a speaker and headed for the bar, took all I could handle, everything was free that night, we gave out all the comics and fanzines to everyone who could not pay for the drinks or already had, poisons, fanzines, comics, originals, and life for free. I sat on the stairs and enjoyed the noise the machines were making. A friend next to me had fallen asleep, and a hit from the Belgrade sky woke him up. What happened, we went outside, they hit the television building, we laugh hysterically, afraid we could not stop, we later realized, realizing nothing was funny, because another friend, a third man, told us how many people were in the building. Later we all found out that everything was known about where, who and why, and why not. We are people, and this is just one bomb from one of the battles from one of the wars.

остало у згради телевизије. Касније се знало да се знало кад и шта, и ко и где и зашто и зашто да не. Људи смо, ово је само једна бомба једне битке једног од ратова.

Трговина која не зна за границе, процват црног слободног тржишта, слободне неконтролисане фармакологије, фирме које продају болест и лек, редефинисање транзиције, увек смо били први и најбољи, у среде комунизма имали смо капитализам, у среде диктатуре имали смо највише слободе, увек, онда, тада, сада и заувек. Мајка Ларса фон Трира је то знала када му је причала о Југославији, земљи која је једини остварила идеал, самоуправни социјализам. Ларс је од тада одрастао. Сада зна. Затим први домаћи хит филм, *Ми нисмо анђели*. Анђело и Ђаво кроје судбину једне невине београдске тинејџерке из богатог и егзотичног предграђа, живот у претоплим бојама, ружичастим тоновима, весле на улицама, журке у по бела дана, на улицама цвета само марихуана, једу се ћевапи у *Има дана*, симпатични полицајац који држи дете у рукама на зиду у полицијској станици, где сам приведен због панка и нереда, девојко мала, песмо мога града, пад са највиших суботичких зграда се претвара у последњи лет, каже спикерка на националној телевизији, следи блок реклами политичких секта, *Идоли* и пријатељи им препоручују да сами препоруче своје производе, веру, снагу, моћ, љубав која је лепа само док се чека, нада, све-видеће око, камере снимају камере и телевизоре на којима се пројектују статични видео снимци камера, лоу-фај видео револуција, рат у реалном времену, на малом екрану, компјутери у шапама злочинаца, хакери галаме, али остали ђуте. Овде цртају стрипове, боже, каква су то имена, каже случајно залутали новинар, шпијун, туриста, ко зна, нека га; са запада, стрип аутори са именима ратних злочинаца. То су вам псеудоними? Не, хвала, то су имена и презимена, нека су нам дали родитељи, а нека смо сами бирали, себи и једни другима, тако смо се укључили у игру, све време смо били ту, у централној негативној тачки ове мале планете у том тренутку, били смо заједно, све време, радили смо се стриповима и знали смо да, ако останемо невини, победили смо. Па колико издржимо. Заиста, како не бити патетичан.

Исусе, каква су вам то имена, понавља збуњени странац.

Wostok, Александар Зограф, Professor, Septic, Grabowski, Schmidt, Schlemmer, Oto, Kovacs, Паликућа (Houseburn), Волођа Палибрк, Vuk Palibrk, Mr. Stocca, Lazar Bodroža, Thursday madness, Nabor Devolac, Dominator, Jesus God what kind of names are you giving, Robot, Kur, Seljak (Peasant), Čiča (Uncle), Mrvi (Deadbeat), Miša (Misha), Pernati prijatelj (Feather Friend), Morcina, Momci (Boys), Nitkov (Bum), Tromb (Blood Clot), Ivan Grubanov, Leonid fon Punkerstein, Damir Rijowich Originalow, Vladimir Kuzmanov, Bogdan Milošec, Lola, Ivana Filipović, Dušan Jevtović, Nedim Hadžiahmetović, Harmonija haosa (Harmony of Chaos), Entropija (Entropy), Miroslav Lazendić,

Border-less trade, flourishing of the free black market, free uncontrolled pharmacology, companies who sell both diseases and cures, redefining transition, we have always been the first and the best, we had capitalism in the midst of communism, we had the most freedom during a dictatorship, always, then, now, and forever. Lars von Trier's mother knew this when she told him about Yugoslavia, the only country that reached an ideal, self-governing socialism. Lars has grown since then. He now knows. Then the first domestic blockbuster, *We Are Not Angels*. An angel and a devil are tailoring a Belgrade teenager's destiny from a rich and exotic suburb, life in warm colors, rosy tones, Vespas in the streets, day parties, only marijuana blossoming, eating ćevapi in *There will be Days*, a congenial cop holding a child in his hands on the wall of the precinct where I was brought to for punk and disorder, my little girl, the song of my town, a fall from the tallest buildings in Subotica turns into the last flight, the anchor woman on national TV announces a commercial break of political cults, Idols and friends recommend them to recommend their own products, faith, strength, love which is only beautiful while you wait for it, hope, the omnipotent eye, cameras taping cameras and TVs projecting static video footage, low-fi video resolution, war in real-time, on the small screen, computers in villains' claws, hackers make noise, but the rest are silent. Here they are making comics, God, what kind of names are those, says a misplaced journalist, a spy, a tourist, who knows, let him be; from the west, comic authors with names of war criminals. Those are your aliases? No thanks, those are first and last names, some given by our parents, and some that we chose for ourselves and for others, that's how we joined the game, we have been here the whole time, in the central negative point of this little planet in that moment, we were together, all the time, getting high on comic books and knew that, if we stayed innocent, we would win. So we hung in there for that while. Truly, how can you avoid being pathetic?

Jesus, what kind of names are those, asks a confused foreigner again.

Кузманов, Богдан Милошец, Лола, Ивана Филиповић, Душан Јевтовић, Недим Хаџиахметовић, Хармонија хаоса, Ентропија, Мирослав Лазендић, Koprokomix, Dr. Skrotum, Dr. Fuzz, Коста Миловановић, Офелијини паразити, Реџа, Никола Топузовић, Ninja, Havoc, Дарио Шантић, Вања Суботић, Мирко Стоилков, Летач, Ђаво, Нандор, Clown, Владимир Бурсаћ, Бота, Еugen Slavik ... да поменемо само неке.

Провала варвара, достојанство, буквально изражавање, оно што се дешава, постојало је. Зограф и *Живот под санкцијама*, то нам је било доволјно, није било потребе да сад сви раде то. Wostok као отац, Зограф је мајка, која је ту, да пази да нас отац, као мрачна фигура вечног патријархата, не понесе превише доле, отац који пази да нас мајка превише не размази. Било је и једног и другог, истина је на средини, тако релативна да не постоји. Нисам више могао да издржим, покушао сам да побегнем, без пасоша, па шта буде, сви су покушали да побегну, скоро нико није успео. Преговори и разговори око првих стрип часописа, мучење, недостатак информација, изолованост Србије и самих градова у самоизолованост, изолованост од самих себе, магичне околности у изолацији, сви апсурдни догађаји, исти ликови, непознати људи, комуникација у стрипу, стрип не као индустрија, већ начин комуникације двосмислености, троимислености, како смо се сви упознали, нисам знаю никог, отишао сам на промоцију првог стрип магазина, сцена је била децентрализована, аутори се нису познавали, градови су ћутали, Суботица, Панчево, Вршац, Крагујевац, земунски клан, Банатско Ново Село, Обреновац, стрип аутори као уличари, пију испред драгстора, завлаче се по пасажима, улазе у галерије, културне центре, аутсајдери на ТВ-у, пошто је владајућа номенклатура понекад, нерадо, попуштала под притиском, а и из сопствених тактичких разлога, вентиле, понекад неки слободни медиј, аутсајдерске новине, локалну телевизију, мали радио ... ако се превише пусти, угасе га. Стара школа репресије.

Остаће у стрипу само они који заиста верују у то што раде, рекао је Никола Витковић у интервјуу, у једном од тих првих покушаја да направимо часопис, да не морамо да се замарамо са фотокопирањем, да унесемо бар мало боје, и погодио је.

Зограф је био превише заокупљен својим животом под санкцијама, сопственим егзистенцијалним проблемима, сањарењу са својим америчким колегама, аутобиографским сторијама, политичким коментарима, документарним стрипом, чиме се ми нисмо бавили, да није ни приметио да око њега буја једна ендемска врста, екстремно мутирани

Koprokomix, Dr. Skrotum, Dr. Fuzz, Kosta Milovanović, Ofelijini paraziti (Ophelia's Parasites), Redža, Nikola Topuzović, Ninja, Havoc, Dario Šantić, Vanja Subotić, Mirko Stoilkov, Letač (Flyer), Đavo (Devil), Nandor, Clown, Vladimir Bursać, Bota, Eugen Slavik ... to name but a few.

The outbreak of barbarians, dignity, literal expressions, what is going on, existed. Zograf and *Life Under Sanctions*, which was enough for us, there was no need for everyone to do it now. Wostok as a father, Zograf a mother, always there, watching over us, a father as a dark figure of eternal patriarchy, not taking you too low, a father making sure our mother does not spoil us. There was this and that, the truth in the middle, so relative it didn't exist. I could not take it anymore, I tried to run away, without a passport, but ready for anything, everyone tried to run away, hardly anyone succeeded. Talks and negotiations about the first comic strip magazine, torture, lack of information, the isolation of Serbia and its cities within themselves, isolation from ourselves, magical circumstances in isolation, all the absurd events, the same characters, unknown people, communication in comics, comics not as an industry but rather a way to communicate double and triple-meanings, how we all got to know each other, I hadn't known anybody, I went to a launch of the first comic magazine, the scene was decentralized, authors did not know each other, the cities were quiet, Subotica, Pančevo, Vršac, Kragujevac, Zemun Clan, Banatsko Novo Selo, Obrenovac, comic authors as homeless people, drinking in front of stores, lurking in alleyways, entering galleries, culture centers, outsiders on TV, because of the governing elite sometimes, reluctantly enough, cracked under pressure, from their own tactical reasons, valves, from time to time a free media, outsider newspapers, local television, small radio ... if it plays too much, they shut it down. Old school repression.

'Only those who truly believe in what they are doing will remain in the area of comics', Nikola Vukotić said in an interview in one of our first attempts at making a magazine, not to have to be bothered with photocopying, to insert a bit of color, and he was right.

Zograf was too wrapped up in his life under sanctions, his own existential problems, dreaming of his American colleagues, autobiographical stories, political comments, comics documentaries, which we didn't deal with, that he didn't even notice an endemic species flourishing around him, extremely mutated offspring of punk, comics, a media space, common comics from Subotica, Pančevo, all the other poor cities with even poorer suburbs, everyone tried what they could. We could not find our way around anything, and in this chaos we found some meaning,

изданак панка, стрипа, медијски простор, заједнички стрипови из Суботице, Панчева, свих осталих сиромашних градова са својим још сиромашњим предграђима, свако се сналазио како је умео и могао. Ми се нисмо сналазили ни у чему и у том хаосу смо нашли смисао, Турбо фолк музика, текстови и начин живота се савршено уклапао са стриповима, саундтрек за стрипове није била алтернативна музика, није било бесмислене критике у стрипу, типа, срам их било шта нам раде. Поезија у стрипу, филм, литература, увек јача од памфлета.

Мејнстрим сцена је потпуно замрла, осим неколико трагичних и гротеских покушаја. То их није спречило да се свим снагама устреме на нас и на растућу продукцију фанзина, појаву прво неколицине, а касније и гомиле аутора који су свој израз нашли сами, иако одгајани на мејнстриму, петпарачким романима италијанске твртке Бонели, као и стрипу Алан Форд који овде, у Србији превазилази оквире љубави и поштовања и прелази у идолопоклонство, затим француско-белгијске школе, као и снажног утицаја југословенског стрипа који је некада био изузетно популаран. Аутори су уживали углед антикултурне јавности, славу непознатих рок музичара, имали снагу и ентузијазам пропале авангарде. Помешати једну тако здраву основу са десет година пакла није могло да изађе ни на шта нормално. Знакови неоинтрупције попут смајлија, срца, и осталих заграда, запета, тачака и тачкица само би још више збунили читаоце овог текста. Све се помешало, иронија је постала патетична, тужни искази цинични, нико није знао шта ко мисли, најмање онај који мисли, осмех се смејао на погрешним местима, суже су текле од смеха.

Први фанзини, групе аутора, јављају се, што је врло чудно, али и карактеристично за српску стрип сцену деведесетих, не само и прво у Београду, главном граду, него паралелно и у Панчеву, Вршцу, Суботици ... и што је заиста чудно, не знају једни за друге, или су тек научили. Југ Србије, потпуно одсечен, толико да ми ни дан данас не знамо шта се тамо радио са стрипом деведесетих. Још је рано, помислих, погрешну тему сам изабрао, деведесете, мало је прошло, али се тешим да је ово само један од текстова, први, колико је мени познато, а да није фактографско архиварско колекционарски одређен. Преокрет се додгођио једне ноћи, на самом почетку деведесетих, у клубу *Индустрија*, вршачки стрип часопис *Патагонија* је имала своје прво представљање у Београду, сазнали смо да постоји Крпел, легендарни стрип фанзин који од тада није престао да излази и који је премашио више од хиљаду бројева. Сви су дошли. Упознали се, упознали једне са другима, дошло се до сазнања да се иста

Turbo-folk music, lyrics and a life-style perfectly blending with comics, the soundtrack for comics was not made of alternative music, there was no pointless criticism in comics, like, shame on them for what they are doing to us. Poetry in comics, film, literature, always outweighing pamphlets.

The mainstream scene was almost completely dead, apart from a few tragicomic and grotesque attempts. That did not stop them to go after us and the growing fanzine production with full force, emergence of firstly a few, and later loads of authors who found their own expression, even though they had been raised on mainstream, pulp fiction of Italian Boneli company as well as Alan Ford comics, that here in Serbia were not only loved, but idolized, then French-Belgian school, and the strong influence of Yugoslavian comics that used to be wildly popular. Comic creators were highly regarded in the anti-cultural sphere, they had the glory of little-known musicians, strength and enthusiasm of a failed avant-garde. Mixing such a healthy basis with ten years of hell could not result in anything normal. Neopunctuation signs such as smiles, hearts and other brackets, commas, dots would only further confuse the readers of this text. Everything got mixed, irony became pathetic, sad remarks became cynical, nobody knew what anyone thought, smiles were smiling at wrong places, tears ran from laughter.

The first fanzines, groups of creators were emerging, which is very strange, but also typical for the Serbian comics scene in the nineties, not only and firstly in Belgrade, the capital, but also in Pančevo, Vršac, Subotica ... and oddly enough, they didn't know about each other, or had barely heard of each other. The south of Serbia is completely cut off, so much so that we don't know yet today what was happening in the comic scene there during the nineties. It's still early, I thought, I chose the wrong topic, the nineties, not enough time has passed, but I comfort myself that this is just one of the texts, the first one, as far as I know it is not facto-graphically archived and directed by collectors. The turnover came one night, at the very beginning of the nineties, in the club *Industrija*, where a magazine from Vršac named *Patagonija* had its first introduction to the Belgrade scene, we found out there was *Krpelj*, a legendary comic fanzine which since then hasn't stopped production and has exceeded more than a thousand copies. Everyone was there. We got to know each other, found out that the same thing was happening in Subotica, the magazine *Striper* from Belgrade had been collecting remains of the ripped Belgrade comic scene, with no apparent success. The content and concept were changed that night, everyone was there that night and everyone knew that now there was no going back. Heavy are the words of the pathetic, so discretely packed in the charming

ствар дешава и у Суботици, часопис *Стриптер из Београда* је већ пар година скупљао остатак поцепане београдске стрип сцене, без већег успеха. Те вечери је промењен садржај и концепција, те вечери су сви били и сви су знали да, иако се већина први пут срела, није било пута за назад. Тешке су речи патетике, тако дискретно спаковане у шармантни спој инфантилног поимања локалне историје и митских монумента на граници коинциденције и судбине. Митоманија нам никад није била страна. Песници и ратници.

Били смо окренути себи, није постојао неки нарочит интерес за то што се дешава у Србији у иностранству, ни обратно. Осим неколико излета у објављивање по западноевропским фанзинима и словеначком *Стрипбургеру*, који је имао ипак мало финији, специфичан укус за наш неукус, укус више окренут западноевропским школама новог стрипа, српска стрип сцена је била окренута себи и имплодирана је. Морала је, требало је и успела је да нађе свој пут, на свим половинама раскршћа доброг и лошег, горег и још горег, испред галерије, галамећи по библиотекама, цртајући стрипове на неприкладним местима, по кафанама и клубовима, на улицама, парку, у аутобусу, возу, изложбе у домовима за децу без родитељског надзора, у тоалетима елитних галерија, герилске акције по забрањеним зидовима, опет патетика, или и романтика.

Деведесете, какав флеш. Љубав и смрт. Док нас љубав не убије.

Бели мајмуни са супротне стране кавеза. Перцепција до мајчег стрипа од стране страног, западног, скоро наслов следећег пасуса, ипак, да не испадамо из наративног низа и не кваримо ритам ако већ морамо мелодију.

Прилично рационално рационализовање рационално-перцепираног модела једног стрип аутора, посвећеника, фанатика, на граници опсесивно компулсивног зависничког обрасца, у овом случају о сопствени рад, мање о себи самом, себи као неком посматраном са стране, из трећег лица једнине. Свакако, по среди је психолошки поремећај, који може бити условљен како генетским предиспозицијама, тако и друштвено социјалном миљеу у коме је одрастао, постао... утицајма средине, што за ове просторе, на које се, претпостављам, односи процена, носи један дубљи, тежи контекст услед специфичности, како даље, тако и ближе историјске основе.

Недостатак читања између редова, као да машина транспонује мелодију у ритам, пазите, рационализам је заразна

blend of infantile notion of local industry and mythical moments on the border between coincidence and fate. Mythomania had never been our strong point. Poets and warriors.

We were turned to ourselves, there was no particular interest for what was going on in Serbia from the outside, or vice versa. Apart from a few releases in Western European fanzines and the Slovenian, *Stripburger*, which had a bit finer, more specific taste for our distaste, a taste more turned towards Western European schools of the new comics, the Serbian comics scene was turned in on itself and imploded. It had to, it was supposed to and it found its way, in all half crossroads of good and bad, worse and even more worse, in front of galleries, making noise in libraries, making comics in inappropriate places, in taverns and clubs, in the streets, in parks, in buses, trains, exhibitions in homes for abandoned children, in the toilets of elite galleries, guerrilla actions on forbidden walls, pathetic again, as well as romantic.

The nineties, what a flashback. Love and death. Until our love kills us.

White monkeys from the opposite sides of the cage. The perception of domestic comics from the side of foreigners, the West, almost a heading to the following paragraph, still, we don't want to break the narration and spoil the pace if we must do so to a melody.

A pretty rational rationalization of the rationally perceived model of a comic book creator, a dedicated man, a fanatic, on the verge of obsessive-compulsive addiction, in this case to his own work, less to himself, himself seen from the outside, spoken of in third person. Certainly, it is a psychological disorder, which can be conditioned as a genetic predisposition as well as by the social milieu he grew up in, emerged, came to life... the environmental influence, which carries an air of deeper, heavier context considering the specificity, further, as well as closer historical basis.

The lack of reading between the lines, as if a machine transports a melody into rhythm, mind you, rationalism is an infectious disease not to kid with, to paraphrase the doctor who first realized there was an outbreak of *Variola Vera* in Belgrade. To catch the moment where unreal things become real, where north falls into south, around hurricanes, a peaceful place in the midst of a hurricane, a balance point.

What is a mad man to do when he sees, when he has no choice but to see, when it has been shown to him, one doesn't close

болест и с њом се није шалити, да парафразирам доктора који је први схватио епидемију вариоле вере у Београду. Ухватити тај тренутак где нестварне ствари постају стварне, где се север улива у југ, око урагана, у сред урагана мирно место, тачка равнотеже.

Шта може лудиста кад види, кад не може да не види, кад му се указало, пред тим се не жмури, то се не доводи у питање, то нешто неухватљиво, тај бесни мир, искуство прадедова, историја крвљу исписана, на удару бинарног кода са запада и крезаве курве, лепих очију, најлепше.

Као да прво и друго лице не постоје, као да се не познају, чудна перцепција неког ко гледа у објект анализе, комуницира с њим/њом, неко необјашњиво осећање механичности процеса комуникације између субјекта и објекта процене.

Премиса деструктивности је потпуно апстрактна, као да се избегава оно што би у тој потенцијалној комуникацији требало да се подразумева. Као родитељ, мајка која не покушава да разуме своје дете него га подвргава општеприхваћеним методама и обрасцима општих места васпитања, уџбеничког приступа. Општим местима погрешног принципа васпитања.

Овде се објекат своди на инфантилног анфандерибра, који из обести руши перпетум мобиле, систем, машину која по природи ствари обећава све удобности малограђанској живота. Лудиста руши (глагол?) све авторитете, било дobre или лоше из имагинарних, недефинисаних, апстрактних разлога, заборављајући, опет, специфичност историјско-географске особености поднебља. Од краја осамдесетих, током ратова и разарања на свим нивоима, морално етичким, социјално друштвеним, културним, економским наравно, дошло је до поларизовања друштва у политичком првенственој смислу, из чега су произилазиле и друге разлике, чак дубље и комплексније. Продужена адолосценција, дакле инфантилност која се приписује објекту је опет, понављам, више на нивоу општег него појединачног случаја. Стрип аутори углавном долазе из екстремно дисфункционалних породица, бивше средње класе, радничких породица и пропале црвене буржоазије, без икаквих илузија у бољу будућност, углавном на самој ивици егзистенције. Постоје два пута која су се показала као образац развоја стрип аутора, дакле један је онај који у покушају да избалансира свој ауторски рад и борбу за голи живот, егзистенцију, почиње да се бави и наизглед сродним гранама ове делатности, ауторским стрипом, па је у исто време и дизајнер, или копирајтер, запослен у маркетиншкој фирми, где за бедну

one's eyes before it, it is not to be questioned, that evasive thing, that angry peace, the experience of great-grandfathers, a history written in blood, a target of binary code and a toothless whore, with pretty eyes, the prettiest.

As if the first and the second person do not exist, as if they don't know each other, a strange perception of a person looking at the object of analysis, communicating with him/her, an unexplained feeling of melancholy for the process of communication between the subject and the object of evaluation.

The premise of destructiveness is completely abstract, as if what should go without saying in this potential conversation is avoided. As a parent, a mother not trying to understand her child but to succumb it to the generally accepted methods and patterns of upbringing, the textbook approach. The general points of the wrong upbringing principle.

Here, the object is brought down to infantile L'Enfant terrible, who is, from pure malice, destroying the perpetual mobile, the system, the machine which, by the nature of things, promises all the comforts of the petty-bourgeois life. The madman knocks down (verb?) all authorities, whether good or bad, from imaginary, undefined, abstract reasons, forgetting, again, the specific context of the historical geographical characteristic of this area. Since the end of the eighties, during the wars and destructions on all levels, moral-ethical, social, cultural, economical of course, the polarization of society has appeared, in the first place politically speaking, and other differences have followed from that point, even those deeper and more complex. Prolonged adolescence, thus, infantilism attributed to the object is again, I repeat, more noticeable in general cases than in individual. The authors of comic mostly come from extremely dysfunctional families, ex-middle class, blue-collar families and fallen red bourgeoisie, without any illusions for a better future, usually on the very edge of existence. There are two ways which represent the pattern of how the authors of comics developed. The first one, trying to strike a balance between their written work and the struggle for bare existence, started dealing with the activities related to comic making, thus, at the same time being a designer, or a copyrighter employed in a marketing company, where he toils for a pathetic pay, because he got scooped when the transition cards were dealt, due to incomprehensible corruption (according to the Western norms) and slave-holding approaches. Thus, the authors slowly started giving up their writing, with some attempts which usually appeared in some anthological editions, or they wrote comics for the foreign markets, so that, in time, the work on their own comics had been completely neglected and forgotten.

плату рмбачи цео дан, јер у подели транзиционих карата, услед, за западна мерила несхврљиве корупције и робовласничког приступа извисио, па аутори полако одустају од ауторског рада, понеки покушај који се углавном појави у неком од издања антологијског карактера, или рад на стрипу за иностранство, да би временом потпуно запоставио и заборавио рад на ауторском стрипу. Друга крајност, али и реалност су управо аутори описаны, карикирани, надам се са ироничном дистанцом, било би трагично да нису, аутори који, дакле живе и раде у својим још увек дечјим собама, живе код и на рачун родитеља, а оно мало финансијског прилива није ни близу довољно осим за повремене бегове из реалног ... стални прилив зараде, прогрес, размишљање о некој класичној породици и сличне глупости. Крај деведесетих је обележио, између осталог управу ту поделу на правоверне и оне који су силом прилика, пре или касније подлегли притиску средине или изгубили интересовање. С друге стране фанатичност, посвећеност, константност, атмосфера међу онима који су изабрали овај други пут је пут којим се ређе иде и не размишља се пуно о томе како, зашто, колико, него се ради експлозивно, импулсивно, срећом па постоје мали фестивали, радионице стрипова и уопште једна племенска повезаност аутора који се овде извргавају руглу, заборављајући се да често ти сам не бираш пут којим ћеш ићи, него пут бира тебе.

Да, проблематика ангажованости у стрипу се овде провлачи већ пар деценија, коинцидирајући са режимом Слободана Милошевића. Ауторски стрип никад није упао у замку конкретне и директне комуникације, колаборације и критизирања опресивног режима и њихових институција. Усудио бих се рећи да је успела да се одржи једна заштићена невиност, не ескапизам, већ трансценденталност тематике, као и визуелног примера. Никада то нису били класични политички карикатурални гег стрипови какве можемо видети у средње-западно-северноевропском стрипу. Та банализација није заживела и осим неколико пропалих покушаја није ни постојала, могло би се рећи. Тешко је под једну ставку подвести заједнички именитељ стилске тематско идејне нити наративно визуелног карактера тако велиоког броја потпуно различитих аутора и одредити шта их повезује. Утицај једних на друге, нескромно је рећи, али боље него лажно скромно лагати и квалитет, монтипајтоновски надреалистичко авангардан, мање, много мање него руска књижевност и филм, источноевропска школа анимираног филма, богата традиција како квалитетних претходника, не заборавимо да је у старој Југославији постојала врло озбиљна и квалитетна стрип сцена, замрла са почетком југословенских ратова, затим традиција *треш, палп*, и уопште жанровски одређеног

The other extreme, which is also a reality, includes exactly the authors described, caricatured, I hope from ironic distance, because it would be tragic otherwise, the authors who still live and work in the same bedrooms they had as children, supported by their parents, while the small amount of financial flow they get is not nearly enough except for the occasional escapes from reality ... constant earnings, progress, thoughts about a classical family and other nonsense. The end of the nineties marked, among other things, the division into the orthodox and those who, under the circumstances, sooner or later, succumbed under the pressure of society, or they simply lost interest. On the other hand, fanaticism, dedication, continuity, the atmosphere among those who chose this other way, the way rarely chosen, without questioning how, why, how much, but working with an explosiveness, impulsively, luckily, there are small festivals, comic workshops, and altogether a certain tribal connection between authors, who are, in this case, exposed to ridicule, forgetting the fact that, often, you do not choose the way, but the way chooses you.

Yes, the problem of being actively engaged in comic making has been present for a couple of decades, coinciding with the regime of Slobodan Milošević. Written comic books never became a subject for concrete and direct communication, collaboration, and criticism of the oppressive regime and its institutions. I dare say that a certain protective innocence was being kept, not escapism, but the transcendentalism of the subject, as well as the visual example. There were never examples of classical political caricature gag comics, as could be found in the Middle-West-Northern-European comics. That kind of triteness did not take hold, and, apart from some unsuccessful trials, we can say it never existed. It is difficult to find one general idea of this style thematic line of a narrative visual character, which combines and joins such a large number of completely different authors, and determine what they have in common. The way they influence each other, immodestly speaking, better than being a modest liar, and the quality representing the surrealistic avant-garde of the Monty Python style, less, much less than Russian literature and film, the Eastern European school of animated movies, the rich tradition of high-quality forerunners, let's not forget a serious and prestigious comic scene in former Yugoslavia, which ceased to exist with the start of the Yugoslavian wars, then the tradition of *trash, palp*, and generally comics defined by genre, Yugoslavian, as well as European, in first place Italian. It could be said that perhaps the authors from this area were inspired by the same models, together with the social milieu, then the regime, the church, military, and police mentality, patriarchy ... not having enough will to compromise is a moral choice, not the arrogant view of the infantile

стрипа како из Југославије тако и из Европе, првенствено Италије, све то заједно, дакле могло би се рећи да су можда узори нешто што повезује ауторе са овог поднебља, као и социјално друштвено економски миље, затим режим, црква, војничко полицијски менталитет, патријархат ... недостатак воље за компромисом је морални избор, а не ароганција инфантилних средњепругаша. Аутори су врло свесни где живе, шта раде чак и кад испољавају несвесно, што стриповима даје баш квалитет, недостатак професионализма је достатак аутентичности, аутохтоности, оригиналности, убојитости, снаге. Поређење са хакерима наравно не смета, напротив, има врло много истине, па чак и конкретне сарадње између ових поткултура, *Космопловци* су један од тих примера, бескомпромисност, експерименталност, посвећеничко фанатични приступ, доследност доказана, сада већ вишедеценијским радом несмањеном жестином. Истина, било је спаљивања стрипова, уништавања, али не из деструктивних разлога упркос самодеструктивној особености ових и осталих ритуала, напротив, овдашњи аутори су врло поносни на свој рад и на чињеницу у каквим је околностима настао. Немају ништа против да свој рад покажу, изложе, поклоне, продају, али ни једног тренутка није дошло до озбиљне колаборације са непријатељем, режимом и укалупљењем у очекивања башталног приступа фондашког карактера, без обзира што су средства, иако огромном већином самиздати, одређена помоћ је долазила и са стране, али неке озбиљније продаје није било. Невиност је сачувана, па бар како тако, није било лако, али ја мислим да велика већина аутора и до дан данас може бити поносна на, како свој рад, посвећеност, квалитет, а историја ће показати, и квантитет, јер огромна већина радова насталих тада, деведесетих, па чак и касније, још увек лежи по магацинима, у фиокама, главама и ормарима, испод кревета, на хиљадама тешких дискова, на таванима и у подрумима. Често незавршени и уништавани, ипак скенирани, сачувани, за једну будућу, још једну вавилонску библиотеку. Ово је сигурно шала, занимљивост и оно што ме инспирише у овом тексту је управо та неодређеност у смислу ироније текста, те сам прихватио игру тако да озбиљно одговарам на провокативна питања на која је немогуће дати прави и искрен одговор, постављајући себе у незавидан положај, што ме додатно инспирише. Бастард светске културе, европске авангарде и балканског паганизма, домаћи стрип је сироче са живим родитељима без заменске породице и дома за незбринуту децу. Остало је улица, а у улици галерија и књижара.

Отац се појављује у фиктивној претпостављеној улози, дакле не појављује се у реалном времену и простору, нема

middle-distance runners. The authors are fully aware of their surrounding and what they are doing when they express themselves even unconsciously, which gives the exact quality to the comics. An insufficient amount of expertise actually presents authenticity, author-authenticity, originality, creativity, a deadly strength. There is no harm in comparing this subculture with that one of the hackers. On the contrary, they are both truthful and even cooperate with one another. The group *Kosmoplovci* is just one of the examples of uncompromising quality, experimenting, fanatic dedication, proven consistence while working with the same passion for several decades. The truth is, there were examples of comics being burnt, destroyed, but not for the purpose of destruction. Although this and similar rituals are considered to be destructive, in this case, on the contrary, local authors are very proud of their work, taking into account the conditions in which it was being done. They do not hesitate to show their work, exhibit, give it as a present, or sell it. However, there was no chance, at any moment, of collaborating with the enemy and the regime, or of getting stuck in the expectations of mediocrity, no matter that the means were hard to get, the work was mostly self published, and certain kinds of help was always present from external sources. However there were no examples of some serious sale. The purity was kept, in some way, it wasn't easy, but I think that the majority of authors could be proud of their work, commitment, quality, and, the history will prove, even the quantity because most of the work created at that time, in the nineties, and even later, is still left to lie in some warehouses, drawers, heads and wardrobes, under the beds, on thousands of heavy compact disks, in the attics and basements. The comics which were often incomplete and destroyed, and yet, some of them were scanned, kept for one more future Babylon library. This must be a joke, it is precisely this lack of definition, in terms of the irony of the text, what inspires me in this text and makes it interesting, so I accepted to play a game and give serious answers to provocative questions, which cannot be fully and honestly answered, thus putting myself into an unenviable position, which inspires me even more. A bastard of the world culture, European avant-garde and Balkan paganism, the domestic comic is an orphan with living parents, without a foster family and without an orphan's home. What is left is the street, and in that street a gallery and a bookshop.

The father appears with a fictively assumed role, which means he doesn't appear in a real time and place, has no identity, even his character determined by this situation is not clear, because it is presented as an authority, *pater familias*, who is, at the same time, without saying accepted as a leader, protector, bread-winner and role model, and at the same time he's also given some negative characteristics, typical of characterization

идентитет, чак ни карактер одређен овом ситуацијом није јасан јер се претпоставља као ауторитет, *pater familias* који је у исто време прећутно признат као вођа, заштитник, хранилац породице и узор објекта, а у исто време му се приписују и негативна својства, својствена карактеризацији и карикатурализацији оца породице, па и оца нације, својствено географски одређеном делу Балкана као не само географски већ и, чак и пре геопсихолошки, уколико посматрамо случај феноменолошки, у социјално друштвеном контексту, а опет, трудећи се да избегнемо стереотипе, како родне/полне, тако и национално расне.

Мајка dakле, као и отац, уосталом као и објект, односно дете, у овом случају син, јер се као што претпостављамо ситуација односи у свом геному на ово одређено поднебље са свим својим особинама, осећајностима, предрасудама и расудама, фактографско, емпиријско доказаним, наравно само у претпоставци, јер ипак је штиво прилично штуро да би му се дала једна објективнија, исцрпнија, одређенија оцена. Услед недостатка изнијансираности односа који су априори комплексни, компликовани и субјективни по свом карактеру као таквом, двојни по својој природи, а тројни по броју претпостављеног броја, како реалних, тако и претпостављених, а опет јединствени по природи ствари, делују као механичке лутке у неком имагинарном примењеном позоришту. Као упутство за употребу, односно упозорење за злоупотребу. Овде се ради о класичном случају самопројекције, и то на више, рекао бих, на све аспекте ове социоедуктивне конструкције. Надам се да нисте ништа погрешно схватили, али сте осетили.

and caricature-type father of a family, even a father of a nation, typical of the geographically determined part of the Balkans, not only geographically, but also geo-psychologically, if we look upon the case in a phenomenological manner, within a social context, and again, trying to avoid stereotypes, gender stereotypes, as well as national racial.

The mother, thus, the same as the father, and as an object, after all, that is a child, in this case a son, because the situation is, as we assume, concerned, in its own genome, with this particular area with all its characteristics, diversity, prejudices and rational, which were facto-graphically, empirically proven, of course only as an assumption, since the reading matter is quite bleak to be given a more objective, detailed and specific mark. Owing to the insufficient nuance of the relationships which are a priori complex, complicated and subjective according to their character as such, dual in accordance with their nature, and triple according to the number of the assumed number, of the real as well as assumed, and again unique according to their nature, they act as mechanic dolls in some imaginary adapted theater. Like a user's manual, that is, a warning for abuse. This all is about the classical case of self-projection, increasing one, I would say, to all the aspects of this socio-educational construction. I hope there were no misunderstandings, even if so, I hope you were able to feel beyond it.

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Supervision: Aleksandra Sekulić



Guerilla Publishers and Strip-Tease Artists Contemporary Croatian comics scene

Bojan Krištofić

Pisati o sceni „nezavisnog“ stripa u Hrvatskoj nedvojbeno znači uhvatiti se ukoštač s vrlo specifičnim i problematičnim tematskim okvirom. Kronološki gledano, očito je riječ o razdoblju od osamostaljenja Hrvatske početkom devedesetih godina prošlog stoljeća, pa sve do danas, gotovo četvrt stoljeća kasnije. Tijekom tih godina, cjelokupna hrvatska kultura, pa tako i strip (kao njen bitan i prepoznatljiv segment), prošla je kroz fazu prividnog konsolidiranja, odnosno emancipacije od pretodnog, kozmopolitskog jugoslavenskog identiteta; a zapravo stagnacije, te potom i apatije, uvjetovane sveprisutnom i dominantnom odrednicom institucionalne kulture devedesetih – nacionalističkom politikom vladajućih, pa i nekih opozicijskih parlamentarnih stranaka, koje su suptilno, ali dovoljno jasno težile sve vidove kulture podvrgnuti svojoj svjetonazorskoj optici. Isključivanje nepodobnog sadržaja iz službenog kulturnog života zemlje provodilo se bilo otvorenom cenzurom i smjenama nepočudnih kadrova s relevantnih pozicija u važnijim institucijama; bilo jednostavnim, no vrlo učinkovitim dokidanjem finansijske potpore manje komercijalnim vrstama umjetničke produkcije, pa tako i stripu. Međutim, 1999. godine, nakon smrti prvog predsjednika Republike Hrvatske dr. Franje Tuđmana, vodećeg kreatora takove politike, te pošto je lijevo-liberalna koalicija na izborima 2000. godine osvojila vlast, situacija se donekle mijenja, a nulte godine ovoga stoljeća postaju razdoblje relativnog procvata ovdašnje „nezavisne“ kulturne scene (za što su korijeni posijani još u prošlom desetljeću), a time i stripa, koji je uz glazbu i amatersko kazalište bio jedan od

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Writing about the ‘independent’ comics scene in Croatia, one cannot avoid having to cope with a highly specific and problematic context. Chronologically, we are concerned with roughly the quarter of a century that has passed since Croatia gained independence in the early 1990s. Croatian culture as a whole, and the comics scene as its notable and recognizable segment, has gone through a phase of virtual consolidation and emancipation from its previous cosmopolitan Yugoslav identity, which in reality brought about stagnation, followed by apathy, and conditioned by the all-pervasive, defining trait of institutionalized culture in the nineties – the nationalist ideology of the ruling party and even some of its parliamentary opposition, which have tended, subtly but clearly enough, to subdue all aspects of culture to their biased viewpoint.

The exclusion of ‘unsuitable’ material from the official cultural life of the country has occurred through open censorship and the dismissal of dissenting functionaries from relevant positions in important institutions, as well as through simple but effective denial of financial support to less commercial branches of art production such as comic books. However, after the death of the first president of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, in 1999, and the victory of the liberal-left coalition at the 2000 elections, the situation has changed to a certain extent. The first decade of the new century brought about a blossoming of the local independent cultural scene (the roots of which were established in the previous decade) including comics, which along with music and amateur theatre

bitnih čimbenika definiranja omladinskih supkultura, odnosno kontra-kulture onih skupina mladih ljudi koji nisu pristajali na bilo kakve političke, etničke, rodne, seksualne i ine podjele, u principu karakteristične za hrvatsko društvo. No, postupna liberalizacija institucionalne kulturne politike učinila je svoje, te je država u vrijeme relativnog ekonomskog blagostanja u prošlom desetljeću snažnije nego prije podržavala alternativne, nevladine kulturne programe i inicijative, stoga su i neki projekti u stripu dobili svoju šansu, a pojedini su je i više nego uspješno iskoristili, pa su njihovi nositelji postali prvo regionalno, a zatim i međunarodno prepoznati i priznati igrači. Neki od njih svojim su djelima zastupljeni i na ovoj izložbi.

Prema tome, pojam „nezavisnosti“ na hrvatskoj se strip sceni može tumačiti dvojako – u devedesetima, epitet „nezavisni“ zaista je značio ekonomsku, a time i političku izdvojenost, jer je većina relevantnih izdanja nastala prema uradi-sam principima isključivo zahvaljujući entuzijazmu autora i posvećenih izdavača, poznavalaca stripa, iako sam sadržaj ili forma stripa nisu nužno morali biti eksperimentalni ili kontroverzni, premda su često bili. Tijekom nultih godina, pak, kada se raspadnuto jugoslavensko tržište stripa počelo oporavljati i obnavljati, a nacionalne države u određenoj mjeri stale podržavati kulturu stripa, „nezavisnost“ je od oznake poslovнog modela opstanka na sceni sve više postajala estetska odrednica, jer Ministarstvo kulture RH svoje donacije nije određivalo prema tom kriteriju – dapače, često se događalo da avangardnija i široj publici teže razumljiva strip izdanja dugoročnije dobivaju finansijski priliv od onih za koje je procijenjeno da bi mogla ostvariti neku prodaju i zaradu, što je u neku ruku i logično. No, praksa je pokazala da je produciranje domaćeg stripa kratkoročno neisplativa investicija, te da se uloženi novac neće tako brzo vratiti, a kamoli da će izdavač i država ostvariti realnu finansijsku korist, iako je sasvim jasno da je takva praksa domaćem stripu najpotrebnija, a učinak se ne mjeri zaradom, već unapređenjem tog segmenta kulture i pružanjem prilike svim zainteresiranim osobama da se sustavno bave stripom. Kad je riječ o stranom stripu, to jest o prijevodima, situacija je prilično drugačija i danas se već može proglašiti vrlo optimističnom, pa i propulzivnom. U svakom slučaju, ne treba zanemariti ulogu kvalitetnih prijevoda stranih stripova, kojih u Hrvatskoj ne manjka, u općenitom senzibiliziranju publike (pogotovo mlađe) za strip općenito, pa tako i za radove vrsnih domaćih autora, među kojima zaista imamo svjetski značajnih imena, i među autorima bližima *mainstreamu*, i među onima opredijeljenima za avangardni, *underground strip*.

Beyond the Iron Curtain

No, kako god definirali „nezavisni“ hrvatski strip, gdje su njegovi istinski korijeni? Oni su, zapravo, prokljali još i prije devedesetih, a tragove njihovog rasta možemo pratiti otprilike sve do sredine

have been a defining factor for youth subcultures, or rather the counter-culture of young people who did not consent to political, ethnic, gender-based, sexual and other divisions largely typical of Croatian society. There was a gradual liberalization of institutional cultural policy, and the relatively prosperous economical situation of the decade allowed for stronger support of alternative, non-governmental cultural programs and initiatives, providing a chance for some comics-related projects, which certain individuals successfully made the most of and became regionally and eventually internationally renowned players. Works by some of them are included in this exhibition.

That is why ‘independent’ can have a double meaning in the context of the Croatian comics scene: in the nineties, it really did mean economic and therefore political insulation, as most relevant publications based on DIY principles were relying solely on the enthusiasm of artists and the devotion of their publishers and fans, and although it didn’t mean that the comics themselves were necessarily experimental or controversial in form or content, they quite often were. In the 2000s, when the former Yugoslavian comics market started to recuperate and re-integrate, and the separate states started to subsidize comics culture to a certain extent, ‘independence’ became more of an aesthetic qualification than a business model of survival on the scene, as the latter criterium was disregarded by the Ministry of Culture when deciding on the donations. In fact, it was often the case that the more avant-garde work, deemed too impenetrable for a wider audience, enjoyed more reliable financial support than the potentially more commercially viable and profitable publications, and one can also see the logic in that. The reality soon proved that no investment in the local production of comics could be expected to bring about a return on the investment, let alone profit for the publisher or the state, although such practice would absolutely be most useful. It also proved that its effect must not be evaluated on an economic basis, but rather in terms of promoting this segment of culture and enabling new talent to emerge and continuously develop. The same set of rules does not apply to Croatian editions of foreign comics, where the situation is quite satisfying even now and promises an even more substantial future. The quality and abundance of translations undoubtedly play a role in educating an audience for comic books (especially among youths) that can be expected to take interest in the works of accomplished local artists, some of which are truly relevant on an international level, both among the more mainstream-oriented and the avant-garde, underground forms of expression.

Beyond the Iron Curtain

Regardless of how we define ‘independent’ Croatian comics, what are their true precedents? They can actually be traced back

sedamdesetih, kada je raznovrsni jugoslavenski omladinski tisak, obilato financiran iz državne kase, bio stožerno mjesto avangardnih tendencija u stripu diljem svih bivših jugoslavenskih republika, pa tako i u Hrvatskoj, te je predstavljao prvu pravu domaću opreku stripu kao didaktičkom ili eskapističkom štivu za djecu i mlađe adolescente, uhvativši korak s naprednim inozemnim inovacijskim tendencijama, prvenstveno francusko-belgijskim, ali i američkim. Vrijeme je to poznate grupe *Novi Kvadrat*, čiji su najtalentiraniji i najradišniji autori (Mirko Ilić, Igor Kordej, Radovan Devlić, Krešimir Zimonić i drugi) u međuvremenu ostvarili impozantne regionalne i međunarodne karijere u stripu, dizajnu i animiranom filmu, a kasnih su sedamdesetih u vlastitim, briljantnim strip-minijaturama u lokalni kontekst originalno prenosili iskustva kako najavangardnijih francuskih autora okupljenih oko izdavačke kuće Humanoides Associés i časopisa *Métal Hurlant* (Moebius, Philippe Druillet i drugi), tako i tradicije američkog hipijevskog underground stripa (Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton), koji je znatno utjecao i na satirički francuski strip (Claire Bretécher, Jean Marc-Reiser), u to doba prevoden i u nas, i to u istim časopisima gdje su članovi Novog kvadrata objavljivali svoje stripove (zagrebački *Polet*, *Studentski list*, *Pitanja*, beogradski *Vidici*, ljubljanska *Tribuna*, i drugi), pa je utjecaj stranih autora na domaće lako dokazati. Pa ipak, unatoč sadržajnoj provokativnosti stripova „Novokvadratovaca“, koja je po prvi put u Hrvatskoj kao općeniti trend podrazumijevala autorski zreo i dosljedan prikaz seksa, iracionalnog nasilja, egzistencijalnih nedoumica, apsurda svakodnevnice i distopijskih futurističkih vizija, uz mnoga za lokalnu sredinu vrlo inovativna i do tada neviđena formalna rješenja, teško je njihova djela strpati u ludicu „nezavisnog“ stripa. Zašto?

Naprosto zato što je država, to jest Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, putem svojih omladinskih organizacija vrlo lukavo i pronicljivo pružala legitimitet takvoj vrsti (sup)kulturnih praksi, zadržavajući kritičke inicijative respektabilnom finansijskom potporom i nizom simboličnih priznanja u okvirima prihvatljivog i po državu, zapravo, bezopasnog djelovanja. Tako je Novom kvadratu uručeno priznanje Sedam sekretara SKOJ-a (Saveza komunističke omladine Jugoslavije) za značajan rad u kulturi, čime je definitivno osporena njihova nezavisnost i kontrakulturna pozicija, ali je, s druge strane, domaći autorski strip postao poželjan medij izražavanja koji je pronašao svoje mjesto u raznovrsnom kaleidoskopu urbane rock kulture Novog vala, zadržavši pritom i svoju egzotičnost i određenu anarhoidnu privlačnost. Međutim, trebalo je pričekati na daljnju ideološku radikalizaciju jugoslavenskih supkultura sredinom osamdesetih, da bi se u takvom kontekstu pojavili politički zaista subverzivni stripovi, premda je taj fenomen ostao ograničen prvenstveno na Sloveniju (Lavrič, Smiljanić, Kastelić i ostali autori okupljeni oko tjednika *Mladina*) i djelomično na Srbiju, dok je hrvatska

well before the nineties and into the 1970s, when various youth publications, well financed by Yugoslav authorities, served as vessels for avant-garde tendencies in all the former federal republics including Croatia. The notion of comics as didactic or escapist fodder for children and young adolescents was first challenged, tuning in local efforts to forward-thinking, innovative international trends, mostly French and Belgian, but also American. It was the time of the acclaimed group *Novi Kvadrat* (New Square), the frontrunners of which (Mirko Ilić, Igor Kordej, Radovan Devlić, Krešimir Zimonić and others) went on to achieve admirable regional and international careers as comic artists, designers and animators. In the late seventies they created brilliant comic miniatures comparable to the most radical French artists associated with the Humanoides Associés publishing house and *Métal Hurlant* magazine (Moebius, Philippe Druillet and others). They were also comparable to the same American hippie underground comics (Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton) that influenced French satirists such as Claire Bretécher and Jean Marc-Reiser, whose work was translated and published in the same Yugoslavian magazines where members of *Novi Kvadrat* published their own comics (*Polet*, *Studentski list* and *Pitanja* in Zagreb, *Vidici* in Belgrade, *Tribuna* in Ljubljana, and some others), making the foreign influence on local artists easy to identify. *Novi Kvadrat* comics were provocative in content and introduced new standards with their artistically mature and uncompromising visions of sex, irrational violence, existential doubt, the absurdity of the everyday and dystopian futuristic fantasies, accompanied by highly innovative formal solutions previously unseen in Croatian comics – and yet it is difficult to deem them ‘independent’. Why?

Simply because the state, or the ruling Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its youth organizations, was clever enough to make that kind of (sub)cultural practice legitimate, rewarding it with respectable financial support and prizes, which kept its critical potential in the realm of acceptable activity unthreatening to the general order. *Novi Kvadrat* won the Sedam Sekretara SKOJ-a (Seven Secretaries of SKOJ) prize, awarded by the Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia for significant cultural achievement, which has definitely denied them the position of counter-cultural mavericks, but at least it established local comics as an important creative medium in the kaleidoscopic diversity of Yugoslav New Wave urban rock culture, while allowing them to retain an aura of exotic and anarchic attractiveness.

Meanwhile, for truly politically subversive comics to appear, Yugoslavian subcultures had to become ideologically even more radical, which happened by the mid-1980s, and then mostly in Slovenia (Lavrič, Smiljanić, Kastelić and other artists working for the political weekly *Mladina*) and to a lesser extent in Serbia. The Croatian comics scene became a sort of a buffer



Magda Dulčić, *Patak* 14, cover 1989

Igor Kordej, *Questions Magazine*, cover 1979

Mirko Ilić, *Born To Be Wild*

strip scena preuzela ulogu svojevrsnog lakušnog papira između avangardnijih susjednih tendencija, te su inovativni proboji postizani uglavnom u domenama estetike i formalnih istraživanja jezika stripa, uz povremene, ali neobično vrijedne izlete u krajnje intimno i pomalo hermetično tumačenje permanentnih društvenih kriza. Zbog ograničenosti prostora, ovdje ćemo spomenuti samo krug autora okupljen oko požeškog časopisa *Patak*, čije su umjetnički najuspješnije godine bile kasne osamdesete, sve do tragičnog raspada Jugoslavije i samog početka rata, kada je u časopisu objavljeno i nekoliko jasno i nedvosmisleno proturatno angažiranih stripova, što je bio hvalevrijedan doprinos malom, ali bitnom pokretu otpora. Istoču se imena Magde Dulčić, Dušana Gačića, Dubravka Matačovića, Danijela Žeželja i ostalih autora koji će, kao i oni prethodne generacije, u kasnijim godinama ostvariti vrlo značajne karijere i izaći iz okvira „nezavisnog“ stripa, nerijetko se okrenuvši i radu za inozemne izdavače, a sve u želji da žive prije svega od rada na stripu, bez suvišnih kompromisa. S druge strane, tijekom istog razdoblja djelovala je druga važna grupa u recentnijoj povijesti hrvatskog stripa (skupina autora koja je nastupala sa zajedničkim programom i stripove potpisivala kolektivno) – grupa ZZOT, čiji se članovi uglavnom nisu bavili stripom u uvriježenom smislu riječi, već multimedijalnim umjetničkim projektima na granicama stripa, klasičnih vizualnih umjetnosti, novih medija i kazališta. Među njima su zamjetan trag u stripu ostavili Helena Klakočar-Vukšić, kako svojim kraćim radovima, tako i „grafičkom novelom“ (jednim od prvih domaćih stripova kojemu je pripala ta nova žanrovska, odnosno izdavačka odrednica) *Passage en Douce*, objavljenom najprije u Francuskoj 1999. godine; te Milan Manojlović-Mance, osebujni zagrebački glazbenik i grafički umjetnik, koji se svojim ludičkim strip-minijaturama, bliskima književnosti apsurdna, povremeno, ali kontinuirano javlja u fanzinima i nisko-tiražnim časopisima već gotovo trideset godina. No, u teškom i za kulturu krajnje nesigurnom poratnom razdoblju devedesetih, temelje za preporod hrvatske strip scene na bitno smanjenom, okrnjenom tržištu nisu postavili najavangardniji i eksperimentima najskloniji autori, već naprotiv oni stilski bliži poimanju stripa kao populističkog masovnog medija, čija su prirodna staništa sveske i specijalizirani časopisi, odnosno kiosci i knjižare, a ne galerije, knjižnice i opskurnija kulturna glasila. Pa ipak, premladi da bi se odmah otisnuli u pustolovinu rada za strane izdavače, i s premalo kapitala i resursa da bi u zemlji poharanoj ratom mogli pokrenuti profitabilna strip-izdanja, ti će se autori, kao što je na početku spomenuto, okrenuti uradisan poslovanju i tiskanju fanzina, financiranih gotovo isključivo iz vlastitog džepa, te će takve inicijative postati žarišta okupljanja novih umjetničkih kolektiva posvećenih stripu. Ujedno, hrvatska „fanzinska“ scena devedesetih godina predstavljala je prvu zaista nezavisnu inicijativu u domaćem stripu, slobodnu

zone between more avant-garde neighbouring concepts, its breakthrough innovations belonging to the realm of aesthetics and formal investigation of the language of comics, with occasional but valuable excursions into highly intimate, but also somewhat hermetic commentary on permanent social crisis. The need for brevity allows us only to mention the circle of artists around the *Patak* magazine published in Požega, which sustained its creative highpoint from the late eighties until the tragic breakdown of Yugoslavia and the beginning of the war, when it published a number of clearly and unambiguously anti-war comics, a valuable contribution to the small but significant resistance movement. Magda Dulčić, Dušan Gačić, Dubravko Matačović and Danijel Žeželj are among the artists of this generation who, like their predecessors, went on to achieve notable careers and outgrew the frame of ‘independent’ comics, often working for foreign publishers in order to make a living as comic artists without conceding to other kinds of work. This was also the active period of another group of artists sharing a common manifesto and signing the works collectively – the ZZOT group, whose members did not make comics in the usual sense of the word as much as they devoted themselves to multidisciplinary art projects blending comics with classic visual arts, new media and theatre. Among the authors from this group, Helena Klakočar-Vukšić was noted not just for her short works but also a graphic novel (one of the first Croatian comics to be categorized by publishers in this way) *Passage en Douce*, first published in 1999 in France. Another standout is Milan Manojlović-Mance, the eccentric musician and graphic artist from Zagreb, whose playful comic miniatures, akin to absurdist theatre, have been an occasional but steady presence in fanzines and limited edition magazines for almost thirty years. However, it was not the experimental avant-garde artists who formed a base for the revival of the Croatian comics scene on the diminished market in the difficult post-war period of the nineties, when it was not easy to begin any kind of cultural enterprise: it was rather those whose style was closer to the notion of comics as a populist mass medium with a natural habitat in albums and magazines, newsstands and bookstores, instead of galleries, libraries and obscure cultural editions. Still, too young to immediately proceed into the adventure of working for international publishers, and lacking capital or resources to create profitable comic editions in a country devastated by war, those artists, as previously mentioned, also turned to DIY methods and began publishing self-financed fanzines, this kind of initiative becoming focal to the formation of new artistic collectives devoted to creating comics. The Croatian fanzine scene of the nineties was also the first truly independent initiative in local comics, free from political dictate as well as from commercial instincts of professional publishers. In this way, the culture of

kako od diktata politike, tako i od komercijalnih poriva profesionalnih izdavača. Na taj način, iz ograničenosti i uskogrudnosti kulture toga vremena proizašla je mogućnost neopterećenog i slobodnog stvaranja za šačicu maštovitih i hrabrih mladih ljudi.

Across the Borders of Cultures

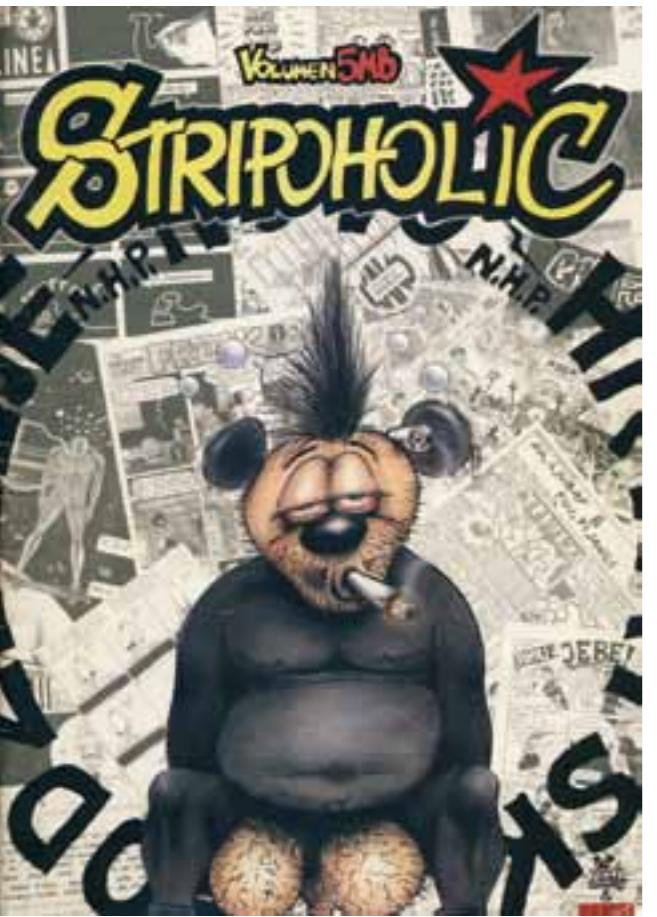
Posljedice rata i prekinutog kontinuiteta izdavanja stripova mogu se sažeti u nekoliko natuknica: nepovratno osipanje publike, nepostojanje bilo kakve relevantne domaće strip periodike, nestanak važnijih festivala stripa, pojava sumnjivih i nekvalitetnih piratskih izdanja stranih stripova, pojava „ratnih generacija“ mladih nenaviklih na čitanje stripova, tako dalje ... Dok je *Patak* devedesetih sve više gubio na čitljivosti i značaju zbog vrludanja uredničkih koncepcija i osipanja domaćih autora trbuhom za kruhom, u Zagrebu je 1992. godine objavljen prvi broj strip fanzina *Endem*. Tada interna zafrkancija studenata grafičkog odsjeka Likovne akademije, predvođena urednicima Tihomirom Tikulinom i Sebastijanom Čamagajevcem, *Endem* je tijekom osamnaest godina i 34 broja postao i ostao najvažniji i najutjecajniji hrvatski strip-fanzin – platforma za osebujne rade dove najrazličitijih autorskih osobnosti, u kojem su u početku povremeno, a kasnije sve više, objavljivali i stariji profesionalci u pauzama rada za strane izdavače. Već je i *Patak* u ranijim brojevima, dok je Krešimir Zimonić dosljedno uređivao časopis, unio u hrvatski strip mnoge novine post-modernog pristupa mediju – fragmentarnost zbijanja, naglašeno citiranje sadržaja drugih djela popularne i masovne kulture, nepostojanje čvrstih prostorno-vremenskih struktura u naraciji, neprozirnost i naglašenu metaforičnost sadržaja i svojevrsnu „estetiku apsurga“; no tek je s *Endemom* i njegovim prvim autorima (Čamagajevac, Ercegović, Ivezić, Kukić, Kumanović, Majnarić, Pisačić, Talajić, Tikulin itd.) takav svjetonazor postao dominantan autorski stav u hrvatskom stripu, što je uslijed stagnacije kvalitete *Patka* učinilo *Endem* gotovo jedinom autentičnom pojavom na sceni prije 1995. godine. Osim *Endema*, treba spomenuti još dva fanzina bitno različite koncepcije. Prvi je *Stripoholic*, službeno glasilo kontroverzne strip grupe *Novo Hrvatsko Podzemlje*, nastalo na jakom utjecaju američkog *underground* strip-a, a drugi je *Variete Radikale*, fanzin pokrenut na radionicama u Istri i Kvarneru gdje je Krešimir Zimonić talentirane osnovnoškolce i srednjoškolce podučavao kreiranju stripova. Nekolicina entuzijasta s tih radionica osnovala je strip grupu *Kolektiv* i pokrenula spomenuti fanzin, a među njenim članovima bili su i danas poznati i priznati dizajneri Damir Bralić i Vanja Cuculić, kao i neki poznati ilustratori, animatori i likovni pedagozi poput Matije Pisačića, Damira Steinfele i Draška Ivezića. Okrenuti naglašeno autorskom poimanju medija, daleko od opuštenije post-moderne zafrkancije *Endema* i *Stripoholica*, *Kolektiv* i *Variete Radikale* nisu dugo izdržali na okupu – ipak, svojim su postojanjem doprinijeli

a period with many limitations and severe restrictions allowed the possibility of unimpeded creativity for a group of imaginative and brave young people.

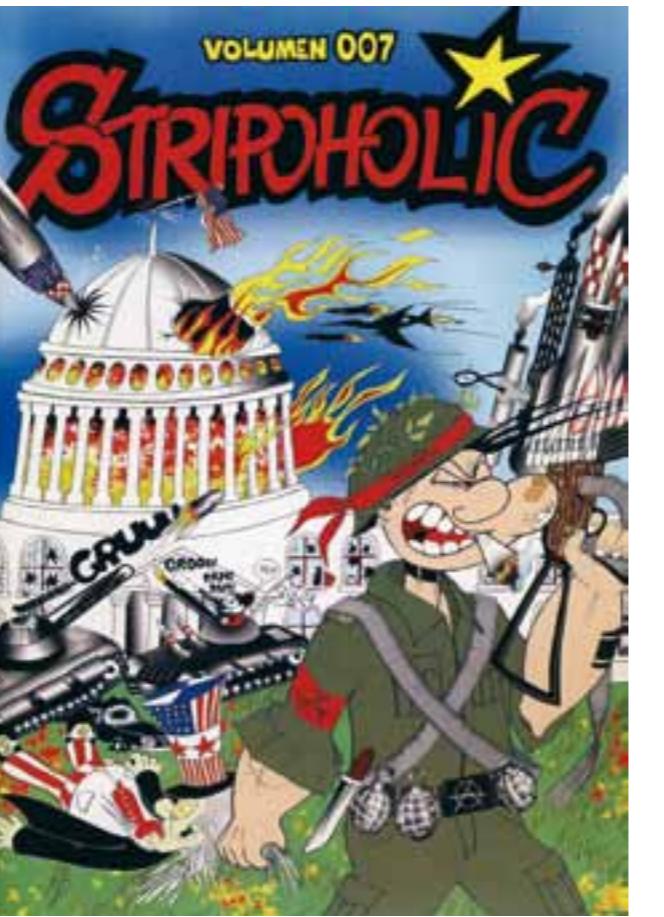
Across the Borders of Cultures

The effects of war and the interruption of comics publishing can be boiled down to a few factors: the irretrievable loss of audience, the absence of any kind of relevant comics periodicals, the discontinuation of important comics festivals, the appearance of dubious and technically lacking pirated editions of foreign comics, the arrival of ‘war generations’ of youths unaccustomed to reading comic books, among others. While *Patak* became less and less readable and relevant as its editing policy started to weaken, and local artists started to consider living abroad, the first edition of *Endem* fanzine came out in 1992 in Zagreb. Begun as an inside joke among graphic arts students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and edited by Tihomir Tikulin and Sebastjan Čamagajevac, over the next 18 years and 34 editions *Endem* established itself as the most important and most influential Croatian comic fanzine. It was a platform for the expression of diverse and original artistic sensibilities, and in the course of its existence attracted contributions from the more experienced professionals, in breaks from their commercial work for foreign publishers. Some of the novelties of post-modern treatment of the medium – the fragmented storylines, obvious references to other works of popular mass-culture, the absence of clearly defined spatial and temporal frames in the narration, the obscure, metaphorical qualities of the content and an aesthetics nearing on absurdism – were already introduced in earlier editions of *Patak*; but it was *Endem* and its first contributors (Čamagajevac, Ercegović, Ivezić, Kukić, Kumanović, Majnarić, Pisačić, Talajić, Tikulin, etc.) who made it the dominant artistic statement in Croatian comics. The stagnation of *Patak* pushed *Endem* to the position of the only authentic presence on the scene in the period before 1995.

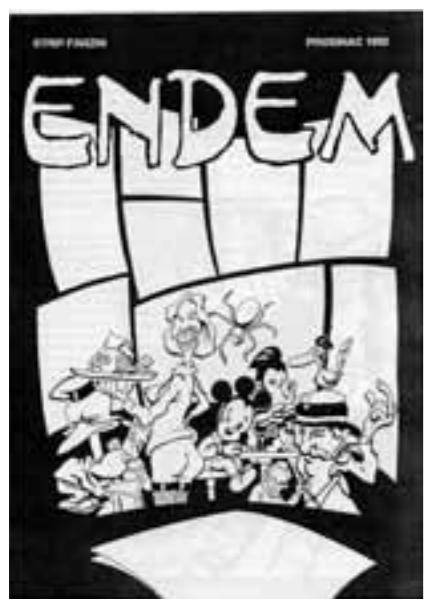
Two other important fanzines with significantly different concepts followed some time after *Endem*. The first was *Stripoholic*, the official publication of the controversial comics group *Novo Hrvatsko Podzemlje* (New Croatian Underground), strongly influenced by American underground comics, and the other was *Variete Radikale*, a fanzine created at comics workshops that Krešimir Zimonić conducted with gifted elementary and high-school pupils in Istria and Kvarner. Enthusiasts from these workshops who formed the comic group *Kolektiv* and published the fanzine include Damir Bralić and Vanja Cuculić, who went on to make their name in graphic design, as well as Matija Pisačić, Damir Steinfl and Draško Ivezić, who later came to prominence as illustrators, animators and art mentors. Developing highly idiosyncratic personal visions of the medium far from the re-



Krešimir Certić-Misch, *Stripoholic* 5, cover 1997



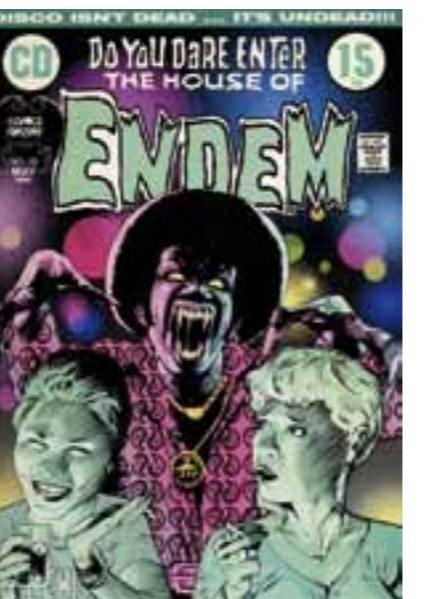
Tino Ćurin Smog, *Stripoholic* 7, cover 2005



Dario Kukić, *Endem* 1, cover 1992



Sebastijan Čamagajevac, *Endem* 8, cover 1995



Frazer Irving, *Endem* 29, cover 2003

pluralizmu i heterogenosti fanzinske scene, koja je definitivnu potvrdu svoga značaja dobila na Salonu stripa u Vinkovcima 1996. godine, kada se mlađa generacija autora stripa po prvi put našla rame uz rame sa starijim kolegama – začeta su vrijedna prijateljstva i razmijenjeni kontakti, što će kasnije utjecati na pokretanje prvog zagrebačkog festivala stripa *Crtani Romani Šou* 1998. godine.

Bitno je istaknuti kako su fanzini, osim novog pristupa stvaranju stripa, donijeli i novi način oblikovanja, odnosno dizajna strip izdanja. Pristup dizajnu djelomično su baštini od jugoslavenskih glazbenih fanzina iz doba *punka* i novog vala (*Urbana gerila, Bankrot, Iznad, Kreten*), a s druge su strane bili vrlo bliski estetici ostalih fanzina tada objavljivanih u Hrvatskoj, a bilo ih je zaista mnogo – od glazbenih do intimnih fanzina pisanih u formi dnevnika (*Lunatic, Adijo pamet, Čempres, You & me* itd.). Zbog niske cijene i velike pristupačnosti, fotokopirni strojevi bili su univerzalna tehnika izrade *Endema* i ostalih fanzina, što je potaknulo korištenje kolaža kao dominantnog izražajnog sredstva u dizajnu dijelova publikacije neispunjениh stripom. Ipak, autori su kolažom također izrazili jasnu povezanost dizajna i sadržaja većine stripova, temeljenu na raznorodnom utjecaju najrazličitijih pop kulturnih motiva. Na primjeru razvoja dizajna *Endema*, od fotokopiranog fanzina do digitalno otisnute publikacije mnogo sofisticiranijeg vizualnog izričaja, moguće je pratiti sve mijene hrvatske strip scene od početka devedesetih do danas, gdje su na produkciju i dizajn strip izdanja u velikoj mjeri utjecali brojni vanjski faktori, od tehnologije i trgovine do korjenite promjene strip publike. Nadalje, rašči i razvojem festivala *Crtani Romani Šou* (Funny Comics Show), koji se održava i dan danas, nastavila se zamjetna centralizacija strip scene prema Zagrebu (s izuzetkom bizovačkog časopisa za teoriju stripa *Kvadrat*, izdavačkog programa Slobodne Dalmacije i nekih riječkih i splitskih fanzina), što je ipak značajno doprinijelo jačem povezivanju raspršene strip publike, koja je od tada nastavila sporo ali postojano rasti, sve do pokretanja makarskog festivala stripa *MaFest* 2006. godine, pri čemu je dolazak čitatelja stripa sa svih strana bivše države u Makarsku značio definitivan oporavak hrvatske strip scene. Zatim, pokretanje novih izdavačkih kuća krajem prošlog desetljeća logično je dovelo do većeg broja strip izdanja, ali je došlo i do segmentiranja publike gdje se pojedinci najčešće opredjeljuju za praćenje produkcije jednog ili dva izdavača; zbog toga što se u Hrvatskoj danas naprsto objavljuje više stripova nego što ih pojedinac prosječnih čitateljskih apetita i financijskih mogućnosti može konzumirati. Međutim, kao što je ranije spomenuto, riječ je manom o (izvrsnim) prijevodima stranih stripova, dok se, sukladno tezi s početka teksta, gotovo cijelokupna produkcija domaćeg stripa može do neke mjere proglašiti „nezavisnom“, ponajviše zato što uglavnom ne pogoduje ukusima najšireg čitateljstva,

laxed post-modern entertainment of *Endem* and *Stripoholic*, the members of *Kolektiv* and *Variete Radikale* did not stay together for very long – but they contributed to the pluralism and heterogeneity of the fanzine scene, finding recognition of their efforts at the 1996 Vinkovci comics salon. Here, the young generation of comic strip artists first appeared in the same context with older peers, sparking valuable friendships and exchanging contacts that enabled the creation of the first comics festival in Zagreb – *Crtani Romani Šou* (Funny Comix Show) in 1998.

It is important to mention that fanzines brought about not only new methods of creating comics, but also fresh ideas for graphic editing and publication design. They were partially inherited from Yugoslavian music fanzines from the time of punk and new wave (*Urbana gerila, Bankrot, Iznad, Kreten*), and shared a similar aesthetic with the other fanzines of the period, which were plentiful in Croatia: from those concerned with music to intimate fanzines written in diary form (*Lunatic, Adijo pamet, Čempres, You & me*, etc.). The low cost and high availability of photocopying made it the universal method of printing *Endem* and other fanzines, which in turn promoted collage as the dominant visual expression in parts of the publication unencumbered by comics. This technique also denoted a clear relation of layout to content in most of the comics, also assembled from diverse existing pop-cultural motifs. The progress of *Endem*'s design from a photocopied fanzine to a visually sophisticated digitally printed publication can be used as a case study of the changes in the Croatian comics scene from the early nineties until today, wherein the methods of comics creation and publication design were heavily influenced by multiple external factors: printing technology and methods of distribution as well as a radical shift of the target audience. The development of the *Crtani Romani Šou* festival, still in existence today, dictated a notable centralization of the comics scene towards Zagreb (with the exception of Bizovac-based comic theory periodical *Kvadrat*, the publishing program of Split-based *Slobodna Dalmacija* and fanzines from Rijeka and Split). Also, however, it administered to the consolidation of a dispersed comic audience, which continued to rebuild slowly but steadily, culminating in the formation of yet another festival, *MaFest* in Makarska, first held in 2006, when the convening of comics fans from all parts of former Yugoslavia proved the definitive recovery of the Croatian comics scene. A number of new publishing houses that started to appear towards the end of the last decade logically brought about a larger number of comics publications, but also a fragmentation of the audience, as most fans settled for following the output of one or two publishers; there are simply more comics publications in today's Croatia than an individual of average reading appetite and financial means can consume. But as mentioned previously, this almost exclusively concerns

već teži razvijati, koliko je to u danom kontekstu moguće, originalne glasove pojedinih autora. Zbog toga u Hrvatskoj danas zapravo i nema komercijalnog, ili, bolje rečeno, *mainstream* domaćeg stripa, makar bi stripovi određenih autora u drugačijim tržišnim uvjetima zasigurno bili bolje prodavani, a možda i profitabilni podjednako za autora i za izdavača. No, budući da tome nije tako, u kontekstu ove izložbe i publikacije, nezavisnima podrazumijevamo one autore koji u svojem radu dosljedno obrađuju teme bliske kontroverzi; razvijaju formalni jezik stripa van aristotelovske logike uzročno-posljedičnoga pripovijedanja; koriste se grafičkim stilom srodnim aktualnim tendencijama u vizualnim umjetnostima (utjecaj *art-bruta* i *informela*, povratak figuraciji i simboličko-narativnim prikazima, citiranje općih mesta popularne i masovne kulture), te se deklariraju kao priпадnici specifičnih supkulturnih mladih koje su tijekom nultih godina, pa i danas, činile kičmu onoga što se uvriježeno naziva „nezavisnom kulturnom scenom“. Upravo su autori zastupljeni u ovom katalogu bili i ostali relevantni pokretači i protagonisti te scene, okupljeni u neformalnu grupu, odnosno udrugu strip autora *Komikaze*.

Subculture as a Solution

Od početka prošlog desetljeća, *Komikaze* su, zahvaljujući dosljednom umjetničkom konceptu i jasnoj ideji o svrsi svoga djelovanja, malo pomalo postale središnji inicijator i organizator dobrog dijela svih aktivnosti vezanih uz alternativni ili *underground* strip u regiji, a unazad tri-četiri godine, otkako su im ambicije opravdano porasle, pokazuju dovoljno snage, želje i mogućnosti za ozbiljno širenje izvan zemljopisnog okvira bivših jugoslavenskih država. A cijeli je projekt krenuo od web stranice www.jedinstvo.hr/komikaze (danas www.komikaze.hr), među čijim je autorima bilo nekoliko manje ili više poznatih imena, pripadnika generacije koja se afirmirala sredinom devetdesetih (Damir Steinfl, Emil Jurcan, Nadan Rojnić), ali i posve novih, nešto mlađih lica (Vančo Rebac, Vinko Barić, Ivana Armanini, Dunja Janković, Irena Jukić-Pranjić), željnih objavljuvanja drugačijeg stripa na tada još relativno jednoobraznoj strip sceni. Ubrzo su im se priključili neki likovni umjetnici kojima strip nije bio primarni interes, ali ih je ova inicijativa potakla na povratak mediju, ili na prihvatanje istog kao dominantne stvaralačke matrice (Igor Hofbauer, već spomenuti Milan Manojlović Mance). Također su vrlo brzo uspostavljene veze s neposrednim susjedstvom, te su na web stranicama Komikaza stripove počeli objavljivati i neki srpski autori sličnog usmjerenja, istaknuti stvaraoci već tada prilično jake lokalne alternativne strip scene (Aleksandar Zograf, Ivan Mitrevski, kasnije i Vuk Palibrk te Danilo Milošev Wostok). Budući da su Komikaze kao svoje glavno oružje i najvažniju medijsku platformu odabrale nevjerojatno brzo rastući Internet, glas o njima uskoro se probio i do šireg inozemstva,

(very good) translations of foreign comics, while almost the entire local production of comics can ostensibly be classified as ‘independent’, mostly as the artists seldom pander to the tastes of mass audiences and prefer to develop original, personal, artistic voices as far as the context allows. Commercial mainstream comics are just not produced in Croatia, although there are artists who would perhaps benefit from a larger market where they could be expected to garner profit for themselves and their publishers. Since this situation remains fictional, in the context of this publication we will continue to use ‘independent’ as a qualification for artists who continuously work on controversial subject matter, develop the formal language of comics beyond the Aristotelian logic of cause-effect narration, use a graphic style akin to contemporary tendencies in visual arts (the influence of art brut and art informale, the return to figuration and symbolical narrative, referencing of mass-culture clichés), and declare themselves members of specific youth subcultures which formed the nucleus of what was commonly called ‘the independent cultural scene’ in the 2000s, and still is today. The artists in this catalogue are exactly the ones who have formed and led this scene, associated in an informal group of comic strip artists which goes by the name *Komikaze*.

Subculture as a Solution

Making their first appearance in the early 2000s, *Komikaze* soon distinguished themselves by the integrity of their concept and clear vision of their goals, and gradually became the main initiators and organizers of activities connected to alternative underground comics in the region. Understandably, in the last three or four years their ambition has grown, and they continue to prove themselves strong, willing and able enough to spread beyond the borders of former Yugoslavia. The starting point of the project was the website www.jedinstvo.hr/komikaze (later shortened to www.komikaze.hr), that initially presented the works of some established artists who rose to prominence in the nineties (Damir Steinfl, Emil Jurcan, Nadan Rojnić), but also a lot of fresh, somewhat younger authors (Vančo Rebac, Vinko Barić, Ivana Armanini, Dunja Janković, Irena Jukić-Pranjić), all of whom sought to bring some diversity into a comics scene that at the time seemed quite monotonous. They were soon joined by visual artists who primarily work in other media, but the action either reignited their interest in comics, or they acquiesced to its dominant position in the creative mainstream of the period (Igor Hofbauer, the previously mentioned Milan Manojlović Mance). They were also quick to establish connections with neighbouring countries, and Komikaze’s web page became an outlet for similarly minded artists from Serbia, some of whom were already noted figures in the quite strong alternative comics scene there (Aleksandar Zograf, Ivan Mitrevski, later Vuk Palibrk



Komikaze 2, cover 2003

Komikaze 10, cover 2011

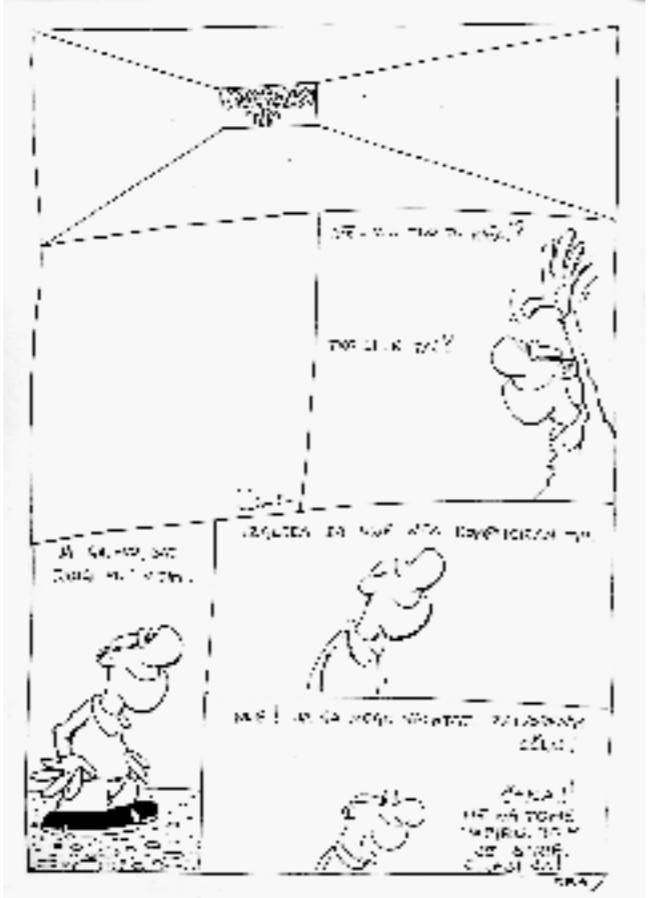
Vančo Rebac, The Joke, 2003



Milan Manojlović-Mance

te se već u trećem broju njihovog web fanzina našlo mesta za švedske autore Maxa Anderssona i Larsa Sjunessona i njihov strip *Bosnian Flat Dogs*, inspiriran ratom u Bosni, baš kao i remek-djelo Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde*.

Mnogi članovi Komikaza, osim što djeluju kao *underground* strip autori, ujedno su i pripadnici srodnih im urbanih supkultura, te su već sredinom devedesetih sudjelovali u brojnim akcijama i inicijativama nevladinih udruga. Njihova imena vežu se za djelovanje takvih organizacija kao što su *Autonomna Tvorница Kulture – Attack!*, *Udruženje za razvoj kulture*, brojne anarchističke, veganske i skvoterske inicijative, udruge i grupacije, te je posve jasno kako se radi o ljudima čiji životni i stvaralački svjetonazor ponešto odstupa od prevladavajućeg načina mišljenja u Hrvatskoj. Baš kao što su spomenute udruge prema mnogim gorućim društvenim pitanjima i kulturnim problemima zauzele nepokolebljiv, „alternativan“ stav, interpretirajući tranzicijsku stvarnost i formalno demokratsko uređenje hrvatskog društva kao indirektni poziv na akciju i priliku za vlastitu inicijativu u smislu geneze originalnih kulturnih i društvenih sadržaja, a protiv prevladavajućih šovističkih i nacionalističkih stereotipa, tako su i Komikaze ponudile vlastitu viziju izražajnih mogućnosti medija stripa u skladu s takvim supkulturnim vrijednostima. Ključ razumijevanja sadržajnih i estetskih elemenata njihovih



Dario Kukić, 1994

and Danilo Milošev Wostok). Using the incredibly quickly expanding Internet as their primary weapon and main media platform, Komikaze spread further from home and included a pair of Swedish artists in their 3rd edition, Max Andersson and Lars Sjunesson, whose *Bosnian Flat Dogs*, like Joe Sacco's masterpiece *Safe Area Goražde*, was inspired by the Bosnian war.

Apart from their work as underground comic strip artists, many members of Komikaze take part in urban subcultural activities and have been active in non-governmental initiatives since the nineties. They worked within organizations such as *Autonomna Tvorница Kulture* (Autonomous Culture Factory) *Attack!* and *Udruženje za razvoj kulture* (Association for Development of Culture), took part in many anarchist, vegan and squatting initiatives and groups, and clearly promoted an attitude to life and creativity that stood apart from the worldview to which most Croatians are accustomed. In much the same way that those associations took a hardcore ‘alternative’ stance towards many controversial social issues and cultural problems, interpreting the realities of the transitional period and the formal instigation of democracy in Croatia as a call to action and a chance to facilitate the genesis of original cultural and social content opposed to dominant chauvinist, nationalist stereotyping, Komikaze offered a vision of comic expression in tune with

stripova leži upravo u razumijevanju ideala supkulturnog konteksta iz kojeg su proizašli – ti stripovi zanemaruju tradicionalno strukturiranu fabulu, jedinstvo vremena, mjesta i radnje, sustav protagonista, antagonistica i sporednih lica, zanemaruju žanrovske klišeje; zanemaruju zapravo većinu postojeće prijevjetačke i vizualne tradicije klasičnog komercijalnog, tržišno isplativog stripa, pa čak i nekih njegovih radikalnijih podvrsta, poput američkog nezavisnog stripa koji jest radikalni u smislu sadržaja, ali u pogledu propitivanja forme i jezika stripa često se drži utabanih putova. To, međutim, ne znači kako stilski opredjeljenje Komikaza nema prethodnika. Ima, i to s obje strane Atlantika, no skup utjecaja koji su ga oblikovali puno je širi od granica tradicije stripa. Čini se kako su Komikaze predano upijale utjecaje iz suvremene vizualne umjetnosti, i to ne samo iz grafike, već i slikarstva, kiparstva, konceptualne umjetnosti, pa čak i performansa, ako se osvrnemo na njihova brojna javna predstavljanja, predavanja i radionice. Drugim riječima, riječ je o stripu koji svakako nikada neće biti u središtu masovnog ukusa, ali čije bitne inovacije i stripovima srednje struje osiguravaju napredak i znače snažan izvor iz kojeg se može crpiti i učiti. Dakako, to ne znači da su svi stripovi Komikaza uspjela djela, niti da pozicija autora pitkih, komercijalnih stripova nije legitimna, već samo da stripovi Komikaza u prvom redu slave individualnost, originalnost i nepredvidivost, čak i kad im to ide na štetu. Riječ je, dakle, i o autorima koji su najbliže definiciji nezavisnog stripa u suvremenoj Hrvatskoj, kako smo naznačili na samom početku teksta – umjetnicima čiji su radovi nezavisni prema svojim estetskim i sadržajnim iskoracima i postignućima, što i jest temeljna odrednica tog krila domaće strip scene danas, kada su gerilski modeli izdavaštva, koji su nekad značili nezavisnu poziciju autora i izdavača, s vremenom djelomično institucionalizirani. Također, članovi Komikaza, kao i još poneki autor ili autorica bliski njihovom krugu istaknuti su na ovoj izložbi, pretpostavlja se, i zbog toga što su već doživjeli određenu međunarodnu afirmaciju u kulturnim krugovima zainteresiranim za takvu vrstu stripa. To će reći kako ih se predstavlja kao prikladne ambasadore živosti i raznovrsnosti hrvatske nezavisne strip scene, koja je probojem na europski kontinent zaokružila određeno razdoblje svoga postojanja, te će se u budućnosti orijentirati prema novim ciljevima i novim prioritetima. A kakvima, to će tek vidjeti u uzbudljivim i nepredvidivim godinama koje dolaze.

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subcultural values. To comprehend the content and aesthetic elements of their work, one must be able to comprehend the ideals of the subcultural context from which it springs. Their neglect of traditionally structured plots, unities of action, space and time, the system of protagonists, antagonists and supporting characters, and the clichés of genre comics, can be seen as a rejection of almost the entire narrative and visual tradition of classic commercial comics intended to make a profit on the market, and even some of its more radical forms, such as American underground comics, which dealt with controversial subject matter but weren't so prone to experimenting with form and visual style. That doesn't mean the style of Komikaze is without predecessors: they do exist, on both sides of Atlantic. But the influences exceed the comics tradition and also come from graphics, painting, and conceptual art, with even a trace of performance art present in their public promotions, seminars and workshops. In other words, these kinds of comics will never appeal to majority taste, but their innovations open up new possibilities for mainstream comic books and represent a significant source of experience to be appreciated and studied. It does not mean that all the comics by members of Komikaze succeed as works of art or that producing escapist commercial entertainment is not a legitimate artistic activity, just that Komikaze comics should principally be viewed as a celebration of individuality, originality and unpredictability, even at their own risk. It follows that they are closest to the position of independent comics in today's Croatia as defined in the beginning of this essay: artists who stand apart for their visual and narrative experiments and formal innovation, which remained their strong points even as their former guerilla publishing model was gradually institutionalized. It is also quite safe to assume that the members of Komikaze, as well as some other authors close to their circle, have been selected for this exhibition because they already enjoy some international recognition in cultural circles interested in this form of comics. This means they are considered representative of the vibrance and diversity of the Croatian independent comics scene, and their European presentation surely marks the end of a certain phase of their progress, leaving them to find new goals and priorities to aspire to in the future. Which goals those will be, we will see in the exciting and unpredictable years that are to come.

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Kad bijasmo gnomovi

Hrvatska distopija u SF stripu

Vjeran Kovljanić

U proteklih trideset godina mogli smo čitati nekoliko SF¹ vizija budućnosti koje su domaći autori nacrtali nedvojbeno potaknuti događajima oko sebe i ne treba izbjegavati da ih se čita kao dokument vremena i prostora. *Machu Picchu* Radovana Devlića, *Ponos Vragova* Darka Macana i Edvina Biukovića te *Entropolu* i *Gnom de Monde* Ivana Marušića funkcioniрају dvojako. Oni su svjedočanstvo trenutka u kojem nastaju, ali ujedno i pokušaj da se preosmisli zadana situacija, odnosno povijesni horizont. Ta dvostruka kodiranost spekulativne fikcije njezina je žanrovska klaузula. S jedne strane, svaki SF treba čitati kao analogiju između simbola i parabole. Ekstrapolacija SF u futurološkom smislu česta je zabluda, a spoznajnu vrijednost SF treba tražiti u analoškom odnosu prema autorovoj sadašnjosti, a ne predviđanju.² Odnosno, SF autor je kritički komentator, a ne враč. S druge strane, SF se ne rađa samo iz znatiželje, odnosno igre bez jasnog označenog, već je uvijek povezan s nadom u otkriće idealnog sistema, nepoznatog u suvremenom povijesnom okruženju. SF pretpostavlja mogućnost drugih, čudnih kovarijantnih koordinatnih sustava i semantičkih polja. On je narativ utopije koji idealistički vjeruje u mogućnost novuma unutar zadane jezične igre i povijesne prakse.³ Spomenuta tri stripa SF su utoliko što donose začudnu sliku novih svjetova koji uspostavljaju istančane veze s vremenom u kojemu su stripovi nastajali, 1983.-1988. *Machu Picchu*; 1994.-1995. *Ponos Vragova*; 2007. *Entropola*, 2010. *Gnom de Monde*. Kontinuitet tog vremena za nas same prelomljen je svojevrsnim tranzicijskim "svjetovima" pomoću kojih osmišljavamo vlastito povijesno iskustvo. No,

When We Were Gnomes

Croatian dystopia in SF comics

Vjeran Kovljanić

In the last thirty years, a number of SF¹ visions of the future have emerged from the drawing boards of Croatian artists, clearly inspired by their authors' surroundings and meant to be read as documents of their time and place. *Machu Picchu* by Radovan Devlić, *Pride of the Devils* by Darko Macan and Edvin Biuković, *Entropolis* and *Gnom de Monde* by Ivan Marušić all serve a double function. They are testimonies to the moment of their creation, but are also attempts to reconsider the given situation and its historical foundation. This double-codedness is a general requirement of speculative fiction. On one hand, every SF piece should be read as an analogy between a symbol and a parable. It is a common mistake to extrapolate SF in terms of futurology, as its cognitive function should be sought in its relation to its creator's present, and not its ability to predict.² In other words, an SF artist is a critical commentator, not a clairvoyant. On the other hand, SF is not only born from curiosity, a game in which the signified is unclear, but is also always based on the hope that a perfect system can be discovered, one that is still unknown in the historical circumstances of the present. SF assumes the possibility of other strange, covariant, coordinate systems and semantic fields. It is a narrative of a utopia, idealistically convinced of the possibility of innovation inside the given language game and historical practice.³ The three comic books mentioned above belong to SF inasmuch as they create de-familiarizing pictures of new worlds which then form subtle relations to the time in which the comics were created: the period of 1983-1988 for *Machu Picchu*; 1994-1995, *Pride of*

uspostavljene veze između povijesnog i fikcionalnog mogu se interpretativno nadovezivati i uspostavljati među samim stripovima kao svojevrsna prostorna kontingenca među žanrovskim narativima unutar medija. Pritom nije za odbaciti ni to da sva tri stripa izuzetno politički kao što bi svaka pravovjerna SF trebala biti.

Dvostruko kodiranje SF narativa – i kao kritike sadašnjeg trenutka, i kao pokušaja da se prodre s onu stranu zrcala povijesti, Radovan Devlić je sam najbolje dijagnosticirao u svojim intervjuiima.⁴ „Upravo dobro poznavanje današnjice, sa svim proturječnostima, omogućuje mi da u SF stripove ukomponiram različite konotacije i predviđanja“ izjavljuje na jednom mjestu da bi na drugome ustvrdio kako je njegov SF toliko bezvremenski „da u njemu političke implikacije pronalazi samo zlonamjeran čovjek.“ Drugdje će iznositi da se povijest ponavlja ciklički, a zatim i da je u *Machu Picchu*⁵ postupno uvodio sve više svagdašnjeg kako se rad na stripu bližio kraju osamdesetih godina dvadesetog stoljeća. Radnja ove distopiskske sage zbiva se u ratu nakon Rata. Atomski rat koji je sravnio sa zemljom čitavu civilizaciju prethodi priči, a čitatelj prati zbivanja u postatomskom dobu u kojemu se ponovo ratuje, a da se više i ne zna zašto. Klasičan postapokaliptični scenarij Devlić je oplemenio ciničnom obradom ratne tematike, a teško je odoljeti viđenju stripa i kao svojevrsne anticipacije ratova na području bivše Jugoslavije. Naime, i oni su bili ratovi nakon ratovanja, često predstavljeni kao drugo poluvrijeme nerazriješenih dugova iz Drugog svjetskog rata. U stripu se *globalni* svjetski rat između dvije strane naziva građanskim ratom upravo da bi se naglasio absurd bratoubilačkog sukoba dviju strana koje govore istim jezikom i po ničemu se ne razlikuju. Pritom *Machu Picchu* cinički zaoštvara besmisao binarnom opozicijom – jedni su crni, drugi su bijeli. Jedni se zovu Militaristi jer se zalažu za ratovanje, a drugi Antimilitaristi jer su protiv rata pri čemu nas prefiks *anti-* ironično tjeru da se zapitamo kakvo je to *ratovanje protiv ratovanja?* Odgovor na pitanje trajno je odgođen, a varijacije izricanja pitanja dostižu vrhunac u obliku ratnog pokliča: „Za mir! Kolji!“

Ježgru Devlićeve distopije čini postupno uvođenje različitih interesnih skupina među podijeljene strane. Glavna među njima su Otpadnici iz čije perspektive je strip ispričivan. Otpadnici su u potrazi za utopijskim prostorom Machu Picchu i ne žele se priključiti ratovanju, ali njihov grijeh tim je veći. Ratni dezerteri kažnjavaju se strože od neprijateljskih zarobljenika pa se uhvaćeni Otpadnici bezuspješno pokušavaju legitimirati kao neprijateljski vojnici. Iako je riječ o čestom motivu ratnih fikcija kojim se glorifikiraju čast i obveza ratnika, *Machu Picchu* zapravo prikazuje kako se izvodi ideološki odstrel onih koji ne žele sudjelovati u ratu, tzv. domaćih izdajnika. Onih koji vjeruju da nije svaki rat nužno i totalni rat te da je moguće biti civilni izvanrednom stanju. Naprotiv, najveći grijeh upravo je ne

the Devils; 2007, *Entropolis* and 2010, *Gnom de Monde*. Our own sense of continuity of that time is refracted through transitional 'worlds' which enable us to reconsider our historical experience. However, the established relations between the historical and the fictional can be interpretatively supplemented and re-established between the comics themselves as a sort of spatial contingency between genre narratives within the medium. It should also be noted that all three comic books are highly political, as any orthodox piece of speculative fiction should be.

The double coding of SF narratives – as both a criticism of the present moment and an attempt to break through the looking glass of history, was most precisely diagnosed by Radovan Devlić himself in the interviews he gave.⁴ ‘My familiarity with the many contradictions of the present enables me to enrich my SF comics with various implications and predictions’, he says in one interview, while elsewhere he states that his SF is so timeless that ‘only a malicious person would find political implications in it’. In yet other statements, he has expressed his belief in the circular repetition of history, and also confided that he began introducing more everyday matters to *Machu Picchu*⁵ as he brought the series to its end in the late 1980s. The plot of this dystopian epic takes place during a war after the War.

The nuclear war which has brought an end to the entire civilization precedes the story, and we read of the goings-on in a post-atomic era in which another war has broken out, although nobody knows why. Devlić has enriched a classical post-apocalyptic scenario with a cynical view of warfare, and it is difficult not to read the comic book as an anticipation of ex-Yugoslavian wars. Those, too, were wars following the big war, often interpreted as the continuation of grudges left unsolved by World War II. In the comic book, a global war between two sides is termed a civil war, to emphasise the absurdity of fratricidal conflict between belligerents who speak the same language and bear no discernible differences. *Machu Picchu* cynically adds to the absurdity with a binary opposition: one side is black, the other white. One side is called the Militarists because they support the war; the other is the Antimilitarists, because they are against war, although this just leaves us to question the ironic nature of *fighting against fighting*. The answer to this question has been indefinitely postponed and its phrasing varies, going so far as to turn into a warmonger’s cry: ‘For peace! Slaughter!’

The core of Devlić’s dystopia is the gradual introduction of various groups positioned between the two sides. The main group is the Renegades, from whose perspective the story is told. The Renegades are searching for the utopian site of Machu Picchu and refuse to join the warfare, but their sin is only graver for it. As deserters are more severely punished than captured enemy soldiers, Renegades that are caught try in vain to pass themselves off as enemy soldiers. Although in a way resembling



Ivan Marusic, *Entropol*

zauzeti stranu i motiv izdaje neprestano se ponavlja kroz priču.

Kada ih uhvati jedna od vojski, Otpadnici završavaju u logoru na prisilnom radu. Ili ratovanje ili logor. Apsurd rata viđen očima Otpadnika podupire i sama priča koja između ostalog prati i pukovnika Harama. Haram je lik na kojemu se neprestano prelamaju optužbe za izdaju, a on je nakon svake optužbe još ustrajniji u nakani da bude lojalan svojoj vojsci. Devlić Haramovu lojalnost "nagrađuje" tako da mu suborci nikada ne povjeruju u pripadnost, pa ni kada im se odluci samoubilački pridružiti u unaprijed izgubljenoj bitci. Štoviše, neprijateljska pukovnica ga namjerno proziva kao izdajnika pred suborcima želeći od njega napraviti Otpadnika dok on ustrajava u svom odabiru strane u ratu. Odnosno, tragikomično inzistira na tome da bude privržen konkretnoj ideologiji ne iz kakva političkog uvjerenja, već samo zbog pripadnosti kao takve.

Promišljanje otpadništva Devlić okončava dvojako. S jedne strane uvodi u radnju incijativu Otpadnika za ujedinjenjem, naoružavanjem i ulaskom u rat kako bi okončali besmisleno klanje između Militarista i Antimilitarista. Pritom, trojica Otpadnika protagonista naslućuju proturječe cijele incijative. Tko god ulazi u rat i s kakvim god motivima da ulazi, može postati jedino još jedna strana u sukobu. Međutim, ovdje strip nagriza i bitno pitanje: što se postiže pasivnošću? Ili, kako se boriti i ne postati zrcalni odraz svoga neprijatelja? S druge strane, strip postupno atrofira iz visoko postavljenog antiratnog, antiutopijskog kompleksa u trivijalu uvodeći naknadno historicističke i pulp motive, *new age* i pseudorodnu tematiku. U priču tako ulaze amazonke, ljudožderi, hibernirani putnici kroz vrijeme, ali i Devlićeva gorljiva strast prema povijesnim motivima. Historicizam je parodoks budućnosti u *Machu Picchu*, ali i trend koji je kolektivno obilježio postjugoslavenske kulturne identitete, tijekom i nakon

the glorification of martial honor and obligation often present in war fiction, *Machu Picchu* actually depicts the ideologically motivated slaughter of those who refuse to participate in the war: the Fifth Column. They believe that not every war must be total and that civility is possible even in a state of emergency. Their refusal to pick a side is considered a cardinal sin, and treason is a recurring motif in the story. Captured by one of the armies, the Renegades are sent to a labour camp. This is either the front or the camp. The absurdity of war as seen through the eyes of the Renegades is supported by the plot, which introduces the character of Colonel Haram. He is repeatedly accused of treason, and every accusation only makes him more determined in his loyalty to his army. Devlić 'rewards' Haram's loyalty by never having it acknowledged by his peers, not even when he decides to join them in a suicide mission in a battle that was lost in advance. Moreover, an enemy colonel singles him out as a traitor in front of his comrades in an attempt to make him join the Renegades, but he still stands by his chosen side. He tragically persists in his loyalty to ideology, not out of political commitment but merely out of a yearning to belong.

The ending of Devlić's contemplation of rebellion is ambiguous. On one side, he introduces the Renegades' initiative to consolidate, take up arms and enter the war in order to end the senseless slaughter of Militarists and Antimilitarists. Three of the Renegade protagonists are aware of the paradox of this initiative. Whoever enters the war, regardless of their motivation, is only likely to become another side in the conflict. But the book also asks the important, corrosive question: what is achieved by passivity? Also, is it possible to fight and not become a mirror reflection of the enemy? On the other side, the book gradually deteriorates from a pacifist, anti-utopian high concept into frivolity, making room for historicism and pulp motifs, new age and pseudo-gendered subject matter. Amazons, cannibals, hibernated time travelers enter the story, as well as Devlić's fiery passion for history. Historicism is a paradox of the future in *Machu Picchu*, but also a trend that has collectively determined post-Yugoslavian cultural identities during the wars on former Yugoslavian territory and thereafter. From the perspective of urban culture of the seventies and eighties, it was a future marked by reaffirmation of diverse notions previously left to sink into obscurity. The Renegades grow resentful of the utopia of peace and a place free of ideology, and the mythical *Machu Picchu* is dubbed a 'very healthy lie' and 'a slut', while one of the characters denies the utopian significance of *Machu Picchu* as an ideologically unaligned entity: 'all our safeties are derived from belonging. To a religion, to a group, to one's self. Your *Machu Picchu* also beacons belonging!' Eventually, *Machu Picchu* becomes a symbol open for 'free interpretation'. The determination of characters engaged in a physical search for

ratova na području bivše Jugoslavije. Iz perspektive urbane kulture sedamdesetih i osamdesetih, bila je to budućnost reaffirmacije svakojakih potonulih blaga. Gorčina Otpadnika prema utopiji mira i mjestu onkraj svake ideologije postupno raste pa se mitski *Machu Picchu* tako u stripu počinje nazivati „vrlo ljekovitom izmišljotinom“ i „droljom“, a jedan od likova odriče utopijski značaj *Machu Picchua* u smislu ideoološkog neprispadanja: „sve naše sigurnosti potječu od pripadnosti. Bilo vjeri, bilo grupi, bilo samom sebi. Tvoj *Machu Picchu* također je pripadnost!“ U jednom trenutku *Machu Picchu* postaje tek simbol kojeg je moguće „slobodno interpretirati“. Odlučnost likova u konkretnoj potrazi za utopijskim mjestom zamjenjuje sofističko relativiziranje vlastitih početnih pozicija. Distopijsko kretanje *Machu Picchua* očituje se tako da potraga za pribježistem proganjene postaje puka tlapnja. Kako se bliži kraj priče, *Machu Picchu* je sve dalje. Strip tako na zadnjim stranicama koje je Devlić uspio nacrtati ostaje vizija razjedinjenog zapadnog svijeta. Prostor Europe i Amerike kojim lutaju i ratuju različita plemena, tobože partikularnih identiteta i svakako iracionalnih poriva.

Machu Picchu Devlić nije uspio završiti, ali se početkom devedesetih dobrovoljno javio u rat, na stranu Antimilitarista ili možda naoružanih Otpadnika. Otprilike u isto ratno nevrijeme, Darko Macan piše scenarije za dva mini serijala⁶ koji donose pomalo sličnu premisu priče: postapokaliptična budućnost koja izgleda poput povratka u daleku prošlost i besmisleno ratovanje između zaraćenih plemena. Razlika je ipak bila bitna: prepoznati nadolazeći rat u Devlićevom stripu sam autor je nazvao podlim, ali ne vidjeti ga u stripu Macana i Biukovića kada se već ratuje potpuno je nemoguće. Pa ipak, *Ponos vragova* preuzima iz ratne stvarnosti isključivo prepoznatljive motive od kojih zatim gradi vlastiti narativ. To je strip koji aludira na stvarni rat, ali ga ne fabulira mimetički već alegorijski. Dopustiti *Ponos vragova* status alegorije znači pristati na raspodjelu uloga i smisao koji diktira strip, a ne kakav nadređeni povijesni diskurz. *Ponos vragova* naslijeduje od *Machu Picchu* regionalizam europske budućnosti pa tako u stripu ratuju različiti Grendel klanovi: Vineri, Balaton, Karantanci, Agram, Save, Zare ili Spalati. Aluzija na tekući sukob između Hrvata i Srba u stripu iskršava, ali i nestaje jer prikazana regionalna plemena fragmentiraju nacionalni identitet do besmisla kao što i klanovi mijenjaju suparnike na dnevnoj bazi. Tako klanovi za koje možemo prepostaviti da predstavljaju Srbe u jednom trenutku ratuju protiv prepostavljenih Hrvata, ali onda im se već idući dan pridruže u ratovanju protiv nekih drugih klanova. Ako određeni likovi vizualno prizivaju karikaturalni izgled onodobnih srpskih četnika, onda tako izgledaju i neki likovi koji pripadaju zagrebačkom klanu Agramera. I obrnuto. Kuriozitet: ako se mitski lik Srbina devedesetih igdje ukazuje u stripu, onda je to ono čovjekoliko čudovište koje živi u divljini, kolje ovce i napada ljudi, a klan Agramera ga dobija

the utopian site is swapped for sophist denigration of their own initial positions. The dystopian streak of *Machu Picchu* has the effect of making the quest for the outsiders' refuge seem illusionary. As the story draws to a close, *Machu Picchu* seems further and further away. Even to the last panels that Devlić completed, the book remains a vision of a divided Western world. Various warmongering tribes roam European and American territories, harboring illusions of their respective identities and decidedly irrational motivation.

Devlić never finished *Machu Picchu*, choosing instead to volunteer for the actual war in the early nineties, in which he joined the side of the Antimilitarists, or perhaps an armed version of the Renegades. In about the same tragic period, Darko Macan wrote the scripts for two miniseries⁶ with a similar concept: an absurd war between two tribes set in a post-apocalyptic future resembling the distant past. There was also a significant difference: while Devlić deemed it malicious to search for reflections of the forthcoming war in his comic, it was perfectly impossible not to see them in the work of Macan and Biuković, made while the war was raging. Still, in *Pride of the Devils*, creators only used certain details from wartime reality in order to form their own narrative. They referred to the actual war, but the construction of the plot was allegorical rather than mimetic. To grant *Pride of the Devils* the status of an allegory, one has to accept the roles assigned and the meaning dictated by the book itself, rather than derived from an external historical discourse. What *Pride of the Devils* inherits from *Machu Picchu* is the regionalism of future Europe, so that the war is waged between various Grendel clans: Viners, Balaton, Karantanians, Agram, Savas, Zaras or Spalats (mostly named after Croatian and regional toponyms). Allusions to the contemporary Serbo-Croatian conflict appear throughout the book, but also disappear, because the depiction of regional tribes fragments national identities ad absurdum, and the clans change enemies on a daily basis. For instance, the clans we could identify as representative of Serbs do at one point wage war against clans we can assume to represent Croatians, but just a day later they all join together in a fight against some other clans. Certain characters do visually resemble caricatures of bearded Serbian Četnik warriors, but some of them belong to the supposedly Zagreb-based clan of Agramers, and vice versa. The character most reminiscent of the mythical image of Serbs in 1990s Croatia is actually the humanoid monster whom the Agramer clan is assigned the task of eliminating, who lives in the wild, slaughters sheep and attacks people. *Pride of the Devils* whorishly offers itself to be read as a parable of the politics of its time, invoking the common experience of the Serbo-Croatian war, but then it constructs a dystopian world from a different ideological viewpoint, renouncing the comic's reference to nationalist interpretations of genetic vendetta and

zadatak efikasno ukloniti. *Ponos vragova* je strip koji se kurvanjski nudi biti čitan kao parabola dnevne politike baratajući općim mjestima proživljenoga rata, ali onda gradi distopijski svijet s drukčije ideološke pozicije i ukida referenciju između narativa stripa i nacionalističkih interpretacija o genskoj vendeti postajući tako narativ političke subverzije. Njegov alegorijski smisao ne iscrpljuje se konkretnim ratom na početku devedesetih. Taj rat samo pruža rekvizite da bi se evociralo jedno veće povijesno vrijeme u kojem su sublimirana sva plemenska ratovanja upisana u stvarni i imaginarni prostor *Bureta baruta*.

Time *Ponos vragova* ničime ne nadilazi početnu briljantnost *Machu Picchu* u prikazivanju besmisla militarizma. Štoviše, svi Macanovi ratnici pisani su pomalo u komercijalnoj maniri *good guys* protagonista čime ne odudaraju od slike "naših dečki" koja je karakteristična za svaku ratnu mitologiju. Dopadljivi su i kada igraju prljavo te navode na identifikaciju mnogo više od Devlićevih antijunaka prema kojima njihov autor čini se nije imao pretjerane naklonosti. Macanov scenarij također tematizira otpadništvo i izdaju kroz dvije ljubavne priče u kojima se oštro suprotstavljaju privatno i političko kao dvije nesumjerljive dimenzije subjekta. No postoje onda još dva momenta u kojima se Devlićeva antiutopija počinje činiti plošnjim, a *Ponos vragova* kompleksnijim prikazom svijeta i vremena. Prvo. Moment univerzalizma Devlićeve distopije zanimljiv je sam po sebi. Poriv da smjesti radnju naokolo čitavih kontinenata kako bi rekao nešto o tom cjelokupnom prostoru navodi na razmišljanje da je u osamdesetima osjećaj pripadnosti zapadnom svijetu još uvijek bio moguć, unutar Jugoslavije ili možda baš zbog toga. Naravno, hladni rat je također bio žanrovska inspiracija *Machu Picchu*, a žanrovske stripove uvijek imaju epohalan zamah jer izjednačavaju čitav svijet sa Zapadom i njegovim događanjem. Međutim, čini mi se da ovdje osjećaj zajedništva sa Zapadom prethodi žanrovskom konstruiranju priče, odnosno prihvaćanju žanrovskog modela kao takvog. Desetak godina kasnije *Ponos vragova* problematizira upravo imperialistički univerzalizam zapadnog svijeta koji gospodski uvozi civilizacijske manire na primitivni istok. U *Ponosu vragova* ne postoji toliko *mi i oni* kao različita plemena, koliko *mi i Oni*, tzv. „vojska rekonkvista“. *Oni* su tehnološki nadmoćnija vojska koja vizualno podsjećajući na *Nato* dolazi na Balkan povratiti izgubljeni prostor manipulirajući ratnom igrom po principu *divide et impera*. Balkanski klanovi tako ispadaju samo manje i odmetnute podružnice velikog klana sa Zapada, baš kao što je i sam *Ponos vragova* zapravo egzotični spinoff Dark Horseovog *Grendel* strip serijala. *Grendel kan*, vrhovni zapovjednik vojske rekonkviste i originalni brand *Grendel* serijala, pritom može biti simbol restauracije kapitalizma, ako ičeg.

Drugi bitan moment u *Ponosu vragova* je postojanje čitave društvene stratifikacije koja se javlja u pozadini priče, ali time

turning into a politically subversive narrative. Its allegorical meaning extends beyond the specific war in the early nineties. That war only supplies the props to evoke a longer historical period into which all the tribal wars inscribed in the actual and imaginary space of the Balkan powder keg are sublimated.

Pride of the Devils does not exceed the initial brilliance of *Machu Picchu* as a portrayal of the absurdity of militarism. Moreover, Macan depicts his warriors in a somewhat commercial manner, as good-guy protagonists true to the image of 'our guys' which permeates all war mythology. They are likable even when they play dirty, and the reader is more likely to identify with them than with Devlić's unsympathetically portrayed anti-heroes. Like Devlić, Macan is preoccupied with rejection and betrayal in the two love stories in which the private and the political are confronted and treated as two incommensurable dimensions of an individual. However, there are two aspects in which Devlić's dystopia seems more superficial, and *Pride of the Devils* a more complex portrayal of time and place. First, the universality of Devlić's dystopia is interesting in itself. The fact that the plot takes place over whole continents and its concerns are almost global suggests that in the eighties it was still possible to feel a part of the Western world even if one lived in Yugoslavia, or perhaps precisely because of it. Of course, the Cold War was also genre inspiration for *Machu Picchu*, and genre comics always have an epic span and equate the whole world with the West and what happens there. Here, however, it seems to me that the feeling of belonging to the West predates the genre construction of the narrative, or the appropriation of a genre model. Ten years later, *Pride of the Devils* criticizes this very universalism of the West, imperialistically gentrifying the primitive East with its civilized manners. *Pride of the Devils* is not so much about *us and Them* as different tribes, as it is about *us and them* in the sense of a 'reconquista army'. They are a technologically superior army visually reminiscent of NATO, arriving to the Balkans to retrieve lost territories by means of a manipulative war game based on the principle of *divide et impera*, divide and conquer. The Balkan clans turn out to be small renegade branches of the big western clan, just as *Pride of the Devils* itself is actually an exotic spinoff of Dark Horse's comic series *Grendel*. Grendel-Khan, commander-in-chief of the reconquista army and a trademarked brand of the original Grendel series, can be viewed as a symbol of the restoration of capitalism, if anything.

The other important aspect of *Pride of the Devils* is the existence of a whole system of social stratification, which only serves as the background to the story but is nevertheless important. The social class structure in the world of the comic book has deteriorated several steps away from modernity into a future system quite close to feudalism. There is Grendel-Khan, a mighty emperor and his warrior caste – the Grendel clans who

nije ništa manje bitna. Štoviše, strip klasni ustroj društva vraća od moderniteta nekoliko koraka unatrag pa prikazuje budućnost kao nešto vrlo nalik feudalizmu. Tu je Grendel kan, car moćnog imperija i njegova ratnička kasta – Grendel klanovi koji žive prema ratničkom kodeksu. Političari koji su apsolutno nemoćni pred ratnicima klana vrše samo simboličku funkciju predstavnika civilnog stanovništva dok u ratnom stanju vladaju samo oni koji i ratuju. Civilno stanovništvo u stripu prikazano je kao kolateralna i apsolutno pasivna žrtva klanovskih odmjeravanja snage. Narod trpi tkogod imao trenutnu prevlast u području njihova životnog prostora i zapravo im je svejedno što se događa u kastinskim razredima iznad njih jer je njihov status i uloga u društvu unaprijed predodređen i otporan na bilo kakve promjene. Kolonijalni status domaćeg prostora u odnosu na utopijski projiciran Zapad kao i prvenstvo klasne diferenciranosti društva pred njegovom plemenskom homogenošću *Ponos vragova* nametnuo je kao temu alegorizacije prve polovice devedesetih, u trenutku kada se hrvatski politički *mainstream* hrani upravo i prvenstveno negacijom tih dviju činjenica!

Za vrijeme rata u Hrvatskoj, a sukob se već bio proširoj i u Bosnu i Hercegovinu, na hrvatskim kioscima počinje izlaziti dvojnedeljak *Arkzin*⁷. *Arkzin* je bio prvo fanzin, a onda magazin udruge *Antiratna kampanja* i ideološki su se pokušali profilirati kao svojevrsni Devlićevi Otpadnici. Naravno, onoliko koliko je to u bipolarnom vrijednosnom sustavu ratovanja bilo moguće, a etikete izdajništva pljušte na sve strane. Sam proces ideološkog pozicioniranja bio je autorefleksivno tematiziran u magazinu od početka do kraja njegovog izlaženja, ali i nakon toga pitanje *Was ist Arkzin?* nije prestalo biti zanimljivo. Osim političkih tekstova, *Arkzin* gotovo čitavu polovicu prostora otvara sadržajima kulturnog predznaka i aktivistički podupire svaku dinamiku nezavisne kulturne scene u devedesetima. Na stranicama *Arkzina* javlja se prvim objavljenim stripovima i Ivan Marušić. Bili su to uradci *underground* estetike upereni protiv domaćeg *establishmenta*, dakle svega što se u tom trenutku može detektirati kao nacionalni *mainstream* – crkva, vojska, policija, kampanja protiv lakih droga i sl. Nešto više od desetljeća kasnije, Marušić objavljuje pod uredničkom palicom Darka Macana dvije distopische vizije svijeta – *Entropoli* i *Gnom de Monde*. Štoviše, *Gnom de Monde* idejno rješenje ovitka izravno citira od jugoslavenske edicije *StripStrip* koja je nudila jeftine stripove za široke mase. Umotati autorski strip art estetike u populističko ruho na gotovo nepostojećem tržištu nostalgija je na prošlo svršeno vrijeme jedne potonule stripovske kulture.

Sam naziv *Entropola* nastao je kombiniranjem riječi *entropy* i *metropola* te naznačuje pomak prema urbanom krajoliku koji je u distopijama plemenskih sukoba bio nepotrebna kulisa jer su dotične ratovale po šumama i gorama. Glavni lik *Entropole*⁸ usamljeni je pojedinac koji luta nepreglednim prostorom

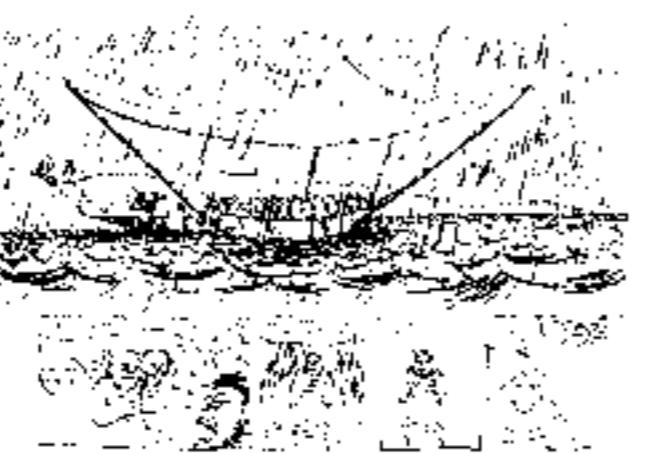
live according to a warrior codex. Politicians, powerless in comparison to the clan warriors, only serve a symbolic function as representatives of the civilian population, but it is the warriors who rule in times of war. Civilians are depicted in the comic as collateral, absolutely passive victims of the clans' power struggles. The people suffer regardless of who temporarily reigns over the territory where they live, and are indifferent to what goes on in the castes above them because their status and social role is preordained and not subject to change. The Balkans' status as a colony, the utopian projection of the West and the precedence of class stratification over the tribal homogeneity of the society were established in *Pride of the Devils* as dominant subjects in the allegorisation of the early nineties, a time when major political points were garnered in the mainstream chiefly by denying those very notions!

During the war in Croatia, which had already spread to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the semimonthly *Arkzin*⁷ made its first appearance on Croatian newsstands. *Arkzin* was published by the association *Antiratna Kampanja* (Anti-War Campaign) initially as a fanzine but graduated to a magazine format, and took up an ideological position similar to Devlić's Renegades. Of course, this occurred only to the extent that was possible in a bipolar wartime value system overflowing with allegations of treason. The very process of ideological positioning was self-referentially reconsidered in the magazine's articles from the beginning to the end of its run, and the question *Was ist Arkzin?* continued to spark interest even in its aftermath. Besides political essays, about half of the magazine was devoted to cultural events, supporting any trace of dynamic activity in the nineties' independent culture scene in a true activist spirit. It was this section of *Arkzin* in which the comics by Ivan Marušić were first published. Their underground sensibility was opposed to the local establishment, to anything that could be detected as the national mainstream of the moment: the Church, the military, the police, soft drug prohibition and so on. About a decade later, Marušić published two dystopian visions edited by Darko Macan: *Entropolis* and *Gnom de Monde*. The cover of *Gnom de Monde* was designed to resemble the old Yugoslavian edition *StripStrip* in which cheap comics for mass audiences were published. To present an artistically ambitious comic book in this populist manner is an act of nostalgia for a bygone age of an extinct comics culture.

The name *Entropolis* is a combination of *entropy* and *metropolis* and signifies the introduction of urban landscapes unnecessary to the dystopias of tribal conflicts occurring 'in the woods and in the mountains' (as the WWII Yugoslav Partisan song puts it). The protagonist of *Entropolis*⁸ is a lonely individual wandering the immense metropolitan area of a city and its surroundings. The anti-hero Krško lacks an enemy clearly defined as another



Ivan Marusic, *Gnom de Monde*



Ivan Marusic, *Gnom de Monde*

velegrada i njegove periferije. Antijunak Krško na prvi pogled nema precizno iscrtanog neprijatelja u liku drugih individua ili nadindividualnih zajednica, etničkih ili klasnih. Njegov glavni i najveći neprijatelj je on sam i borba koju vodi prikazana je kao dijalog s demonom koji ga jeftinim opijatima uljuljkava u ravnodušnost prema obitelji, kolegama, vlastitim mogućnostima i nepromjenjivom ustroju svijeta. Grad tako postaje vizualna metafora ideološke neproničnosti trenutka, nemogućnosti da se pronađe vrijednost u zastrašujuće pulsirajućoj suvremenosti. Ono što je za *Machu Picchu* i *Ponos vragova* bio labirint povijesti, za *Entropolu* je nepregledni prostor "životnih mogućnosti" u kojem se je nemoguće orientirati. Ogromni vir koji mahnito usisava usred beskonačnog mora jedna je od ključnih vizualnih metafora stripa.

Ali pojedinac je ujedno i taj koji ima ogromnu snagu destrukcije jer njegov pasivni nihilizam može uništiti privatne svjetove dragih mu osoba. Na spomen radničkih prava, on zaključuje da mu je svejedno radi li za crvenu ili crnu korporaciju. Nema razlike između Militarista i Antimilitarista. Na prijedlog kolege da luditski razbiju strojeve za rad, antijunak Krško mu odgovara da ima i boljih metoda, ali mi ne saznajemo koje su to. Odjednom, kao da smo ponovo u situaciji u kojoj društvene promjene može pokrenuti jedino nasilje. S druge strane, protagonist i sam biva napadnut od stanovnika mjesta koje mu je beščutni poslodavac dao na zadatak srušiti kako bi gradio nove i luksuzne "stratosferske rezidencije". Kada ga oni opremljenog poput robota (*robotnik*), he calls the bare-handed attackers *terrorists*. The area to which robotized workers have come to tear down futuristic slums is recognized by Krško as 'the south' for its poverty. It bears no similarity to the southern part of Croatia. All the effort political elites have invested in order to homogenize the tribe from the perspective of the despised went to waste. The southerners at the outskirts of *Entropolis* are like eternal Gypsies. Maybe this goes for all Balkan people, or even the whole south of Europe. It probably concerns anyone who feels that way, and

individual or an association of individuals based on ethnicity or class. His main and biggest enemy is himself, and the conflict is depicted in the form of a dialogue with a demon that uses cheap opiates to numb him into indifference towards his family, colleagues, his own possibilities and the unchangeable order of the world. The city thus becomes a visual metaphor for ideological imperceptibility of the moment, the impossible search for value in the intimidating pulsation of everyday reality. What to *Machu Picchu* and *Pride of the Devils* is the labyrinth of history, to *Entropolis* is the immense and disorienting space of 'life options'. A huge whirlpool in the middle of an endless sea, manically sucking in, is one of the key visual metaphors in the book.

However, an individual also has great power of destruction because one's passive nihilism can destroy the private worlds of people one holds dear. When labor rights are mentioned, Krško concludes he does not care if he works for the red corporation or the black one. When his fellow worker makes a Luddite proposition to break the machines, Krško tells him there are better methods, but we never find out which methods he has on his mind. It is as if we are suddenly in a situation where only violence can bring social change. On the other hand, the protagonist himself is attacked by the inhabitants of a village that his cruel employer ordered him to tear down so that luxurious new 'stratosphere residences' could be built. Equipped like a robot (*robotnik*), he calls the bare-handed attackers *terrorists*. The area to which robotized workers have come to tear down futuristic slums is recognized by Krško as 'the south' for its poverty. It bears no similarity to the southern part of Croatia. All the effort political elites have invested in order to homogenize the tribe from the perspective of the despised went to waste. The southerners at the outskirts of *Entropolis* are like eternal Gypsies. Maybe this goes for all Balkan people, or even the whole south of Europe. It probably concerns anyone who feels that way, and

nadregionalan i transhistorijski. No Krško se ne identificira olako ni sa kime. Dok mu nepokretna baba šiva goblen sa zvijezdom petokrakom, on je upita: „Jel onda život bio bolji?“ To ultimativno pitanje jugostalgije *Macchu Picchu* nije mogao, ni trebao postaviti. *Entropola* odgovara u najmanju ruku sarkastično jer je svaka memorija pomalo plemenska i dijalog s utvarama. Pogotovo ako je izgubila svoje mjesto u pisanju službene povijesti. „Nisam ovako zamišlja budućnost“ rezimira Krško svoj tobože individualni životni put.

Fantazmagorični unutarnji krajolik iz kojeg dolazi Krškov demon bit će u *Gnom de Monde*⁹ povanjšten kao mjesto radnje. Paklenska vizija nije više metafora unutrašnjosti individue, već suvremeno okruženje koje neki tek trebaju nazrijeti kroz koprenu utvare, a drugi vrlo intenzivno žive. Opreka između *Gnom de Monde* i *Entropole* granica je unutarnjeg i vanjskog pakla. *Entropolu* proizvodi dekadentni pojedinac koji ne priželjuje društvenu promjenu, već smak svijeta, pa strip ovdje nastupa s vrlo liberalnih pozicija jer vidi u čovjeku sukričva za vlastitu otuđenost. U svijetu *Gnom de Monde* otuđenje mnogo nedvosmislenije dolazi "odozgo". Svijet je to u kojem žive raznoliko vizualizirani demoni i uniformno zamišljeni gnomovi vrlo nalik ljudima. Demoni utjelovljuju klasu koja posjeduje moć, a vrijeme provode smišljajući izrabljivačke metode kojima će stići još moći i profiti ili uživajući u orgijama tjelesnosti i opijata. Živeći bez ikakvih skrupula, demoni se međusobno nadmeću jedni s drugima, a ako se nađu jedan drugome na putu doslovno se odsjecaju i glave. Njihov je svijet čudovišan, ali i prepun aluzija na korporativne odnose, tajkune sumnjivih profila, svijet medija koji se bavi proizvodnjom stvarnosti, *outsourcing* poslova pre-karnim radnicima za male nadnice ili *celebrity* kulturu. Gnomovi su, pak, hrana demona. I metaforički, ali i doslovno. Žive u rupama opustjelog postapokaliptičnog krajolika koje funkcioniraju poput podzemnih stambenih zgrada. Život u potpunoj bijedi njihova je svakodnevica, a strip tematizira mogućnost prelaska u viši svijet demona kao lažno utopisko obećanje.

Odmah na početku radnje saznajemo iz demonskih usta da su se gnomovi nakontili preko svake mjere i da ih treba brojčano reducirati. Međutim, taj posao ne može biti održan metodom klasičnog genocida. Ne zato jer bi to bilo ikome neprihvatljivo, već ne bi podrazumijevalo nikakvo obrtanje kapitala. Demoni stoga odlučuju povesti reklamnu kampanju koja je u visoko-oktanskom korporativnom svijetu sama sebi svrha. Kampanju protiv gnomova radi, naravno, gnom, a obećana plaća mu je kuglica koju će proglutati i doživjeti *upgrade*. *Upgrade* podrazumijeva približavanje svijetu "viših sfera" i nadu da neće biti pojeden. Na putu do željene kuglice, gnom Džafer proživljava malu odiseju na kraju koje će uspjeti zadovoljiti poslodavca i pobrinuti se za svoju obitelj, a usput će i naivno pomisliti kako ga oni iz viših sfera mogu prihvati kao jednakovrijednog.

the feeling is most probably ubiquitous and transhistorical. But Krško is not one to identify easily with anyone. While an immobile old woman sews a tapestry for him with the Communist symbol of a five-pointed red star, he asks, 'Was life better then?' *Macchu Picchu* could not, and did not need to, pose that question. *Entropolis* answers it sarcastically, to say the least, because every memory has a tribal quality to it, and a sense of conversing with ghosts, especially if it was omitted from the official history books. 'I didn't imagine my life would be like this', Krško says, as if he truly believed himself to lead an independent life.

The phantasmagorical inner space from which Krško's demon comes is externalized as the setting for the plot of *Gnom de Monde*.⁹ The hellish vision is not a metaphor of an individual's inner life anymore, but the contemporary setting that certain people are yet to perceive through a ghostly veil, while others are immersed in it intensely. What sets *Gnom de Monde* apart from *Entropolis* is the border between internal and external hell. *Entropolis* is produced by a decadent individual who does not yearn for social change but rather for the end of the world, and in that respect the book speaks from a liberal perspective, assuming that the individual is partly to blame for his own alienation. In the world of *Gnom de Monde*, alienation is much more unambiguously depicted as coming from 'above'. It is a world of variously visualized demons and uniformly depicted anthropomorphic gnomes. The demons represent the class in power and spend their time either inventing new exploitative methods to gain more power and profit, or enjoying narcotics-fuelled sexual orgies. Living without any scruples, the demons compete with each other, and when their paths cross, heads are known to roll. Their world is monstrous, but it is also filled with allusions to corporate relations, tycoons with dubious backgrounds, the media world that counterfeits reality, the outsourcing of work to barely surviving workers for minimal wages, and celebrity culture. The gnomes are, conversely, fodder for the demons, metaphorically as well as literally. They live in the holes in the post-apocalyptic wasteland that function like underground apartment blocks. Their lives are terminally miserable, and the possibility of elevation into the world of demons is treated in the comic book as a false utopian promise.

In the very beginning we are informed by a demon that the gnomes are breeding excessively and their number needs to be reduced. However, this task cannot be accomplished by means of classic genocide. Not because it would be morally unacceptable, but because it would not reap any profit. The demons decide to start a marketing campaign, which serves its own purpose in the high-octane world of corporations. The campaign against gnomes is, of course, managed by a gnome, who was promised to be rewarded with an iron ball he could swallow to be 'upgraded'. The 'upgrade' means he will advance

Usput upoznaje još jednog gnama koji se maskira u demona umjetnim protezama, a sve kako bi mu posao išao bolje. Ako na trenutak Džafer i pomisli kako je našao sudruga na putu prema gore, ovaj će mu već u idućem trenutku okrenuti leđa jer milosti nema – ili proždireš ili bivaš proždran.

Dva momenta u *Gnom de Monde* posebno su zanimljiva. Svi gnomovi odreda imaju imena s istočnjачkim prizvukom: Džafer, Dževdeta, Mileusna, Nefisa. Taj prizvuk, međutim, ne pobuđuje univerzalne asocijacije poput "južnjaka" u *Entropoli*. *Gnom de Monde* je izrazito premrežen motivima koji izravno aludiraju hrvatsku stvarnost: od izravnog citiranja imena lokalnih korporacija do autoironična autorova zbivanja šala na račun bavljenja grafičkim dizajnom kojeg mnogotko u umjetničkim krugovima danas svaštari. U tom vrlo lokalnom kontekstu imenovanje gnomova čak i trenutku sveopće klasne podijele čuva pamćenje na onu koja joj je prethodila – nacionalnu. Štoviše, veza je gotovo izravna u trenutku kada jedan od pripadnika viših sfera kaže kako se njegov genom stoljećima usavršava u obiteljskoj lozi. Drugi važan detalj je i snažna biopolitička crta. Kada Džaferova kći Dževdeta dobije prvu mengutaciju, što je ponovo igra riječi od *menstruacije* i *mutacije*, odvode je zračnim putem do nebeskog otoka na kojem se nalazi veliki kompleks zgrada ograđen bodljikavom žicom. U njemu ih dočekaju, postroje i Peru drugi gnomovi što je izravna aluzija na Drugi svjetski rat. Tamo će im gnomske žene služiti za rasplod i proizvodnju mesa što je "dužnost prema gornjim sferama". Zauzvrat, one dobivaju zaštitu od gnomožderstva, a za sve će se pobrinuti Gyneral, lik čije ime spaja ratno nazivlje i ginekologiju.

Oba Marušićeva strip-a završavaju pomalo optimistično. Međutim, obrat koji se dogodi u priči nije sistemsko preobraćenje distopijskog u utopijski svijet, već unutarnja promjena koju njegovi likovi doživljavaju. Oni potiču preobraćenje životne situacije u svoju korist i uspijevaju za dlaku izbjegći pošasti koja im čitavo vrijeme prijeti. Time Marušić donekle otvara prostor emancipaciji subjekta koja pojedincu pretpostavlja moć i slobodu kreacije boljeg svijeta "odozdola". *Gnom de Monde* jest svojevrsna terapija u jednako zaključanoj situaciju kakvu su projicirali i *Machu Picchu* i *Ponos vragova*. Devlićev strip od prvotne poletnosti upada u apsolutni pesimizam prema utopijskoj ideji, a Macan i Biuković donekle optimističan završetak prikazuju samo u vidu definitivnog odlaska iz prostora radnje, odnosno dijegečkog univerzuma. Mogućnost spaša stoga tu nije nedvosmisleno naznačena. Marušićevi stripovi, pak, anticipiraju ono što se već danas ponegdje naziva *ratnom situacijom* – ratom između "gnomova i viših sfera". Međutim, njegovi stripovi donose novu osjećajnost u kojoj individuum skoro iracionalno zadržava osobnost usprkos nadređenoj pripadnosti. Ako je pasivnost pojedinca i autodestruktivna, to je samo cijena njegove slobode. Velike riječi kojima se opterećuju Devlićevi likovi, kao

towards the world of 'higher spheres' and can reasonably hope he will not be eaten. To win the ball, the gnome Džafer undergoes a small odyssey which he completes by satisfying his employer and providing for his family, while also harbouring the unfortunately naïve belief the higher beings can accept him as their equal. During the course of his actions, he meets another gnome who uses prosthetics to impersonate a demon in order to improve his business. Džafer barely has time to be thankful for a soul mate in social advancement before he is betrayed by his new acquaintance, because there is no mercy: you either devour or will be devoured.

Two aspects of *Gnom de Monde* are especially interesting. The names of all the gnomes have an eastern feel: Džafer, Dževdeta, Mileusna, Nefisa. Their oriental status does not, however, elicit universal associations like the 'southerners' in *Entropolis*. *Gnom de Monde* is interspersed with allusions to Croatian reality: from the direct quoting of local corporate brand names to the author's self-deprecating jokes about the graphic design industry in which many contemporary artists dabble in order to survive. In this locally specific context, the names of gnomes preserve the memory of segregation that preceded class stratification: segregation based on ethnicity. The relation is almost direct when one of the creatures belonging to the 'higher sphere' confides that his genome has been perfected in his family line for centuries. The other significant detail is a strong bio-political thread. When Džafer's daughter Dževdeta gets her first *men-gutation*, which is another compound word combined from 'menstruation' and 'mutation', an aircraft takes her away to an island in the sky where a complex of buildings is surrounded by barbed wire. They are encountered, assembled and washed by other gnomes, in a scene clearly alluding to the Second World War. The institution is where the female gnomes will be used for breeding and production of meat, which is an 'obligation to the higher spheres'. In turn, they will be spared from being eaten. The whole operation is managed by Gyneral, whose name is combined from military and medical terminology.

Both of Marušić's comic books end on a somewhat hopeful note. Still, the twist in the plot is not a systematic turn of the dystopian world into a utopian one, but the inner change his protagonists experience. They manage to alter their living situation to their benefit and narrowly escape the predicament that has been constantly threatening them. In this way, Marušić allows the possibility of emancipation of a subject which grants the individual the power and the freedom to create a better world 'from below'. *Gnom de Monde* is a therapy of sorts, as the turning point occurs in a situation just as closed as was projected in *Machu Picchu* and *Pride of the Devils*. Devlić's book graduates from initial enthusiasm to absolute pessimism towards the utopian idea, and the relative optimism at the end of Macan and

i nemogućnost da se ne bude plemenski žigosan u *Ponosu vragova*, Marušićevi svjetovi postmodernistički tretiraju kao neobvezujuću igru. Gnom Džafer svakako je svjestan svoje gnomske pripadnosti, kao i krvnog porijekla koje mu je sadržano u samome imenu. No, ako je ideja o postanku nečim drugim i drukčijim iluzorna, on će je svakako pokušati odigrati jer je identitet sam po sebi tek jedna od fikcija u multiverzumu modernosti. *Gnom de monde* ne odustaje od historizma i plemenskog porijekla da bi premjestio problem na druge temelje jer se klanski sukob ne zbiva pod krinkom identitetskog već kao njegova reifikacija. Identitet i prostor tretirani u *Machu Picchu* i *Ponosu vragova* ozbiljno i visokoporno u *Gnom de Monde* postaju parodia. Time Marušić u svoje distopije skriva klicu utopizma jer je žanr utopije od svojih početaka povezan s karnevalskom subverzijom kako ju je opisao Bahtin. Utopija negira dominantni osjećaj stvarnosti više klase, odnosno eksplikira ono što satira implicira.¹⁰ Demonski svijet u kojem žive gnomovi nije ništa manje dijaboličan od svijeta u kojem žive Devlićeva europska ili Macanova balkanska pleme. Gnomovi samo imaju smisla za humor.

1 SF koristim kao kraticu za *spekulativnu fikciju*.

2 Darko Suvin, 2010, *Metamorfoze znanstvene fantastike*, Zagreb, Profil, str. 128

3 Ibid, str. 38

4 Kvadrat, časopis za strip, 2001, br. 13

5 Radovan Devlić, 2009, *Machu Picchu*, Bizovac/Zagreb, Matica hrvatska i Mentor

6 *Devils and Deaths* i *Devil's Choices* odvojeni su serijali koji su potom objavljeni u knjizi koja je u hrvatskom prijevodu objavljena kao Darko Macan i Edvin Biuković, 2010, *Ponos vragova*, Zagreb, Fibra.

7 *Arzin* postoji od početka ratnih sukoba pa sve 1998. Godine.

8 Ivan Marušić, 2007, *Entropola*, Zagreb, Mentor

9 Ivan Marušić, 2010, *Gnom de Monde*, Zagreb, Mentor

10 Darko Suvin, 2010, *Metamorfoze znanstvene fantastike*, Zagreb, Profil, str. 100

Biuković's work only springs from the fact that the protagonists are departing from the location where the plot took place and its entire diegetic universe. The possibility of salvation is not unambiguously indicated in these works. The comic books by Marušić anticipate what today is already dubbed a state of war – between the 'gnomes' and the 'higher spheres'. However, they also bring about a new sensitivity in which an individual preserves his or her individuality in an almost irrational manner, in spite of subordination. If the passivity of an individual is self-destructive, it is just the price of freedom. The big words pondered by Devlić's characters, as well as the impossibility of avoiding tribal tagging in *Pride of the Devils*, are treated in a playful postmodern way in the books by Marušić. The gnome Džafer is perfectly aware of his gnomeness, and of the ethnic origin reflected in his name. Although the notion of a metamorphosis is illusory, he is nevertheless willing to play the game because identity itself is just a fiction in the multiverse of modernity. *Gnom de monde* does not give up historicism and tribal roots to assign the problem to other causes, as the class conflict is not disguised by the conflict of identities, but is a reification of it. Identity and location, treated solemnly in *Machu Picchu* and *Pride of the Devils*, turn into parody in *Gnom de Monde*. This is how Marušić smuggles a seed of utopianism inside his dystopias, as the utopian genre is fundamentally connected with carnivalesque subversion, as described by Bakhtin. Utopia subverts the dominant assumptions of reality sported by the ruling class, and externalizes what is implied in a satire.¹⁰ The demonic world in which the gnomes live is not any less diabolical than the worlds inhabited by Devlić's European or Macan's Balkan tribes. The gnomes just happen to have a sense of humour.

1 I use SF as an abbreviation for *speculative fiction*.

2 Darko Suvin, 2010, *Metamorfoze znanstvene fantastike*, Zagreb, Profil, p. 128

3 Ibid, p. 38

4 Kvadrat, comics theory magazine, 2001, Issue 13

5 Radovan Devlić, 2009, *Machu Picchu*, Bizovac/Zagreb, Matica hrvatska i Mentor

6 *Devils and Deaths* and *Devil's Choices* were originally created as separate miniseries, later to be united and published in Croatian translation as Darko Macan, Edvin Biuković, 2010, *Ponos vragova*, Zagreb, Fibra.

7 *Arzin* was published from the beginning of the war until 1998.

8 Ivan Marušić, 2007, *Entropola*, Zagreb, Mentor

9 Ivan Marušić, 2010, *Gnom de Monde*, Zagreb, Mentor

10 Darko Suvin, 2010, *Metamorfoze znanstvene fantastike*, Zagreb, Profil, p. 100



Szerzőiség a kortárs magyar képregény kultúrában

A magyar képregény újjászületése

Tóth Zoltán János

A kortárs magyar képregénykultúra és a magyarországi képregényfogyasztás sajátos jellegzetességeket mutat és jelentősen eltér más országokétól, különösen az olyan nagy képregénykultúrával rendelkező országoktól, mint az Egyesült Államok, Franciaország, Belgium, és esetleg Olaszország.

Ez a különbség leginkább abban ragadható meg, hogy a magyar képregény piacáról hiányzik a tömeggyártásban megjelenő műfaji képregény. A sorozatokban megjelenő képregények leginkább a külföldi franchise-ok magyar nyelvű fordításaira korlátozódnak. A Magyarországon legnépszerűbb képregény típusának így sokkal inkább az a szerzői képregény nevezhető, melynek meglátásom szerint jelenleg három formája létezik. Az első típus a tömeggyártást el nem éró műfaji képregény, ahol az alkotót nem korlátozzák a piac törvény-szerűségei, ezért a kiadók nyomása nélkül valósíthatja meg koncepcióit. Mivel nincs mögöttük tőke, ezért leginkább az interneten koncentrálódik ez a típus, és egy szűkebb szubkultúra figyelme jelenti a médiavilvánosságot ebben az esetben. A második típus a műfaji archetípusuktól távol, egyfajta artisztikus vállalkozásként válik ismertté. Elismertségét nem feltétlenül képregényként, sokkal inkább művészeti tárgyként nyeri el. A harmadik, és úgy gondolom a közönség által legismertebb, típus célja a szórakoztató társadalomkritika. A legismertebb képregényalkotók, mint például Gróf Balázs, Futaki Attila, Stark Attila, Marabu ilyen képregények alkotóiként váltak ismertté.

A kortárs magyar képregénykultúra viszonyait, akárcsak más országokban, globális és lokális körülmények egyszerre

Authorship in Contemporary Hungarian Comics Culture

The rebirth of Hungarian comics

Zoltán János Tóth

Contemporary Hungarian comics culture and consumption display some specific characteristics that differ significantly from that of other countries, especially from those that have a huge comic culture such as the US, France, Belgium and perhaps Italy.

The difference can mostly be grasped in the fact that the Hungarian comics market lacks the mass-produced comic book genre. The comics that come out in series are mainly limited to Hungarian translations of foreign franchises. Therefore, it can be said that the most popular type of comics in Hungary is rather the authorial comic, which I believe has three forms at present. The first type is the comic book genre that does not reach mass production, ensuring that the authors are not constrained by market regulations and can carry out their concepts without pressure from publishers. As there is no capital behind it, this type is most often concentrated on the internet, and in this case only a rather narrow subculture garners any media publicity. The second type is becoming known as a kind of artistic entrepreneurship, far from the archetypes of the genre. It gains recognition not necessarily as a comic but rather as an artifact. The third type, which in my opinion is the most familiar to the public, aims at an entertaining form of social criticism. The most well-known comics authors such as Balázs Gróf, Attila Futaki, Attila Stark and Marabu have gained their popularity as authors of such comics.

As for those of other countries, the relations of Hungarian comics culture have been shaped by global and local circumstances at the same time. The concept of culture has changed

alakítják. A posztmodernben a kultúra fogalma átalakult, a magas- és mélykultúra diszkrét különállása megszűnt, ami együtt járt a populáris kultúra akadémiai és közösségi újraértékelésével is. A populáris kultúra státuszának megváltozása hozzájárult a képregény egyre fokozódó emancipációjához. Az olyan szubkultúrák, mint például a hipster vagy geek a mainstream zenei, divatvilág stb. részévé váltak, melyek a képregény ikonográfiáját a pop arthoz hasonló rajongással vették körül és sajátították ki. Jóllehet a fiatalabb korosztály számára a belépési pontot a képregény világába elsődlegesen nem maguk a képregények jelentik, hiszen a szuperhősök, manga figurák és kanonikus történetek a számítógépes játékokból és egész estés filmekből válnak elsősorban ismertté. A kezérez évében első évtizedében a filmközönség nagyon gyorsan reagált a képregény növekvő népszerűségére. Nem csupán az egyik legfontosabb inspirációs bázissá lépett elő a film, de a blockbusters jelentős része képregény-adaptáció volt. A népszerű sorozatok (*Bang Bang Theory*) és filmek (*Die Hard 4, Shop Stop, Shop Show*) ismert komikus karakterével lépett elő a geek, aki a popkultúra és általában a képregények fetisztája rajongója.

Ezek a változások jól tükröződnek a képregénykultúrában is, ami leginkább a fogyasztás intézményesültségével mérhető. Ezt az intézményesültséget Maksa Gyula úgy értékeli, mint a magyar képregénykultúra megszületésének első lehetőségét: „Az intézményes önállósulást nemcsak a képregényre speciálizálódott kiadók szövetségének 2007-es megalapítása, a hozzá kötődő fesztiválok, hanem többek között kiállítások, a Magyar Képregény Akadémia (lapja: a *Pinkhell*) és a kéregény-múzeum funkcióját is részben betöltő kArton Galéria jelzi. (...) A kéregénykritika ugyan felbukkant, de még nem önállósult igazán a képzőművészeti, nem rajzolt irodalmi vagy filmkritikához képest. Ezen változatot majd (az induláskor) az első magyar kéregényfanzinnak tartott *Panel* is, amely már kezdetben is inkább a hagyományos rajongói magazin és a specializált kulturális folyóirat közötti átmenetnek, azaz prozinnak látszott.”

Maksa Gyula azt állítja, hogy a kilencvenes évek végéig a magyar kéregény protomédium szakaszában volt, és ebből csak az utóbbi időben lépett ki. Ennek az elhúzódó születésnek több oka is van. A protomediális szakaszban rekedt kéregény életét hosszú évtizedekig, leginkább az 1989-es rendszerváltásig fennálló szocialista rendszer kultúrpolitikája szabta meg. A populáris kultúra legfontosabb médiumai és műfajai tűrt vagy tiltott kulturális terméknek minősültek. A tömegfilm és a populáris kéregény szinte a világ minden országában egymásra reagálva alakult, hiszen az archetípusaikat, műfaji mintákat és tematikus állandókat egyszerre vagy egymással versengve dolgozta ki a majdnem egyszerre induló két médium. A mai magyar tömegfilm is sok szempontból hasonló utat járt be és hasonló

in the postmodern era; the discreet distinction between high and low culture has ceased to exist, which brings along with it the re-evaluation of popular culture in both academia and everyday life. The changing status of popular culture has contributed to the increasing emancipation of the comic. Subcultures like hipsters or geeks that have built fandom around comics similar to that of pop art and appropriated the iconography of comics have become part of mainstream music, fashion, etc. However, for the younger generation the entry point into the world of comics has not been provided primarily by comics as such, since superheroes, manga characters and canonical stories have become popular first and foremost through computer games and motion pictures. In the first decade of the 2000s, the movie audience was very quick to react to the increasing popularity of comics. Films became not only one of the most important sources of inspiration, but also a significant number of blockbusters were adaptations of comics. The geek, who is the fetishistic fan of popular culture and comic books in general, has stepped forward as a recognizable character of popular television series (*Big Bang Theory*) and movies (*Die Hard 4, Shop Stop, Shop Show*).

These changes are reflected well in the comics subculture, which can best be measured by the institutionalization of consumption. Gyula Maksa sees this institutionalization as the first possibility for the birth of the Hungarian comic: ‘Institutional independence is not marked solely by the foundation of associations specialized in publishing comic books and the festivals associated with it in 2007, but among others by the exhibitions, the Hungarian Comics Academy (its paper: *Pinkhell*) and the kArton Galéria (Cardboard Gallery), which partly fulfills the function of a comics museum too. (...) Comic book critique, even though it has appeared, has not yet gained its independence compared to the artistic, non-illustrated or film critiques. This is one of the issues *Panel*, the first (to be) Hungarian comic fanzine aims to change, which seemed to be a transition between the traditional fan magazine and the specialized cultural journal, i.e. a prozine even at its very beginning.’

Gyula Maksa believes that until the end of the ‘90s the Hungarian comic was in its protomedium phase, and it has only recently stepped out of it. There are several reasons for this difficult birth. The life of the comic stuck in the protomedium phase was for decades determined mainly by the cultural policy of the socialist regime that lasted until 1989. The most important media and genres of popular culture were classified as either tolerated or banned cultural products. In almost all countries of the world, the mass movie and the popular comic have developed by reacting to each other, because the two media that emerged almost at the same time have developed their consistent thematic features either simultaneously or in competition

tényezők alakították mint magyar képregényét. Emiatt a későbbiekben is többször hivatkozok majd ezekre a hasonlóságokra.

A szocializmus cenzúrája egyformán érintette a popkulturális filmet és a képregényt, hiszen minden műfaj gyanús volt, amely nyugati értékeket és mintázatokat hirdetett. A szocializmus más típusú hősököt és megoldásokat preferált, mivel egészen más értékrendszer épített fel. A bűn üldözése, amely számtalan műfaj alapmotívuma a krimitől a szuperhős képregényekig, nem, vagy csak mérhetetlenül eltorzított formában jelenhetett meg. A szocialista kultúrpolitika és cenzúra olvasási módja a minden fikciót kizáró referenciális megértés volt. A szocializmus utópikus valóságában nem létezett szegénység, alkoholizmus, homoszexualitás, mint ahogyan ennek megfelelően a bűn léte is paradoxon volt. A szocialista krimiben a bűn ezért mindig csak az országon kívülről, rendszerellenes elemként érkezett. Kolozsi László: „A magyar rendszerben nem volt helye a magánnyomozónak: egy magánnyomozó pusztá léte is magát a rendszert kérdőjelezte volna meg. A magyar rendőrség – természetesen – önerőből, minden külső segítség nélkül megold minden esetet. Ennek ellenkezőjét állítani egyenesen államellenes cselekmény lett volna. A bűnözés eltörlését minden diktatúra, nem csak a kommunista rezsimek, zászlajára tűzi: a bűnözés eszerint a régi, eltaposott rend öröksége, melyet gondosan kell és fel lehet számolni. Ezért sem készültek sem nálunk, sem más közép-európai országban igazi krimik.”

A többi műfaj a krimihez hasonlóan került kirekesztésre vagy oldódott fel a rendszer által engedélyezett termékekben. Az amerikai minta esetében a képregény a film konkurenseként története során minden követte annak műfaji mátrixát. Magyarországon a hiányzó műfajokat egyetlenegy típusú képregény pótolta. A hatalom csupán azokat a képregényeket engedélyezte, melyek a szórakoztató kalandpoétiát didaktikus célokkel tudták alátámasztani. Így a magyar képregény aranykorszakának nevezett időszak az ötvenes évektől hihetetlenül szegényes kínálattal jelentkezik. „A második világháború utáni fél évszázad leghíresebb magyar képregényei adaptációk. E korban leginkább a klasszikusnak tartott irodalmi művek, elsősorban régenyek feldolgozása, tágabb körben népszerűsítése által nyert némi kulturális legitimációt Magyarországon a képregény.”

Maksa Gyula szerint a képregényt formanyelvi szempontból is visszatartotta a fejlődésben a politika. A szóbaborék és más hangutánzó megoldások alkalmazása korlátozás alá esik, mivel a kultúrpolitika szerint ezek az eljárások leszoktatnak az írásbeliségről és az olvasásról.

Úgy gondolom, hogy ez az időszak mérhetetlenül fontos szerepet játszik abban, hogy a magyar műfaji képregény helyett például szerzői történetek és látásmód válik népszerűvé, különösen akkor, ha ez az összes korosztály számára elérhető felületen és az összes korosztály számára értékelhető céllal jön

with each other. The contemporary Hungarian mass movie has in many respects followed this same path and has been shaped by similar features that influenced the Hungarian comic. For this reason I will continue to refer to these similarities below.

Socialist censorship has equally affected pop culture films and comics, since all genres that promoted Western values and patterns were deemed suspicious. Socialism preferred a different type of hero and solution because it created an entirely different value system. The prosecution of crime, which is the basic motive of numerous genres ranging from crime movies to superhero comics, could appear only in a largely distorted form or did not appear at all. The socialist cultural political way of reading was a referential interpretation lacking all kinds of fiction. In the utopian reality of socialism there was no poverty, alcoholism or homosexuality, and conversely the existence of crime was a paradox. Therefore, in the socialist crime movie, crime could only come from abroad, as an element subverting the regime from outside. As László Kolozsi writes, ‘in the Hungarian regime there was no room for the private detective: the mere existence of the private detective would have questioned the regime itself. The Hungarian police solve all cases, on their own of course, without any external assistance. Claiming the opposite would have been a direct act against the state. All dictatorships, not only communist regimes, aimed at the eradication of crime: according to them, crime is the legacy of the old trampled order that can and should be carefully liquidated. This is the reason why there were no crime movies made either in Hungary or in other Central-European countries.’

Similarly to the crime movie, other genres were marginalized or melted down into cultural products allowed by the regime. In the case of the American pattern, as a competitor of the film, the comic has always followed its genre matrix in its plot. There was only one type of comics permitted in Hungary that compensated for the missing genres. The state power allowed only those comics that could support the entertaining adventure poetics with didactic goals. Thus, the period of the so-called golden age of Hungarian comic books after the ‘50s represents an unbelievably poor offering. ‘The most famous comics of the half-century following the Second World War were adaptations. In this era the comic in Hungary gained some cultural legitimacy mostly through the adaptation and popularization of literary works thought of as classical, mainly novels.’

According to Gyula Maksa the development of comics has been restrained by politics with regards to form as well. The use of the speech bubble and other onomatopoetic solutions has been restricted, because according to the cultural policy of the time these procedures limited literacy and the habit of reading.

I believe that this period has played an extremely important role because of the fact that instead of the Hungarian comic book



Imre Papp, Deveraux



Imre Papp, Deveraux (inside)

létre. Az élcílapok és karikatúrák hagyományát részben folytató alkotók esetében, mint ahogyan azt Gróf Balázs esetében is láthatjuk, ez a siker biztosított.

Felmerül ugyan a kérdés, hogy a szocializmus végével, lassan húsz év alatt, miért nem történt igazi változás. Azt gondolom, hogy a fiatalabb generáció számára ezt a keresletet kínálattal töltötte fel a nemzetközi piac, amely a hálózati kultúra korában korlátozlanul vált elérhetővé. A hálózat végképp felszámolta a nemzeti határokat. Akárcsak a filmek, a képregények esetében is elveszett a jelentősége a hazai premiereknek, hiszen a számítógép, mint multimediális platform és más interfések (tabletek, okostelefonok) nem csak a nyomtatott, de a rajzolt irodalom befogadását is magukhoz ragadták. A mindenki által elérhető grafikai szoftverek pedig hozzájárultak ahhoz, hogy a tartalmak a felhasználók által történő magyarázásával ez a folyamat felgyorsuljon.

A magyar fikció hiánya leginkább abban érhető tetten, hogy a magyarországi populáris kultúrának nincsenek magyar hősei. *Tin Tin*, *Asterix*, *Blueberry*, *Astroboy* történeteinak ismertetése más országban szorosan hozzátarozik a nemzeti identitáshoz, és ez közelviszi az embereket képregénykultúrához kortól és

genre, it was for instance the authorial stories that became popular, especially since they were created on a platform accessible to all generations and with an aim that all could evaluate. In the case of authors who have partially followed the tradition of satires and caricatures, as seen in the case of Balázs Gróf, success is guaranteed.

The question that arises now is how, with the end of socialism, there has been no real change in almost twenty years. In my opinion, for the younger generation the demand has been met by the supply of the international market which has become unlimitedly accessible in the era of the internet. The Internet has permanently eradicated national borders. Just like with movies, in the case of comics domestic premiers have lost their significance because computers as multimedia platforms, as well as other interfaces (tablets, smart phones) have halted not only printed but also graphic literature as well. The graphic software accessible by everyone has also contributed to the acceleration of this process by making it possible for users to ‘Hungarianize’ the contents.

The lack of Hungarian fiction can best be grasped in the fact that Hungarian popular culture has no Hungarian heroes.

nemtől függetlenül. Magyarországon a képregényfogyasztás egy olyan fiatal generációhoz kötődik elsősorban, akik a rendszerváltás után nőttek fel és a nyugati mintákat tartják meg-határozónak. A magyar nemzetet egyébként is jelmezi egy nagyon erős fikció-idegenség. Legyen szó moziról, irodalomról vagy képregéniről, a magyar alkotók és magyar befogadók minden közelebb érezték magukhoz azokat a műfajokat, amelyek levezethetőek a társadalmi vagy politikai valóságból, esetleg ép-pen arra reflektálnak. A dokumentum műfajai Magyarországon minden győzedelmeskedtek a fikció műfajain. A talán első lát-szatra túlzónak tűnő állítást bizonyíthatja az, hogy a magyar műfaji film mátrixa teljesen nélküli a science-fiction, a horror, a musical stb. műfajokat. A hazai filmgyártás alig mozdul ki a vígjátékok és romantikus komédiák, illetve drámák területéről és idegenkedik a popkulturális mítoszoktól. A mai magyarországi filmgyártás pontosan ezt az ízlést tükrözi, és azt gondolom, hogy a képregény jelenlegi távolmaradása a fikciótól szintén részben ezzel a szemléettel magyarázható.

Ahogyan a korábban általam idézett Maksa Gyula is kiemelte, az utóbbi néhány évben történtek ezzel kapcsolatban hiánypót-ló alkotások, illetve megemlíthetünk elszigetelt próbálkozásokat, de ezek mennyiségileg és népszerűség tekintetében nem váltak a tömegkultúra részévé.



Roland Pilcz, Kalyber Joe. Rain.

In other countries, knowing the stories of *Tin Tin*, *Asterix*, *Blue-berry* or *Astroboy* is tightly connected to national identity and brings people closer to comics culture regardless of age and gender. In Hungary, the consumption of comics is primarily linked to a younger generation that grew up after the change of regime and considers Western patterns definitive. In general, the Hungarian nation is characterized by a very strong aversion to fiction. Be it film, literature or comics, both Hungarian authors and audience have always felt closer to genres that can be derived from social or political reality or directly reflect their lives. In Hungary, the documentary genre has always won out against the genres of fiction. This claim may seem an exaggeration at first, but the fact that the matrix of the Hungarian genre film completely lacks the horror, science fiction, musical and other genres may prove it. Hungarian filmmaking has hardly ever left the territory of comedies, romantic comedies and dramas, and popular myths are alien to it. Contemporary Hungarian film production reflects exactly this taste, and I believe that the current absence of comics from fiction can also be partly explained by this view.

To refer to Gyula Maksa again, the things that have taken place in the past few years met a demand in existing work; isolated attempts can also be mentioned, however they have not been incorporated into the mass culture in either number or popularity.

Of these works meant to fill a gap, one should certainly mention those comics that popularize the important events and characters of Hungarian political and sports history. Critics and cultural historians always sound the alarm when popular culture incorporates 'official' culture. However, an integrative culture cannot be thought of without the participation of popular culture. What is more, popular culture and comics play an inevitable and crucial role in maintaining cultural memory. The successes of *Persepolis* or *Maus* prove that the comic is capable of fulfilling this function. The French historian Pierre Nora writes that after organic memories have faded, the past is conserved by external memory sites. However, it is important that these memory sites (*lieux de mémoire*) are also emptied in the process of their institutionalization. 'On the horizon of societies possessing a historical consciousness, on the borders of a fully historicized world, the deprivation of sanctity is extreme and definitive. The process of history, the historical aspiration does not glorify what has really happened but destroys it. There is no doubt that the general critical attitude preserves museums, coins, monuments, i.e. the toolbox necessary for historical work, but at the same time it empties everything that makes these *lieux de mémoires* for us.' To keep memories alive, new and alternative memory sites have to open up constantly. I do not want to reflect here on cultural memory, but only claim that

A hiánypótól alkotások között mindenkiéppen megemlíteniőek azok a képregények, amelyek a magyar történelem és sporttör-ténet fontos eseményeit és személyiségeit popularizálják. A kri-tikusok és a kultúrtörténészek minden meghúzzák a vészharangot, amikor a populáris kultúra bekebelez a *hivatalos* kultúrát. Integratív kultúra azonban elképzelhetetlen a populáris kultúra részvételle nélkül. Mindemellett a kulturális emlékezet fenntartásában szükségszerű és nagyon fontos szerepet vállal a popkul-túra és a képregény. A *Persepolis* vagy a *Maus* sikere bizonyítja, hogy a képregény képes ellátni ezt a funkciót. Pierre Nora fran-cia történész azt írja, hogy amikor vége az organikus emlékezetnek, a múltat emlékezethelyek rögzítik. Fontos azonban, hogy ezek az emlékezethelyek (*lieu de mémoire*) intézményesülésük során ki is üresednek. „A történeti tudattal bíró társadalmak horizontján, a teljességgel historizált világ határain a szentségtől való megfosztás végső és végleges. A történelem folyamata, a történeti törökés nem dicsőíti a valóban megtörténtet, hanem megsemmisíti. Kétségtelen, hogy az általános kritikai attitűd megőrzi a múzeumokat, az érméket, a műemlékeket – tehát a történeti munkához szükséges eszközöt –, ugyanakkor ki is ürítve mindazt, ami szemünkben lieu de mémoire-rá teszi ezeket.” Az emlékezet életben tartásához folyamatosan új és alternatív emlékezethelyeknek kell megnyílniuk. Nem a kultúrális emlékezetről akarok gondolkodni, csupán azt szeretném kijelenteni, hogy az új médiaelbeszélések új emlékezethelyeként születnek meg, és a film mellett ezt a feladatot a képregény képes a leghatékonyabban vállalni. A Felvidéki Miklós és Pertics Róbert alkotópáros 2012-ben kiadott képregénye a *Papp Laci. A Londoni olimpia bajnoka* a magyar ökölvívás ikonikus alakjának, Papp Lászlónak az 1948-as londoni olimpián elért győzelmet narrativizálja újra képregényben. Felvidéki Miklós békéidőkbeli retro rajzstílusa a vizualitáson keresztül hozza azt a nosztalgiat, amit Pertics történetében a keménykötésű, nyakas Papp Laci sztorija épít tovább. A képregény tovább építi a nemzeti hősként tiszttelt Papp Laci mítoszát, tovább keményít azon a karakteren, aki egyébként is generációk számára jelentett példaképet. Fazekas Attila és Bán Mór a *Tűzvihar 1956* című képregényében az 1956-os forradalom eseményeiből készít populáris mitológiát. Az 1956-os forradalom hosszú időkig neuralgikus pontja volt a magyar történelemnek, különösen azért, mert a forradalom vérfeljárása után a szovjet erők Magyarország lázadását ellenforradalomnak minősítették. A morálisan súlyozott témák, mint a Holocaust vagy diktatúrák, minden nagy ellenállását váltanak ki, ha a popkultúrában jelennék meg. Szükségszerű azonban, hogy általában ötven év elteltével, amikor leköszön az utolsó szemtanúként jelenlévő generáció, új alternatív elbeszélések jönnek létre, és a történelem fikcionálzálása szabad utat kap. A filmű-vízszetben ez az út világosan látszik. A *Bukás, a Goodbye Lenin* vagy a *Mások élete* ezt a feladatot vállalja fel. A képregényben

new media stories are born as new memory sites, and apart from films, comics are the most effective in taking up this task. In 2012 the comics *Papp Laci (Laci Papp)* were published by the pair of authors Miklós Felvidéki and Róbert Pertics. A *Londoni olimpia bajnoka* (*The Champion of the London Olympics*) retells the narrative of László Papp's victory, the iconic figure of Hungarian boxing at the 1948 London Olympics. The old-school retro drawing style of Miklós Felvidéki brings out nostalgia through its visual style, strengthened by the story of the well-built, unruly Laci Papp in Pertics' plot. The comic further develops the myth of Laci Papp, celebrated as a national hero, and solidifies his character that has in any case been an idol for several generations. In their comic *Tűzvihar 1956* (*Firestorm 1956*) Attila Fazekas and Mór Bán construct a popular mythology out of the events of the 1956 revolution. For a long time the revolution of 1956 was a neuralgic point of Hungarian history, especially since after the bloody suppression of the revolution the Soviet forces regarded Hungary's uprising as a counter-revolution. Morally weighted topics such as the Holocaust or dictatorships always meet resistance if they appear in popular culture. Yet, it is inevitable that usually fifty years after the last eye-witness generation resigns, new alternative narratives are created and the fictionalization of history gets the green light. This is clearly visible in film. *The Fall*, *Goodbye Lenin* and *The Life of Others* take up this task. *Firestorm* can be seen as a similar undertaking in comics. In these adaptations, the revolution becomes a spectacle, a background that offers a pathetic setting for the developing melodramatic line of the story. The main heroine Eva falls in love in the cavalcade of the revolution. *Firestorm* builds on easily recognizable patterns and sequences of action. Genre incorporates history.

With regard to completely fictional genres probably the most visible tendency is that there is no domestically produced superhero on the Hungarian comics market. This is, on one hand, part of the aversion towards fiction that I have already mentioned. On the other hand, Hungarian society does not fictionalize its problems like, for instance, American society does. To be more precise, the heroes of DC and Marvel are popular among Hungarian comics consumers as well, however according to the domestic taste it is much more unimaginable that a similar hero would operate in the Budapest nights.

Among the domestic authors we can find some that are attracted to fiction, however these comics are closer to traditional adventure poetics. In Roland Pilcz's character Joe Kalyber one can recognize the inspiration for the Indiana Jones stories. The six-part series *Deveraux* by Imre Papp is about a demon hunter whose parents were killed by a demon. Hungarian critique considers Imre Papp to be the Hungarian Mignola. The style and the diegetic world of the comic can indeed be considered

hasonló vállalkozásnak a tekinthető a *Tűzvihar* is. A forradalom látvánnyá alakul, olyan háttérre, ami patetikus környezetet kínál a történetben kibontakozó melodramatikus szálnak. A főszereplő Éva a forradalom kavalkádjában lesz szerelmes. A *Tűzvihar* jól felismerhető mintákból és akciószekvenciákból építkezik. A történetet bekebelez a műfajúság.

A teljesen fikciós műfajok területén talán leginkább szembetűnő tendencia, hogy a magyar képregény piacáról hiányzik a hazai kiállítású szuperhős. Ez részint annak a fikcióidegenségnek is a része, amelyet korábban már kifejtettem. Másrészről a magyar társadalom nem fikcionalizálja problémáit, mint például az amerikai. Pontosabban fogalmazva a magyar képregényfogyasztók körében is népszerűek a Marvel és a DC hősei, de a hazai ízlés szerint az már sokkal elképzelhetlenebb, hogy egy hasonló hős a budapesti éjszakában ténykedjen.

A hazai alkotók között találunk ugyan olyanokat, akiket a fikció vonz, de ezek a képregények közelebb állnak a hagyományos kalandpoétikához. Pilcz Roland Kalyber Joe figuráján az Indiana Jones történetek inspirációja ismerhető fel. Papp Imre hat részes *Deveraux*-sorozata egy olyan démonvadászról szól, ainek egy démon végzett a szüleivel. Papp Imrét a magyarországi kritika a magyar Mignolaként tartja számon. A stílus és a képregény diegetikus világa valóban a *Hellboy*-széria egyenesági leszármazottjának tartható, de Papp sokkal nagyobb hangsúlyt fektet a humorra. Nem egyszerű klónja Mignola képregényének, hanem egy olyan munka, amely posztmodern értelemben intertextuálisnak nevezhető.

A műfaji és az artisztikus képregények esetében is fontos történés, hogy a mai magyar képregény nem fejlődött organikusan. Hosszú hiátus és fokozatosság nélkül fejlődő képregény; Thomas Schatz fogalmával élve átmenet nélkül a barokk szakaszába lépett. Thomas Schatz elmélete szerint, aki a filmes műfajok vizsgálatát végezte el, az egyes műfajok különböző életszakaszokon haladtak át fejlődésük során. Schatz célelvű történeti narratívájában a műfajok fejlődése négy szakaszra bontható. Az első szakasz a kísérleti szakasz. A műfaj életében ez az az időszak, amikor a műfaj alapvető elemei és sémai rögzülnek. Ezt követi a klasszikus szakasz, melyben a nézők felismerik a műfajt és megtanulják dekódolni. A műfajjal kapcsolatban ekkor alakulnak ki azok az elvárások, melyek a későbbiekre nézve is meghatározzák, hogy a közönség mit fogad el a műfaj reprezentánsaként. A kifinomult szakaszban a műfaj enerválttá válik és előregedés jeleit mutatja. A manierista vagy barokk szakasz a műfaj fejlődésének utolsó fázisát jelenti, amikor a műfaj önreflexívvé válik és saját, a klasszikus szakaszban megszilárdult, jegyeit kezdi el lebontani. Ha ezt a kulturális evolucionista elméletet a képregényre értelmezük, akkor azt mondhatjuk, hogy hiányzik a magyar képregény fejlődéséből az a szakasz, amely a műfajokat, a különböző képregénytípusok alapvető

a lineal descendant of the *Hellboy* series, but Papp puts much more emphasis on humor. It is not a mere clone of Mignola's comic but rather a work that can be called intertextual in the postmodern sense. It is an important event in the case of the comic book and artistic comics that the Hungarian comic has not developed organically. After a long hiatus and without any evolution in its development, it suddenly stepped into a baroque phase without transition, to use Thomas Schatz's concept. According to the theory of Thomas Schatz who has conducted an analysis of film genres, in their development genres go through various life stages. In Schatz's goal-oriented historical narrative, the development of genres is divided into four phases. The first phase is the experimental phase. This is the period of life of a genre when the basic elements and schemes are established. This is followed by the classical phase, in which the audience recognizes the genre and learns to decode it. In this stage, the expectations related to the genre are being created that will later determine what the audience will accept as representative of the genre. In the refinement phase, the genre loses vigour and displays signs of senescence. The mannerist or baroque phase, then, is the last phase of the development of a genre in which it becomes self-reflexive and begins to deconstruct its own characteristics established in the classical phase. If we apply this cultural evolutionist theory to the comic, we may claim that the development of Hungarian comics lacks the phase that would have established the genres and basic patterns of different types of comics. In both authorial comics and the comic book genre, it is the postmodern playfulness of the baroque phase that is emerging. One of the main features of this playfulness is that the genre, or possibly the entire medium, is not capable of taking itself seriously. It is not capable of taking the genre, the medium and already established patterns seriously. Internationally, the most successful comics from Alan Moore's *Watchmen* to Mark Millar's and John Romita's *Kick Ass* display this type of irony.

I believe that this irony can have a strong presence in the authorial comic, as the authorial comic book is actually different from the mass-produced comic book in that the author is not completely subordinated to the patterns of the genre. In this case, it is the author who can manipulate and rewrite the archetypes. For artistic comics and others that avoid the rigid expectations of the genre, freedom is guaranteed.

Within Hungarian comics this type of irony is made quite successful by Balázs Gróf. Gróf is a comics author who is innovative enough to also capture the attention of the younger generation, while for cultural consumers who grew up in the old regime his comic strips and series call to mind the world of satire and caricatures.

mintázatait, jegyeit megalapozta volna. A szerzői és műfaji képregényben is a barokk szakasz posztmodern játékossága érvényesül. Ennek a játékosságnak az egyik legfőbb ismérve, hogy a műfaj, de talán az egész médium, nem képes komolyan venni magát. Nem képes komolyan venni a műfajt, a médiumot, az eddig bevett mintákat. A nemzetközileg legsikeresebb kéregények Alan Moore *Watchmen*től egészen a Mark Millar és John Romita *Kick Ass*-éig ezt a típusú iróniát viszik színről.

Azt gondolom, hogy ez az ironia igazán intenzíven a szerzői képregényben tud megjelenni, hiszen a műfaji szerzői kéregényt éppen az különbözteti meg a sorozatgyártott kéregénytől, hogy a szerző nincs teljesen alárendelve a műfaj mintáinak. Ebben az esetben a szerző az, aki kiforgathatja és újraírhatja az archetípusokat. Az artisztikus és egyéb kéregények számára, melyek még a műfaji kötöttséget is elkerülik, eleve biztosított ez a szabadság.

A magyar kéregényen belül ezt a fajta iróniát viszi igazán sikerre Gróf Balázs. Gróf olyan szerzői kéregényes, aki elégé innovatív ahhoz, hogy a fiatal korosztály érdeklődését is felkeltse. A rendszerváltás előtt kulturális életet élők számára pedig az általa készített sorozatok, stripek a karikatúrák és élclapok világát idézhetik.

A társadalomkritikus él pedig biztosít egy olyan referenciálistást, ami a valóságközpontúvá és bizonyos értelemben realistává teszi az egyébként fiktívnek nevezhető történeteket is Gróf esetében. Másrészről az élclapok és karikatúrák hagyománya, amelyre Gróf Balázs épít, előbb hagyomány a magyar hétköznapi ember számára, mint az amerikai kéregény.

Gróf groteszk, néhol szürrealista történetei és az ehhez párosított szintén groteszk, sokszor keresett amatőrzmusában ismertetőként személyeket idéz. A hetvenes évek underground kéregényeket idézi. A hetvenes évek undergroundja nem egyszerűen társadalomkritikus volt, de ezt tematikailag és vizuálisan is agresszívan képviselte.

„Az underground alkotói házilagos – netán félfelvételi – körülmenyek között készítették és terjesztették műveiket: a nyomda-technika hiányosságait a grafikai kreativitás és a minden tabut elegánsan szemberöhögő tematika pótolta, a terjesztés pedig az ellenkulturális sejtek (hippi-boltok, headshopok) közreműködésével szerveződött. Az underground kéregény olykor pszichedelikus, szexábrázolása pornográf – megmutatja, melyik szerv hol van és mit lehet vele kezdeni –, politikailag radikális és aktívan társadalomkritikus. Ha amerikai underground comix, akkor Robert Crumb, Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco: *Zap*. A fekete-fehérben induló, majd színesbe váltó kéregény-magazin mániákus ihletettséggel illusztrálja, milyen az, ha az ember túl sok LSD-t használ a rajzoláshoz. A történetek szürrealisak, erőszakosak és szókimondóak, a kor nagy témáit dolgozzák fel a földalatti nézőpontból.”

In the case of Gróf, the social critical blade provides a reference that makes the otherwise fictional stories reality-centered and to some extent realist.

On the other hand, the tradition of satire and caricatures that Balázs Gróf builds upon is a more lively tradition for the common Hungarian than that of American comics.

In its themes and style, the grotesque, sometimes surreal stories of Gróf and the also grotesque, often deliberate amateurism that goes with it reminds one of American underground comics from the 1970s. The '70s underground was not simply critical towards society but it represented it aggressively both in its visual style and themes.

'The authors of the underground created and disseminated their works in a do-it-yourself, even half-amateur manner: graphical creativity and the elegantly taboo-breaking topics made up for the shortcomings of the printing technique, while dissemination was organized with the cooperation of counter-cultural cells (hippie-shops, headshops). The underground comic is sometimes psychedelic; its representation of sex is pornographic in showing where each organ is and what it can be used for, politically radical and actively socially critical of society. If we talk about American underground comix, then it is Robert Crumb, Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco: *Zap*. The comic magazine that started in black and white and later switched to color illustrates with a manic inspiration what it is like when one uses too much LSD for drawing. The plots are surreal, aggressive and outspoken, they process the big issues of the period from an underground perspective'.

In the comics of Balázs Gróf we can find this kind of underground perspective compounded with postmodern self-reflexivity. Balázs Gróf, who also makes animation films, started publishing his series in the *Est Lapok* (*Evening Papers*) in 1996. The most famous of these is the *Butapest*-series (*StupidPest*) which generates grotesque stories with typical characters of the urban space. Gróf offers a sarcastic presentation of the phenomena that are in themselves grotesque distortions of consumer society. Such phenomena can include, for instance, the programmed world of celebrities, the impingements of political subcultures, the events of the music scene and pop culture. These series describe a Hungary in which sarcasm is the only weapon against the meaninglessness of everyday life. His series *Rizsa* (*Rice*) got its title from the main character's name who constantly wears a paper bag on his head. At first glance, the series looks like a genre parody of a superhero comic, but Rizsa is actually a teenager who constantly fails in his communication with the world, and at the end he usually even gets beaten up.

The bloodiest and the most aggressive of Gróf's comics is definitely the series entitled *Darabolós Pingvin* (*Frittering Penguin*). In the *Frittering Penguin*, it is as if the character Michael

Gróf Balázs képregényeiben ez az underground szemlélet köszön vissza a posztmodern önreflexivitásával ötvözve. Ezek animációs filmkészítéssel is foglalkozó Gróf Balázs 1996-ban kezdte el megjelentetni sorozatait az *Est Lapokban*. Ezek közül a legismertebbek a *Butapest*-sorozat, mely a urbánus tértípus figuráival generál groteszk történeteket. Gróf azokat a jelenségeket ábrázolja szarkaszikusan, amelyek önmagukban is groteszk torzulásai a fogyasztói társadalomnak. Ilyen például a celebvilág programozottsága, a politikai szubkultúrák túlkapásai, a zenei színtér és a popkultúra történései. Ezek a sorozatok egy olyan Magyarország képét festik le, amelyben a szarkazmus az egyetlen fegyver a hétköznapok értelmetlensége ellen. A *Rizsa* című sorozat főhőséről kapta nevét, aki folyamatosan egy papírzacskót hord a fején. Első látásra egy szuperhős képregény zsánerparódijának tűnik a sorozat, de *Rizsa* valójában olyan tinédzser, aki folyamatosan kudarcot vall a világgal való kommunikációja során, és ennek általában az a vége, hogy el is verik.

Gróf képregényei közül a legvéresebb és a legtöbb agreszziót felvonultató sorozat egyértelműen a *Darabolós Pingvin*. A *Darabolós Pingvin* olyan, mintha a Michael Douglas által az Összeomlásban játszott karakter a texasi láncfűrészessel egyesülné. Az *Est Lapokban* megjelent képregényekből 2005-ben jelent meg egy válogatás *Képregények* címmel.

Gróf Balázs stílusa rendkívül változatos. A fekete-fehér expresszionista stílustól a Paint eszköztárát imitáló egyszerű grafikáig nagyon sokféle vizualitású képregénnel találkozunk. Gróf akár egy sorozaton belül is szívesen kísérletezik eltérő megjelenésekkel, változatos a panelek elrendezése is, az egyszerűtől a retorikusabb oldalakig sokféle megvalósítással találkozunk.

A Gróf Balázs által a képviselt kritikus szemlélet azonban a képregény rövidebb formáinak kedvez. A rövidebb stripek pedig jobban illeszkednek a hálózat struktúrájához. A hálózat mémek milliárdjait keringeti és ökonómizálja. A rövid képregények, stripek a mikroblogok és a nagy közösségi oldalak népszerű tartalmaiává váltak. A <http://parkocka.hu> olyan oldal, mely az ország híres és népszerű rajzolói által állít ki naponta gyors reagálású, a politikai és a gazdasági élet történéseit kifigurázó képregényeket.

Az artisztikus képregények kiállítása általában olyan magas minőségű, hogy a képregényfogyasztók körén kívül is sikeres sé teszi őket. A Nikolényi Gergely által írt és Futaki Attila által rajzolt *Spirál* című képregény minden egyes kockáját megfestette nagyméretű olajvászonon Futaki. A kivitelezés annyira impozáns, hogy a francia képregénypiacon is értékesítik. Stark Attila *Kulo City*-je is egyfajta intermediais vállalkozás. A képregény talán nem is képregény, hanem street artosként induló Stark művészeti albuma. A *Kulo City* a majmok városa, ugyanis Starknál, akárcsak Gróf Balázs *Butapest* című sorozatában, a fő-

Douglas from *Falling Down* has been united with the Texas chainsaw. In 2005 a selection entitled *Képregények (Comics)* was printed from the comics published in the *Evening Papers*.

Balázs Gróf's style is remarkably varied. From the black and white expressionist style to the simple graphics imitating the MS Paint toolbox, we come across a great variety of visual styles in his comics. Even within one series, Gróf willingly experiments with different perspectives; the ordering of panels is also varied, with many examples ranging from simpler to more stylistic pages.

However, the critical perspective represented by Balázs Gróf favors shorter forms of comics. The short strips fit well with the structure of the internet. The internet circulates and economizes billions of memes. Short comics and strips have become the popular contents of micro-blogs and large social networking sites. <http://parkocka.hu> is a site that publishes swift-reaction, high quality comics parodying the events of political and economic life by famous and popular comic designers around the country.

The publication of artistic comics is usually of such a high quality that they become popular outside the circle of comics consumers as well. Every frame of the comic entitled *Spirál* (*Spiral*) written by Gergely Nikolényi and designed by Attila Futaki was painted in oil on a large canvas by Futaki. The design is so compelling that it is being sold on the French comics market as well. Attila Stark's *Kulo City* is also a kind of intermedial enterprise. The comic is perhaps not even a comic, but an artistic album by Stark, who started out as a street artist. *Kulo City* is a city of monkeys, because Stark, similarly to Balázs Gróf's *Butapest*-series, captures the capital's sweaty, dirty world on the pages. In *Kulo City*, everyone is a monkey.

In these comics the visual takes primacy, which involves the bracketing of the narration and traditional storyline. In one sense, this is a feature of artistic creations as well. They turn away from the hero type of the comic book genre, therefore the adventure is not determined as physical, but rather as a mental adventure which creates a world balancing on the border between reality and hallucination. In Futaki's *Spiral*, reality is indistinguishable from the protagonist's hallucinations. In a world without fangs, one cannot be sure of anything, just as when the hero cannot know whether he had been deceived, yet takes revenge while he circles in madness and jealousy.

Dániel Csordás's comic entitled *Nocturne – Az éjszakai látható* (*Nocturne – The night visitor*) published in 2008 also makes use of the dream-like nature of nocturnal events. In search of childhood memories, the book's protagonist involves the reader in a psychedelic world. In *Némajáték (Mime)* by Miklós Felvidéki, creative imagination is the main motive, because the story's protagonist is a pantomimist who can bring his thoughts to fruition in emergency situations.

város fullesztő, koszos világa kerül át az oldalakra. Kulo City-ben mindenki majom.

Ezekben a képregényekben a vizualitás az elsőbbség, amely a narráció és a hagyományos értelemben vett történetvezetés háttérbeszorulásával jár együtt. Ez bizonyos értelemben az artisztikus alkotások sajátja is. Elfordulnak a műfaji képregény hőstípusától, ezért a kaland sem fizikaiként határozódik meg, hanem sokkal inkább mentális kalandként, ami olyan világot hoz létre, amely a valóság és a hallucináció határán billeg. Futakiék *Spirál*jában a valóság megkülönbözőtlen a főhős hallucinaciótól. Ebben a kapaszkodók nélküli világban nem lehetünk biztosak semmiben, mint ahogy a főhős sem abban, hogy megcsalták, mégis bosszút áll, miközbe az örölet és a féltekencség köreit rója.

Csordás Dániel 2008-ban megjelent *Nocturne – Az éjszakai látható* című képregénye szintén kihasználja az éjszakai történetek álomszerű jellegét. A kötet főhőse gyermekkor emlékei után kutatva egy pszichedelikus világba vonja be az olvasót. Felvidéki Miklós *Némajáték*ában szintén a teremtő képzelet a fő motívum, hiszen egy olyan pantomimes a történet főszereplője, aki vészhelyzetben valóra tudja váltani azt, amit elgondol.

Érdekes felfigyelni arra, hogy még a társadalomkritikus szerzői képregények éppen a referencialitásuk által válnak ismertté, addig az artisztikus produktumok az attól való elszakadást célozzák meg.

A magyar képregénynek és a magyar kultúrának a fikciós műfajok területén ez a kísérleti terepe jól láthatóan a hálózat, hiszen az online felület a legköltséghatékonyabban kínál megjelenést és nyilvánosságot. A 2010-ben indult <http://5panels.kepregeny.net/> című oldal remek példáját szolgáltatja annak, amikor fiatal alkotók egyesülésének köszönhetően jön létre képregényes adatbázis, amely az offline piacról hiányzó műfajokat is megjelenít (például sci-fi, cyberpunk).

It is interesting to note that while the socially critical authorial comic books are known for their referentiality, artistic products aim at moving away from this.

The field of experimentation in the area of fictional genres in Hungarian comics and culture is clearly the internet, since the online platform offers the most cost-effective publishing opportunity and publicity. The site <http://5panels.kepregeny.net/>, which started in 2010, provides a great example of a comics database created by the association of young artists that publishes genres missing from the offline market (e.g. sci-fi, cyberpunk).

¹ In Hungarian slang *rizsa* also means a lot of meaningless talk.



Káoszesztétika és vallomásosság

Stark Attila *Kulo City*-je a *Roham* magazin kontextusában

Nemes Z. Márió

A *Roham* magazin már indulása óta (2006) a különböző kulturális szférák közti interakciók megvalósításában érdekelte.¹ Ennek a mellérendelő stratégiának az irodalmi kivetülése, hogy a lapban egyszerre publikálnak a kortárs irodalom kanonizált írói-költői és a fantasy-sci-fi színtér képviselői, illetve olyan kívülálló szerzők, akik nem illeszthetők be a hivatalos irodalmi rendszer struktúrájába. Ez a szerkesztési elv egyedülállónak mondható a magyar lapkiadás kontextusában, hiszen a folyóiratrendszer máig kifejezetten monolitikus és a különböző irodalmi regiszterek tisztántartására törekzik, vagyis nehezen elképzelhető az ún. tömegműfajok és magaskulturális kódok képviselőinek közös szövegtérben való szerepelése. Ugyanakkor a *Roham* szövegszerű teljesítményét nem alábecsülvé, mégis ki kell jeleníteni, hogy a lap kultikus jelentőségét azáltal nyerte el, hogy a kulturális regiszterek közti határátlépés programját vizuális síkon is sikerült megvalósítania.

A vizuális fordulat 2007-re tehető, amikor a szerkesztőséghez csatlakozott több frissen végzett grafikus (Stark Attila, Szöllősi Géza, Vidák Zsolt, Baranyai B. András stb.) és festő-képzőművész (Győrfi László, Kis Róka Csaba). Az ezután megszülető lapszámok már egy teljesen más paradigmába tartoznak, mint a korszak legtöbb kulturális orgánuma, hiszen itt a képiség expanziójával szembesülünk, vagyis azzal az igennel, hogy a színre vitt vizualitás ne egyfajta utólagos ornamentika – a szöveget kívülről ékítő ciráda – legyen, hanem a szöveggel egyenrangú jelentésalkotó mező. Ez a folyamat a kétezres évek végének abba a képantropológiai trendjébe illeszkedik bele,

The Aesthetics of Chaos and Testimony

Attila Stark's *Kulo City* in the context of the *Roham* magazine

Márió Z. Nemes

Since its foundation in 2006, *Roham* (*Assault*) magazine has been interested in promoting the interaction of different cultural spheres.¹ The literary manifestation of this strategy is that canonized writers and poets of contemporary literature publish simultaneously with representatives of the fantasy-sci-fi scene in the paper, as well as *outsider* authors who cannot be fit into the structure of the official literary system. This editorial principle can be considered unique in the context of Hungarian magazine publishing, since the system of magazines is still a monolithic one that strives to keep the different literary registers *clean*, i.e., it is hardly imaginable for representatives of the so-called mass genres and high cultural codes to be included in a common textual space. However, without underestimating the textual performance of *Roham*, it should be noted that the paper has won its cultic significance by managing to implement its program of visual border-crossing between cultural registers.

The visual turnover can be said to have taken place in 2007 when a number of freshly graduated graphic designers (Attila Stark, Géza Szöllősi, Zsolt Vidák, András B. Baranyai, etc.) and painters/visual artists (László Győrfi, Csaba Kis Róka) joined the editorial staff. The magazine issues created after this belong to a paradigm completely different from most of the cultural organs of the period, as here we are faced with a pictorial expansion, i.e., the requirement that the staged visuals are not a kind of post-ornament, a decoration that adorns the text from outside, but rather a meaning-making field that is of equal value with the text. This process fits the visual anthropological trend

amikor a különböző irányultságú művészeti és (szak)folyóiratok (*Symposion*, *Árgus*, *Prizma*, *Műút*, *Prae* stb.) elkezdték érzékelni önmaguk materialitását, vagyis ráébredtek arra, hogy nem lehet a betű primátusán felül alakítani a kulturális kínálatot.

Az ebben a kontextusban körvonalazódó programot a következőképp lehetne összefoglalni: Fel kell fedezni a lap testét és meg kell haladni azt a monokróm esztétikát, mely a fehér lap és a fekete betű kettősségeben gondolkodik. Vagyis meg kell válni attól a szövegkultúrából eredő megkölöböztetéstől, miszerint gondolatokat olvasunk és képeket nézünk. A dualista megközelítés helyett egy *fisiognómiai* tekintetre van szükség, mely megszünteti, illetve hibridizálja ezeket az ellentéteket. A fisiognómia eredeti értelemben annak művészete, hogy „valakinkek a látható alakjából kiindulva a bensője felől ítéljünk, akár érzékenységét, akár gondolkodásmódját illetően” (Immanuel Kant). Egy folyóirat fisiognómiai olvasása olyan művelet, mely nem egyszerűen a látható alakot helyezi előtérbe, és onnan hatol a benső jelentésig, hanem az a felszabadult esemény, amikor a szöveg és a kép médiuma egy közös pszichofizikai érzékenységen keveredik el.

A *Roham* oldalain ez a stratégia egyfajta kaotikus érzéxiséget eredményez. A szövegeket szinte szétszagatják a képi effektusok, melyek egymással sem alkotnak egységes vizuális paradigmát, ugyanis a szerkesztők nem törekedtek a radikális stíluspluralizmus (a street arttól a horror-esztétikáig) dekoratív összefűsülésére, inkább valamiféle posztmodern Kunst és Wunderkammer megteremtése volt a cél, melyben a popkulturális ikonográfia és a kortárs képzőművészeti kánon kölcsönösen megfertőzheti egymást. Ez a barokkos attitűd a poétikailag rokon *Symposion* folyóirattól² is megkölöbözteti a *Rohamot*, hiszen még a vajdasági lap szigorú tematikus szerkesztés segítségével próbálja számára újradefiniálni kép és szöveg viszonyrendszerét, addig a pesti magazin nem szolgált még átmeneti definíciókkal sem, ugyanis az egyetlen konцепció a vitális káoszérzékelés, melyet az esztétikai provokáció gesztusai motiválnak.

Ezen a ponton – előrevetítve a *magyar underground* képregény fogalmának kérdéssésséget – érdemes röviden utalni az *underground* fogalma körüli nehézségekre. A magyar tudományos diskurzusban az *underground*, az ellenkultúra, illetve az alternatív kultúra kifejezések a hatvanas, hetvenes, nyolcvanas évek olyan heterogén kulturális-művészeti képződményeire utalnak, melyek a hivatalos szocialista kultúrával, illetve esztétikai kánonnal való szembenállás gesztusa alapján definiálódtak.³ Ezekhez a kifejezésekhez gyakran társulnak az autenticitás és a szubverzivitás fogalmai, de az *underground* esetében jelen vannak a titkosság és a láthatatlanság motívumai is, hiszen a nem-hivatalos kultúracsinálás – magyar kontextusban leginkább neoavantgárd – stratégiája feltételezte az azonosíthatatlan

of the late 2000s in which the differently oriented artistic (and professional) magazines *Symposion*, *Árgus*, *Prizma*, *Műút*, *Prae* etc. began to perceive their own materiality, i.e. the fact that the cultural market cannot be formed taking the primacy of letters for granted.

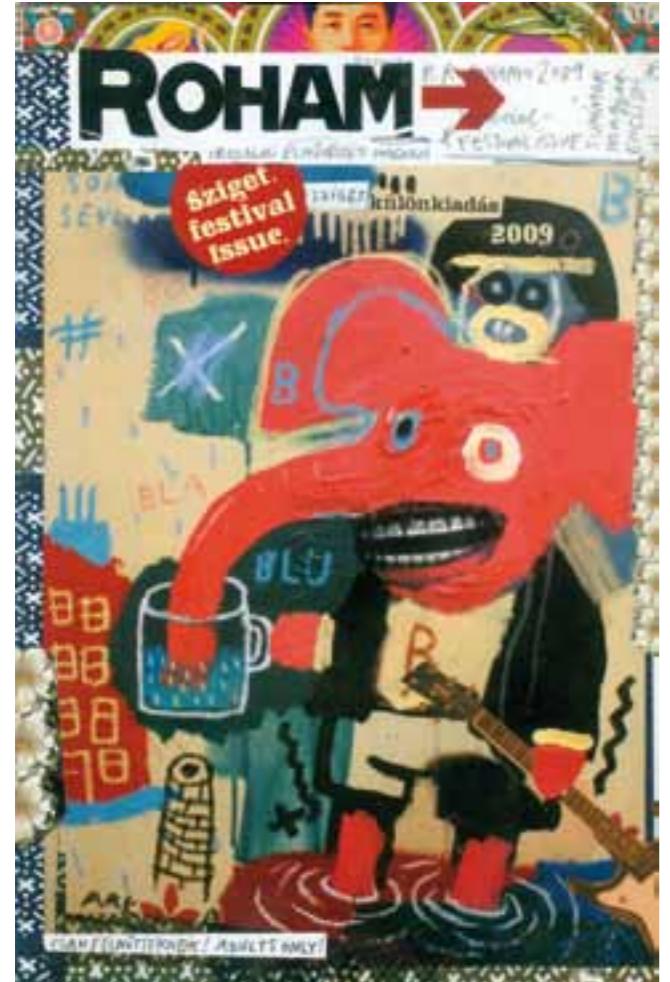
The program outlined in this context could be summed up as follows: The body of the page has to be discovered and a monochromatic aesthetics which thinks in the duality of white paper and black letters has to be transcended. In other words, one needs to get rid of the discrimination arising from textual culture claiming that thoughts are *read* and images are *seen*. Instead of a dualistic approach, one needs a physiognomic view that eliminates or hybridizes these contradictions. In its original sense, physiognomy is the art of ‘judging a person’s disposition or way of thinking by his visible form’ (Immanuel Kant). The physiognomic reading of a magazine is an operation that does not simply put the visible *form* to the fore and from there penetrates the *inner* meaning, but is a free event where the media of text and image mix in a common psychophysical sensitivity.

On the pages of *Roham*, this strategy results in a kind of chaotic sensuality. The texts are almost torn to pieces by the visual effects, which do not form a unified visual paradigm even with one another, because the editors did not seek to decoratively comb together the radical pluralism of styles (ranging from street art to the aesthetics of horror). Rather, the aim was the creation of some kind of postmodern *Kunst* and *Wunderkammer*, in which pop culture iconography and the contemporary art canon mutually *infect* each other. This baroque attitude distinguishes *Roham* from the poetically related *Symposion* magazine,² since while the Vojvodina paper tries to redefine the relationship of image and text from one issue to another, the Budapest magazine has not provided even temporary definitions, its only concept being vital chaos motivated by gestures of aesthetic provocation.

At this point, foreshadowing the conceptual problem of *Hungarian underground comics*, I should refer briefly to the difficulties surrounding the concept of the *underground*. In Hungarian academic discourse the terms *underground*, *counterculture* and *alternative culture* refer to the heterogeneous cultural-artistic formations of the sixties, seventies and eighties which have been defined according to their gestures opposing the official socialist culture and aesthetic canon.³ These expressions are often associated with the concepts of authenticity and subversion, but in the case of the underground the motives of secrecy and invisibility are present as well, for the strategy of unofficial *culture-making*, which in the Hungarian context has mostly been the neo-avant-garde, presupposed the position of the unidentifiable outsider. From this point of view, it is important to note that today these concepts have a historical and

kívülállás pozícióját. Saját szempontunkból fontos kiemelni, hogy ezek a fogalmak immár történeti-politikai indexszel rendelkeznek, vagyis a kortárs művészeti mozgásokra – a kulturnális struktúra meg változása miatt – nem, vagy csak erős fenntartásokkal, alkalmazhatóak.

A Roham poétikáját illetően talán az *alternatív* jelző jelenthet fogódzót, mégpedig a pluralitás, párhuzamosság, választhatóság értelmében, hiszen a káoszérzékelés a (kép)kultúra decentralizált felfogását implikálja, vagyis a különböző képnyelvek ideológiai megelőzettség nélküli szabad kombinálhatóságát feltételezi. Ugyanakkor a vitális társíthatóságnak ebben a demokratikus terében elbizonytalannodik a hivatalos és nem-hivatalos kultúra közti különbségtétel, mely az underground fogalom használhatóságának (egyik) alapja. Ami bizonyos szempontból emlékeztet a különböző (neo)avantgárd mozgalmak militáns attitűdjére az a lendületnek, dinamikának, erőnek a hangsúlyozása, mely már a – az expresszionista *der Sturm* utaló – névválasztásban is kifejeződik. „A Rohamot azért készítjük, hogy történjen valami. Hogy mindaz, amit művészetnek hívunk, ne csak zakatoló és unalmas önreflexió meg ideológia legyen,



Roham magazine cover, 2009

political index, i.e., due to a change in the cultural structure, they can be used for contemporary artistic movements with strong reservations or not at all.

Regarding the poetics of *Roham*, probably the attribute *alternative* can be referenced, especially if it means plurality, parallelism and electivity – since its perception of chaos implies a decentralized concept of (visual) culture – or if it assumes the free combination of different visual languages without ideological pretexts. At the same time, in this democratic space of vital associability, the differentiation between official and unofficial culture gets blurred, which is (one of) the base(s) of the applicability of the concept of *underground*. What is to some extent reminiscent of the militant attitude of various (neo-)avant-garde movements is the emphasis on movement, dynamics and strength, already reflected in the choice of their name associated with the expressionist *der Sturm*. ‘We make *Roham* because we want something to happen. We want what we call art to become something other than just rattling and boring self-reflection and ideology, to become an event. And there are few spaces where the generation born after the regime



Roham magazine (inside), 2009

hanem történés. És kevés az olyan felület, ahol a rendszerváltás utáni generáció elmesélhetné és viszontláthatná történetét. Alighanem ennek a generációnak forradalmi tette éppen az ilyen szabad felületek feltalálása lehet.’⁴ – írja Korchma Zsombor, a lap főszerkesztője, a 2007-es májusi szám előszavában. A dinamizmus (az eseményszerűség) kultiválása az esztétikai szubverzió iránti elköteleződéssel függ össze, hiszen a *Roham* káoszpoétikáját a linearitással, homogenitással, organikussággal szembeni averzió mellett a kulturális-esztétikai tabuk állandó felülírása jellemzi. A pornográfia, a horror, illetve a kulturális szenny minden formája iránti vonzódás azonban nem merül ki egy sokkesztéka kiszolgálásában, inkább a különböző ízlésregiszterek közti éles váltásokból adódó vizuális *irritáció* jellemzi az elérni kívánt hatást. Mindez Georges Bataille *Documents* című folyóiratának képpoétikáját idézi, ahol a vizuális heterogenitás szinte kioltotta az egyes képek által közvetített tartalmakat, ugyanakkor valahol a vitalitás és a megszünés határán mégis új (forma)minőségek teremtődtek, vagyis az irritáció nem csupán zavart hoz létre az érzékelésben, hiszen a látás *kisiklatása* új perspektívák megszületését is jelentheti.⁵

A *Roham* egyik központi jelentőségű vizuális *műfaja* (az illusztrációk és kollázsok mellett) a képregény. Magyarországon – összefüggésben a szocialista korszak képregény-ellenes kultúrpolitikájával⁶ – nem beszélhetünk nagy hagyományra visszatekintő és virulens képregénykultúráról. A kétezres években ugyan megkezdődött a mára klasszikussá vált szerzők (Art Spiegelman, Enki Bilal, Moebius, Alan Moore stb.) alapműveinek színvonalas megjelentetése, illetve a magyar szerzői színtér kiépülése, de ezek a folyamatok pénzügyi és kulturális kontextusban sem jelentettek maradandó sikert. A magyar kulturális közegben (értlevezetőként a képzőművészeti szcenát is) a képregény *láthatóvá* vált ugyan, de megmaradt egyfajta egzotikus senkiföldjének. (Ebből a szempontból üdítő kivétel képez a *Műút* irodalmi folyóirat, mely már indulása (2007) óta rendelkezik képregénymelléklettel, illetve rendszeresen közöl képregényelméleti írásokat.)

Ebben a közegben a *Rohamban* közölt – illetve a Roham Kiadó által könyv/füzet alakban megjelentetett⁷ – underground/alternatív/szerzői képregények egyszerre számítanak úttörő jelentőségűnek és zárványszerűnek, hiszen képregénykultúra, illetve képregényes mainstream hiányában ezeknek a műveknek a progresszivitása csak hézagosan értelmezhető.⁸ Túlzó általánosítás nélkül nehéz a népes szerzőgárda (Szöllősi Géza, Stark Attila, Csordás Dániel, Dorcsinecz János, Baranyai B. András, Sirály Dóri, Kárpáti Tibor, Gróf Balázst stb.) által képviselt poétikákat összefoglalni, hiszen ahogy azt már többször megjegyeztem, a *Roham* egészére a plurális gondolkodás jellemző. Annyit azonban ki lehet jelenteni – és ez a később részleteseben tárgyalandó Stark Attila művészettel fokozottan jellemző

change could tell and see their story. Probably this generation's revolution act is exactly the invention of such free spaces.⁴ These are the words of Zsombor Korchma, editor-in-chief of the magazine, in the preface to the May 2007 issue. The cultivation of dynamism (the *event-likeness*) is related to the commitment to aesthetic subversion, since apart from the aversion towards linearity, homogeneity and organicity, the chaos poetics of *Roham* has been characterized by a constant overwriting of cultural and aesthetic taboos. However, attraction to pornography, horror and all forms of cultural *trash* is not limited to serving an aesthetics of shock, but is also intended to achieve a visual *irritation* resulting from sharp transitions between various registers of taste. This is reminiscent of the visual poetics of Georges Bataille's magazine *Documents*, where visual heterogeneity almost extinguished the content conveyed by each image, yet somewhere on the verge of eliminating vitality new qualities (of form) were born. In this sense, irritation does not only create confusion in perception, but the *derailment of vision* can also mean the birth of new perspectives.⁵

One of the central visual genres of *Roham* (in addition to illustration and collage) is comics. For reasons related to the anti-comics cultural policy of the socialist era,⁶ we cannot speak of a virulent tradition of comics culture in Hungary. Even though in the 2000s quality publishing of the main works of now-classic authors (Art Spiegelman, Enki Bilal, Moebius, Alan Moore, etc.) and the foundation of a Hungarian authorial scene were begun, these processes did not mean lasting success in either the financial or cultural context. In the Hungarian cultural context (meaning here the visual art scene as well), comics did become *visible*, but they have remained a kind of exotic no man's land. (From this point of view, a refreshing exception is the literary magazine *Műút* (*Driveway*), which has a comics supplement and regularly publishes articles on the theory of comics since its foundation in 2007).

In this environment, the underground/alternative/authorial comics published in *Roham* magazine and by Roham Publishing House in the form of books or booklets⁷ can be considered simultaneously works of pioneer significance as well as conformity, since in the absence of a comics culture and a comics mainstream the progressivity of these works can be understood only imperfectly.⁸ It is difficult to summarize the poetics represented by a team of a great number of authors (Géza Szöllősi, Attila Stark, Dániel Csordás, János Dorcsinecz, András B. Baranyai, Dóri Sirály, Tibor Kárpáti, Balázs Gróf, etc.) without excessive generalization because, as I have already pointed out, pluralistic thinking is always a characteristic of *Roham*. However, it can be claimed – and this is highly characteristic of Attila Stark's art that will be discussed at greater length below – that the aesthetics preferred by the magazine goes against the commonly

– hogy a magazin által preferált esztétika szembemegy azzal a közlelőtű elképzéssel, miszerint a képregény mediális sajátossága a történetek kép és szavak kombinációjában történő elmesélése.⁹ Ezzel a narratíva-centrikus értelmezéssel – melynek sok mainstream képregény megfelel(het) – szemben itt egy olyan elképzés érvényesül, mely ha nem is töri el teljesen a narratívát, kép és szöveg kapcsolatát nem a kölcsönös szemantikai *kiegészítés*, hanem a kreatív irritáció dimenziójában értelmezi. Az irritáció nem (de)konstruál szükségszerűen történt, inkább egy olyan szuggesztív – egyszerre kognitív és érzéki – eseményt tár fel, melynek narratív mozzanatai is lehetnek.

Ebből a szempontból Aleksandra Sekulić és Radovan Popović értelmezését érzem termékenynek: „Régen, és még annál is régebben beszélnek a képregény problémájáról, mint két médium, az írott szó és a kimondott szó hibridjéről, megejtően ovális felhőcskékbe sűrítve. Szánalmas mainstream utódai, akik vakon követik a mainstream túlkapásait, és belevesznek a „szöveget rendelni képhez” szószerintiségebe, képtelenek látni saját médiumukat, a képregényt, amely, hogy századszor is elismételjük: nem csupán ezen két kifejezési formának az egyszerű összeadása, hanem éppen ellenkezőleg, és mintegy ellenében a hétköznapi számítannak, valami közöttes: a látszólag üres tér két képregénykocka között, a kimondhatatlanul lebegő a három pont felett; ismeretlen, de érzéklethes...”¹⁰ A(z alternatív) képregény tehát valami *ismeretlen* és távollévő *közöttes*, vagyis racionálisan nem kisajtitható, hiszen mindenig elmozdul a jelen-tételektől elöl, mert lényege szerint hiányt követít. Ugyanakkor a hiány érzékelhető, mert az így színre vitt távollét érzékleleg irritálja a befogadót, aki a szó és kép közöttében való imaginárius utazást élvez. Ez az élvezet nem egyszerűen a jelentésadás kudarcából táplálkozik, hiszen akkor *csupán* nem értenékn azt, amit látunk, hanem inkább a jelentések és jelek közti érzéki *elidőzésből*, mely „szellemileg-fizikailag oszcilláló elevenségtapasztalatban” (K. Ludwig Pfeiffer) részesít a befogadót.

Ha az alternatív képregény egyik meghatározó jegye a hiány színrevitele, akkor lehet-e alkalmassabb médium nála az Én színreviteléhez? A szubjektum illékony szerkezete képantropológiai értelemben ugyancsak egyfajta érzéki távollétként fogható fel, mint ami a képek és önreprezentációk által mindenig *megmutatkozni* kíván, de sohasem tehet szert teljes jelenlétére, híven Hans Belting definíciójához, miszerint az „ember a képek üres helye.”¹¹ Az előbbiek értelmében tehát az alternatív képregény szubjektivizmusa – a mainstream művekhez képest – mediálisan (is) megalapoztnak túnik. Ez a vonás erősödik fel akkor, amikor a képregény (ön)reflexív módon fel is próbálja mutatni a szó és kép közöttében oszcilláló Ént, vagyis amikor a művész – autofikciós módon – önnön önéletrajzát teszi meg a mű kiindulópontjául. A Roham szerzőgárdjából Stark Attila az a szerző, aki egy hangsúlyozottan biográfiai alapú, *vallomásos* poétikát

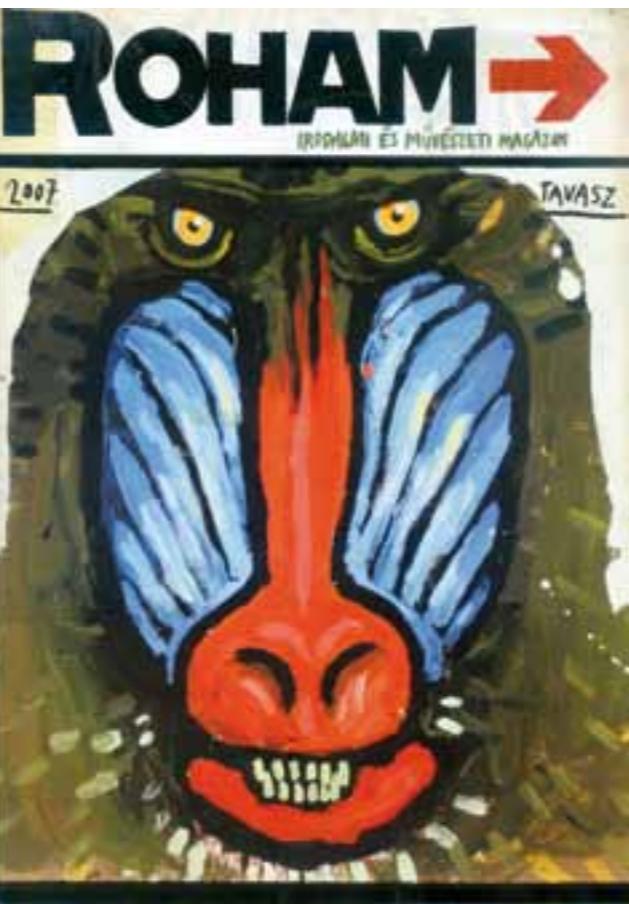
held notion that the medial specificity of comics is *storytelling* through the combination of images and words.⁹ As opposed to this narrative-centered interpretation with which many mainstream comics (may) comply, the idea that prevails here, even if it does not abolish the narrative completely, is to interpret the relationship of image and text not in terms of reciprocal semantic *supplements*, but as creative irritation. Irritation does not necessarily (de)construct a story, but rather reveals a suggestive event that is both cognitive and emotional and that could also have narrative moments.

In this respect, I consider the interpretation by Radovan Popovic and Aleksandra Sekulic to be productive: ‘For ages and ages there has been a lot of talk about the problem of comics as the hybrid of two media, the written and the spoken word charmingly concentrated in an oval bubble. The pathetic mainstream descendants blindly follow the excesses of the mainstream and get lost in the word-for-word meaning of ‘assigning text to image’, unable to see their medium, the comic, which is – to repeat for the hundredth time – not only the mere sum of these two forms of expression, but on the contrary, and as opposed to everyday arithmetic, something in-between: a seemingly empty space between two frames of a comic, the unspeakable floating above the three dots; unknown, but expressive ...’¹⁰ The (alternative) comic is therefore some *unknown* and distant *in-betweenness*, i.e., rationally impossible to appropriate since it always moves away from meaning-making because mediating a deficit is its inherent property. However, this deficit is *expressive*, since this staged absence becomes a sensory irritation to the beholder, who enjoys the imaginary travel in the *in-betweenness* of word and image. The enjoyment does not simply feed from the failures of signification, as in that case we would not just understand what we see, but rather from the sensual *lingering* between the meanings and signs, which grants the recipient a ‘mentally-physically oscillating experience of liveliness’ à la K. Ludwig Pfeiffer.

If one of the defining features of the alternative comic is the staging of absence, can there then be a more suitable medium for the staging of the Self? The volatile structure of the subject in a visual anthropological sense can also be understood as a kind of sensual absence that has a permanent urge to show itself but can never gain full presence, according to Hans Belting’s definition that ‘the person is the empty space of images.’¹¹ Thus, in this sense the *subjectivism* of alternative comics, compared to the mainstream, seems (also) medially justified. This feature intensifies when the comic book tries to show the Self oscillating between the word and the image in a (self-)reflexive manner, i.e., when the artist in an auto-fictional way makes his or her own biography the starting point of the work. Within the creative team of Roham, Attila Stark is the author who represents

képvisel, bár azt már az elemzés elején le kell szögeznünk, hogy az Énnek a *Kulo Cityben* való színrevitele nem jelent közvetlen önkifejezést, inkább egyfajta önszimulációról van szó, ahol az Én valóságeffektusok (Roland Barthes) és fikcionális aktusok segítségével – mint művészeti konstrukció – teremtődik meg.

Stark Attila 2005-ban diplomázott a Magyar Iparművészeti Egyetemen. Diplomamunkája a – Roham Kiadó által 2007-ben megjelentetett – *Kulo City – Kula Jani kalandjai* című művész-könyv. Ez a kötet egy olyan mediális hibrid, mely egyszerre vázlatkönyv, pszeudo-napló és képregényszekvenciákat, festményeket egyaránt tartalmazó művészeti album. „Stark Attila bizonyos értelemben újra feltalálta a könyvet. Azt a könyvet, amely nem nagypari termék, hanem kézműves alkotás. Amelyet nem egy meghatározott üzenet sokszorosítása miatt hozott csak létre, hanem a létrehozás örömeért is.”¹² A kézműves-jelleg valóban meghatározó, hiszen a Stark-féle poétika alapvető mozzanata a személyesség auráját szuggeráló *kéznyom* állandó jelenléte. A képek tobzódnak az expresszív, festői gesztusokban, a figurák jellegzetesen *elrajzolt*, neoprimitív firkákból épülnek fel, illetve a képszekvenciákban megjelenő szövegek is kézírásos formában jelennek meg. Ebbe a festői-grafikai térbe aztán fotókat, plakátokat, talált fecmeket implikál a művész, eközben a beillesztés technikai jellege is reflektálódik,

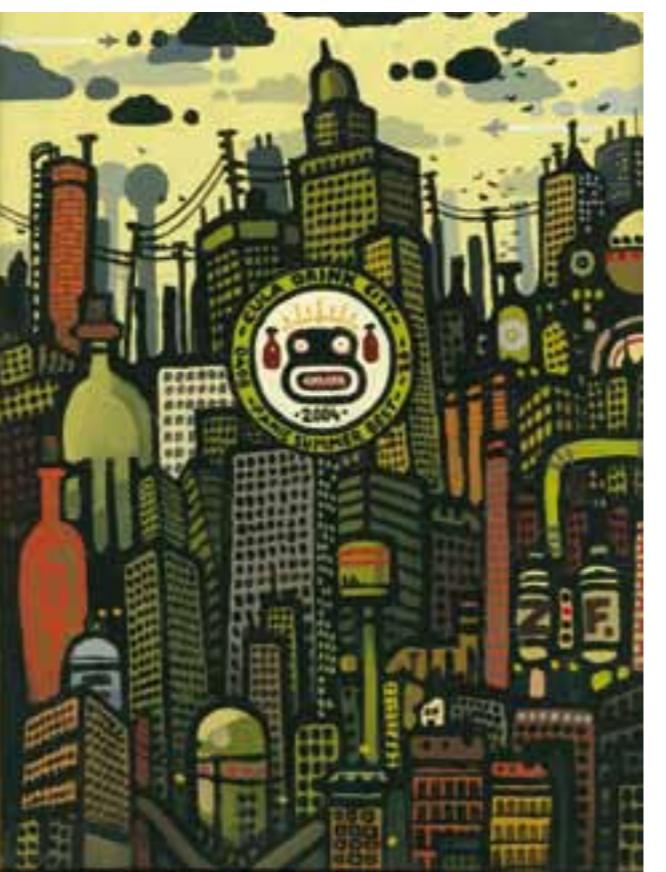
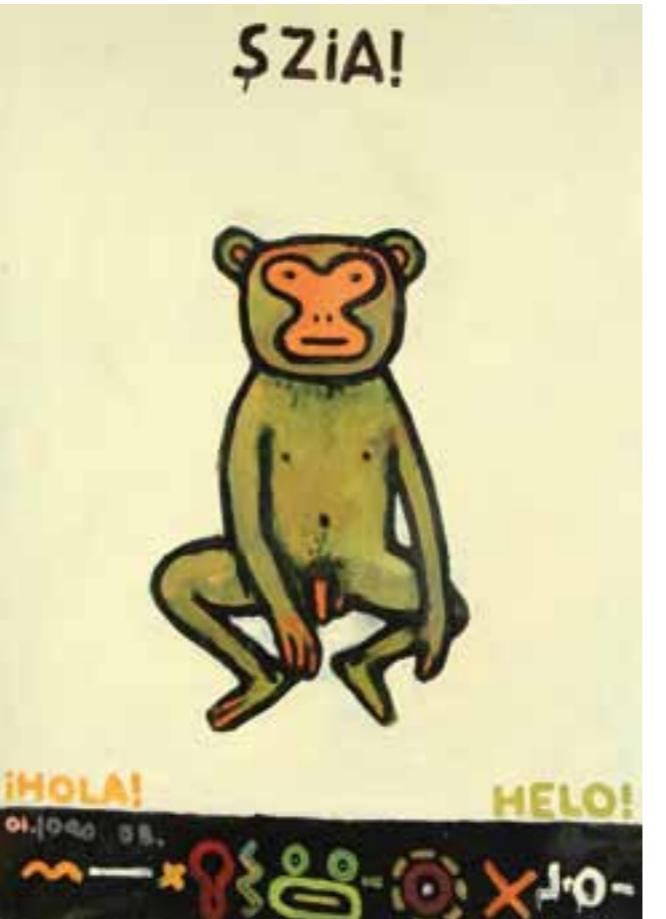
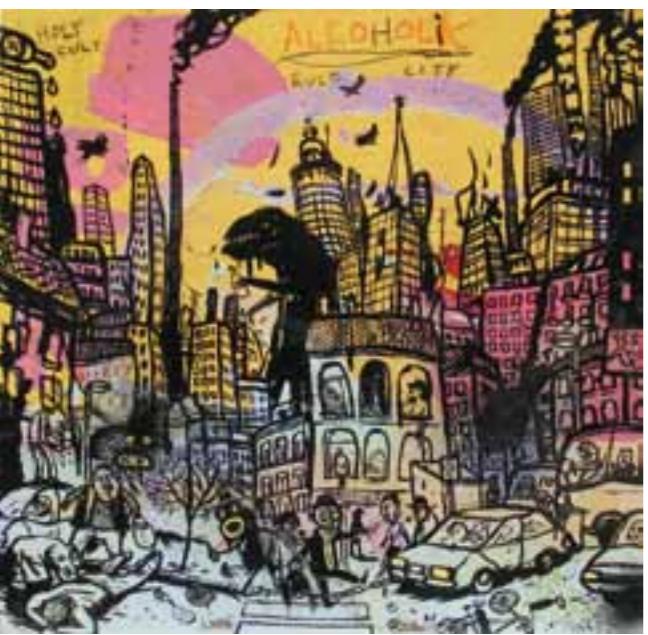
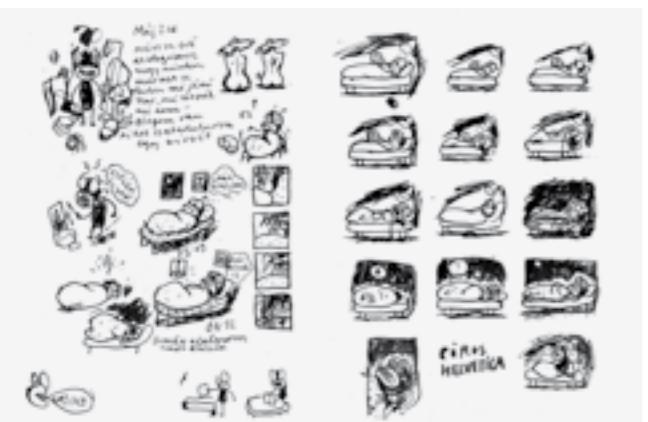
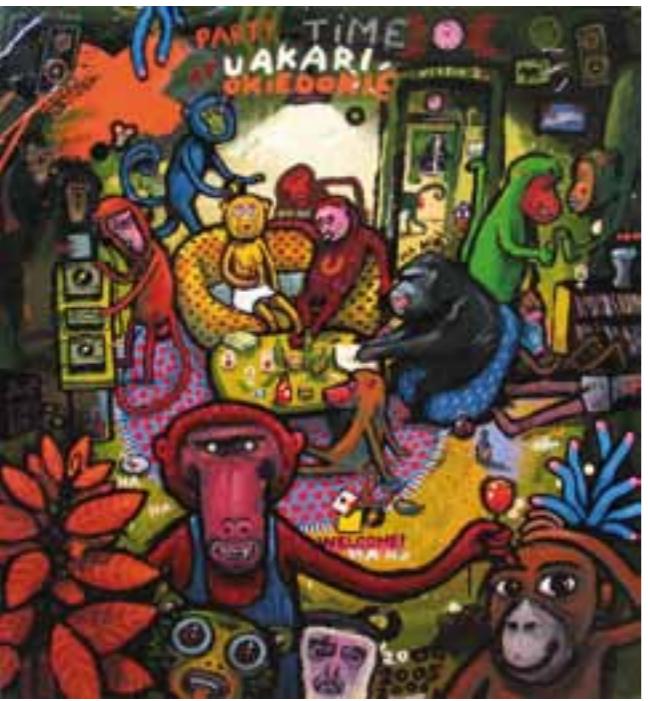


Roham magazine Cover, 2007

a strongly biographical *testimonial* poetics, although already at this early stage of analysis it must be clearly noted that the staging of the Self in *Kulo City* does not mean a direct self-expression, but rather a kind of self-simulation where the Self is created through *reality effects* (Roland Barthes) and fictional acts as an artistic construct.

Attila Stark graduated from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts in 2005. His thesis work was the art book *Kulo City – Kula Jani kalandjai* (*Kulo City -- The Adventures of Jani Kula*). This volume is a medial hybrid that is at the same time both a sketch book and an artistic album that contains a pseudo-diary, sequences of comics and paintings. ‘Attila Stark in a sense re-invented the book. The book that is not a mass product, but a handicraft. Which he created not only for duplicating a specific message, but also for the joy of creation.’¹² The handicraft-likeness is truly defining, since the basic feature of Stark’s poetics is the constant presence of the *handprint* suggesting privacy. The images are replete with expressive pictorial gestures, the characters are typically built from smeared, neo-primitive scratches, and the texts in the sequences of images appear in handwritten form. Into this painted/graphic space the artist then includes photos, posters and scraps that he has found, while the technical nature of the insertions is also reflected in order for the end product to display the ambivalent interplay of rawness and decorativity. The previously discussed poetics of chaos enters into operation here, but at the same time the establishment of this decentralization requires a strict aesthetic control, which turns the artistic automatisms into integral parts of the volume’s composition.

The word *kulo* that appears in the title can (also) refer to the Hungarian word *kula*, i.e., *sputum*, *saliva*, *shit*, however, according to one of Stark’s interviews¹³ the phrase comes from a Spanish rhyme lining up ‘F’ words.¹⁴ With this interference between languages, *kulo* becomes a general signifier of abject contents, and coupled with the word *city* it conveys the ironic inversion of *sin city*. In other words, already from the title it can be seen that *Kulo City* can be interpreted as a kind of parodic city-book that tries to collect the traces of the Self through the subjective mapping of urban spaces. The connection between the city and art is a recurring theme of Stark’s art, as he has been a member of the street art group called *1000%*, which is responsible for the decorative work of the most frequented sites of Budapest ruin pub culture (Mumus I and II, Szimpla Kert, Túzraktér, Kiadó, Palánk, Roham Bár, etc.). Both the ruin pub paintings and the street art projects fit into Stark’s aesthetic program of individualizing the city. From this perspective, the individual works can be understood as *spatial practices* à la Michel de Certeau which break up the grand narratives along the lines of individually used and aesthetically appropriated spaces. ‘Behind the



hogy a végeredmény nyersesség és dekorativitás ambivalens összjátékát mutassa. A korábban már tárgyalt káoszpoétika lép itt is működésbe, ugyanakkor ennek a decentralizáltságnak a létrehozása szigorú esztétikai kontrollt követel meg, mely a művészeti automatizmusokat a kötet kompozíciójának integráns részévé avatja.

A címben megjelenő *kulo* szó a magyar *kula*, vagyis *köpet, nyál, szar* szavakra (is) utal, ugyanakkor Stark egyik interjú-nyilatkozata szerint¹³ a kifejezés egy csúnya szavakat felsorakoztató spanyol mondókából származik.¹⁴ A *kulo* ezzel a nyelvek közti interferenciával az abject-tartalmak általános jelöljévé válik és a city szóhoz társulva a bűnös város toposzának ironikus kifordítását követíti. Vagyis már a címből is láthatjuk, hogy a *Kulo City* egyfajta parodisztikus városkönyvnek is felfogható, mely az urbánus terek szubjektív feltérképezése által próbálja összegyűjteni az Én nyomait. A város és a művészet összekapcsolása Stark művészeti visszatérő motívuma, hiszen tagja annak az 1000% nevű street art csoportosulásnak, mely a budapesti romkocsmakultúra legfrekventáltabb helyszíneinek (Mumus I.-II., Szimpla Kert, Tűzraktér, Kiadó, Palánk, Roham Bár stb.) dekorációs munkáiért felelős. A romkocsmafestészet és a street art projektek Starknál egyaránt a város individualizálásának esztétikai programjába illeszkednek. Ebből a szempontból az egyes művek olyan térgyakorlatokként (Michel de Certeau) foghatóak fel, melyek az urbanizmus nagy elbeszéléseit az individuális használatba vett és esztétikailag kisajátított helyek mentén bontják fel. „A várost ideológiákkal átszövő diskurzusok mögött szaporodnak a meragadhatatlan pozíciójú, olvashatatlan identitású, racionális áttetszőséget nélkülező erők cselszövései és szövetkezései, melyeket lehetetlen irányítani.”¹⁵

A *Kulo City*-ben ez a meragadhatatlan pozíciójú szubjektum egy ember és majom köztő hibridlény (Kula Jani) alakjában jelenik meg. A majomság a figura ösztönlény voltát hivatott hangsúlyozni, ugyanakkor ez az animalitás nem fenyegető, inkább a szubjektum kiszolgáltatottságáterősítő, illetve az ábrázolás humoros-ironikus regisztereit szervezi.¹⁶ Kula Jani vágyai és érzelmei strukturálják magát a kötetet is: az első fejezet (I. I have ...) egy állapot- és valósággregisztráció, a második (II. I hate ...) egy (belő) konfliktus ábrázolása, míg a harmadik (III. I want ...) a konfliktus megoldása utáni állapotot és a lehetőséges jövőt körvonalazza. Mit szeret, illetve hogyan él Kula Jani? Vágyai látszólag nem bonyolultak: szeret enni, inni, ülni, ácsorogni, hanyatt-, hason-, oldalt feküdni, fejjel lefelé lenni. Mindez Budapesten szereti csinálni, mely városhoz ugyanakkor ambivalens érzelmek fűzik: „Budapest rettentő szutyok hely. Mégis itt élünk. Kénytelenek vagyunk. Én speciel szeretem ezt a várost, de utálon is annyira, hogy szívesen itt hagynám, ha tudnám, hova ... mit...”¹⁷ A kötet első feletérképekkel, a városgyűjteményekkel, illetve a baráti kört ábrázoló skickekkel, fotókkal,

discourses permeating the city with ideologies, the intrigues and alliances of forces with ungraspable positions, illegible identities and a lack of rational transparency are reproduced.¹⁵

In *Kulo City* this subject with an *ungraspable position* appears in the form of a hybrid being between human and ape (Jani Kula). The apelike qualities are intended to emphasize the instinctual nature of the character; however, this animality is not threatening but rather reinforces the subject's vulnerability and organizes the humorous-ironic registers of the portrayal.¹⁶ Jani Kula's desires and emotions structure the volume: the first chapter (I: I have ...) is a registration of a situation and reality, the second (II: I hate ...) is a representation of a(n internal) conflict, while the third (III: I want ...) outlines the situation after the resolution of the conflict and the possible future. What does Jani Kula like and how does he live? His desires are apparently not complicated: he likes to eat, drink, sit, stand around, lie on his back, on his stomach, and be upside down. He likes to do all these in Budapest, the city towards which he has ambivalent feelings: 'Budapest is a damn awful place. Yet we live here. We are made to. I personally love this city, but I also hate it enough to be happy to leave it, if I only knew where ... what ...'¹⁷ The first half of the volume is full of maps depicting some parts of the city, sketches, photos, paintings of the circle of friends, and journal-like entries reflecting on these; from these pseudo-documents we learn about Jani Kula's urban everyday life. Based on these, Stark's character is the parodic, animalized distortion of the bohemian, urban artist and Benjamin's *flâneur*, who, instead of searching for sophisticated and complex aesthetic qualities, lives the urban existence as sensual hedonism. He has no self-reflection, more precisely the story of the book shows exactly the formation of this self-reflection, since with its creation, *Kulo City* as a work of art proves that Kula was able to recognize and organize his own destiny as an aesthetic order. In other words, the book stages at the same time its own birth, and inseparably from this the birth of the artistic subject.

In this respect, Stark's volume is a kind of educational story and can also be read as an artist's novel. Kostil Danila's film *Kulocity* (2010)¹⁸ also uses this interpretation, which leads to the linearization of Stark's fragmented visual imagery and split narratives in the course of the adaptation, while the parallel amplification of the biographical dimension reduces the complex subjectivity of the original work.¹⁹ As opposed to this biased referential reading, the relationship between testimoniality and fiction is far from clear-cut, since, as already noted, the alternative comic medially supports the display of center-less subjects: 'The comic's constructions of Self are therefore increasingly complex, fragmented, contradictory and unstable, to which simultaneously the easily shifting points of view and the complex narration using image and text further contribute.'²⁰ *Kulo*

festményekkel és az ezeket reflektáló, naplószerű bejegyzésekkel van tele, vagyis ezekből a pszeudo-dokumentumokból ismerhetjük meg Kula Jani urbánus hétköznapjait. Ezek alapján Stark figurája a bohém, nagyvárosi művész és benjamini kószáló (flanőr) parodiztikus – animalizált – torzképe, aki ami a kifinomult és komplex esztétikai minőségek kutatása helyett érzéki habzsolásért éli meg a városi létet. Önreflexiója nincsen, pontosabban a könyv története épp ennek az önreflexiónak a kialakulását mutatja be, hiszen a *Kulo City* mint műalkotás a létrejöttével bizonyítja, hogy Kula képes volt esztétikai rendkint felismerni és megszervezni önnön sorsát. Vagyis a kötet egyszerre viszi színe önmaga – és ettől elválaszthatatlanul – a művész szubjektum megszületését.

Ebből a szempontból Stark kötete egyfajta nevelődéstörténetként, illetve művészregényként is olvasható. Kostil Danila *Kulocity* (2010) című filmje¹⁸ is ezzel az értelmezéssel él, ami ahhoz vezet, hogy Stark fragmentált képi világa és narratíva-törökéi linearizálódnak az adaptáció során, miközben a biográfiai dimenzió párhuzamos felerősítése redukálja az eredeti mű komplex szubjektumkezelését.¹⁹ Ezzel az egyoldalúan referenciális olvasattal szemben a kötetben távolról sem egyértelmű a vallomásosság és a fikció viszonya, hiszen – ahogy azt már korábban is megjegyeztem – az alternatív képregény mediálisan is támogatja a középpont nélküli szubjektumok megjelenítését: „A képregényes énkonstrukciók tehát fokozott mértékben összetettek, tagoltak, ellentmondásosak és instabilak, amihez a hangulatok és érzések változatos képi megjelenítési lehetőségei, valamint a képet és szöveget egyaránt használó komplex narráció mellett a könnyen változtatható nézőpontok is hozzájárulnak.”²⁰ A *Kulo City* számos olyan megoldással él, melyek a személyesség, intimitás, önéletrajziság hatását próbálja kelteni, de ezek az elemek nem a közvetlen valóság reflektálatlan tényei, hanem a művész konstrukció szolgálatában álló poétikai effektusok. Itt van például a kézírásos üzenetek, feliratok, bejegyzések kérdése. A kézírás a lejegyző személy testi jelenlétének érzéki nyoma, a szubjektum egyfajta hitelesítő pecsétje, illetve – grafológiai-pszichológiai értelemben – az Én megismerhetőségenek egyik eszköze. A kézírás művészeti használása esetében azonban egy határátlépéssel van dolgunk, hiszen szó és kép kölcsönös irritációja meg végbe, miközben egy olyan köztesség nyílik fel, melyben a szubjektumhoz vezető nyomok elkeverednek. Stark tehát a kézírással egy szubjektum jelenlétét műmeli, de ezzel nem hozzáérhetővé teszi az alanyt, hanem műalkotást – konstrukciót – hoz létre belőle, miközben a valóság és fikció jeleit esztétikai struktúrába szervezi.

Hasonlóan működik a *The Shit Catalog of Our Districts* című vegyes technikájú képszekvencia is. A *Kulo City*-nek ezt az oldalt különböző eredetű, változatos formájú fekaliákról készített fotókollázs alkotja. Az oldal tetején a kutyáját sétaítató Kula

City uses a number of solutions which try to create the effect of privacy, intimacy and biographicality, but these elements are not the direct unreflected facts of reality, rather poetic effects in the service of artistic design. Take, for example, the problem of handwritten messages, captions and entries. Handwriting is the sensible trace of the physical presence of the person writing, a kind of subject's stamp authentication or in a graphological and psychological sense one of the tools for *recognition of the Self*. However, in the case of the artistic use of handwriting we can speak about a border-crossing, since what is taking place is the mutual irritation of words and images, while an in-betweenness is opened up in which the traces leading to the subject intermingle. Thus, with handwriting Stark mimics the presence of a subject, but this still does not make the subject available but instead creates a work of art, a construct, while organizing the signs of reality and fiction into an aesthetic structure.

The sequence of images with a mixed technique entitled *The Shit Catalog of Our Districts* works in a similar way. This page of *Kulo City* is made up of a photo collage of feces of various origins and shapes. At the top of the page Jani Kula can be seen walking his dog, so if we follow the biographical code, we can assume that this is a personal collection recorded by the camera of a *real character* rambling in the city. However, there is not any solid evidence for this; what we see is just a set of pseudo-documents, which are components of an aesthetic field practice. This field practice takes the form of a sort of ironic city advertisement, since Stark introduces feces as art as an attraction of the living space of Budapest. The fecal matter as a ready-made does not only signify an aesthetization, i.e., a display of the richness of its abstract forms, but is at the same time also an ironic manifesto about the essence of metropolitan life that successfully deconstructs the system of tragic-heroic urban ideologies.

In summary, it can be claimed that *Kulo City* is one of the significant achievements of the aesthetics of chaos represented by *Roham* magazine and the diasporic alternative comics scene. Stark managed to validly summarize the most varied processes and paradigms of image-making, and in such a manner that the end result is not exhausted in empty technical professionalism, but is capable of conveying important claims about urban existence and the complex relationship of the city and the subject. Furthermore, what also makes the work significant is that *Kulo City* stages the Self using the medial characteristics of the alternative comic, i.e., he creates a pseudo-testimonial poetics unique to the contemporary comic which renews the visual forms of self-talk with the toolkit of poetic inventiveness.

Jani is látható, vagyis ha az életrajziság kódját követjük, akkor feltételezhetjük, hogy itt egy személyes gyűjteményről van szó, melyet a városban kószáló valós figura rögzített fényképezőgéppel. Ugyanakkor erre nincs semmilyen szilárd bizonyíték, amit látunk, az csupán pszeudo-dokumentumok halmaza, melyek egy esztétikai térgyakorlat elemei. Ez a térgyakorlat egyfajta ironikus városreklám formáját ölti, hiszen Stark a fekáliát a budapesti élettér látványosságaként avatja művészetté. A fekália mint ready-made nem csupán az abject esztétizálását – absztrakt formmagazdagságának felmutatását – jelenti, hanem egyúttal ironikus manifesztum a nagyvárosi életvitel lényegéről, mely sikerkel írja szé a tragikus-heroikus urbánus ideológiák rendszerét is.

Az eddigieket összefoglalva kijelenthetjük, hogy a *Kulo City* a *Roham* magazin által képviselt káoszesztetika és szórványállapotban létező alternatív képregényszíntér egyik fontos teljesítménye. Starknak sikertűl érvényes formában összegeznie a legkülönbözőbb képalkotási eljárásokat és paradigmákat, még hozzá úgy, hogy a végeredmény nem merül ki üres technikai profizmusban, hanem képes jelentős állításokat közvetíteni az urbánus létezésmóról, illetve a város és a szubjektum összetett kölcsönviszonyáról. Emellett az is jelentőssé teszi a munkát, hogy a *Kulo City* az alternatív képregény mediális sajátosságait kihasználva hajtja végre az Én színrevitelét, vagyis egy olyan – kortárs mezőnyben egyedülálló – pszeudo-vallomásos poétikát hoz létre, mely az énbeszélés vizuális formáit a költői invenció eszköztárával újítja meg.

¹ A 2009-es erotica-szám volt az eddigi utolsó, nyomtatott formában megjelent *Roham*-lapszám. Ezután elkészült még a 2010/őszi szám is, de ez már csak elektronikus formában tekinthető meg a rohamarchive.blogspot.hu oldalon, ahol a korábbi magazinok, illetve a *Roham*-kollektíva más munkái megtalálhatóak. A magazinhoz köthető alkotók még mindig számos művészeti projektben (ilyen volt például az *Organs & Ecstasy* (organsandextasy.blogspot.hu) csoportos kiállítás Besztercebányán) dolgoznak együtt, és a lap újraindításának híre is rendszeresen szárnyra kap. Mindezek miatt nem egyértelmű, hogy a *Roham*ról múlt vagy jelen időben érdemes-e inkább beszélni.

² A *Symposion* és a *Roham* alkotósgárdája között több együttműködés is létesült. Ezek közül a legfontosabb a *Symposion* Tolnai-száma (No. 59.), melyben a két folyóirat képzőművészei Tolnai Ottó versei alapján készítettek képszöveg fúziókat, ú.n. vizualizációkat. Ennek a lapszámnak az anyagát aztán – többek között – a pesti Roham Galériában mutatták be 2010. szeptemberében.

³ „A Kádár korszak kontextusában az underground kifejezés sok esetben azt a meglehetősen heterogén kulturális világot jelentette, amelybe a háború előtti polgári kultúra túlélői, a nem-kommunista baloldali értelmiségek csoportjai, az 1956-os forradalom prominensei, tovább a hatalom által perifériára szorított kulturális, tudományos, művészeti irányzatok (avantgárd művészeti, szellemi történet, pszichoanalízis) képviselői egyaránt beletartoztak.” – írja Havasréti József in: Uő.: *Alternatív regiszterek – A kulturális ellenállás formái a magyar neoavantgárdban*, Typotex, Budapest, 2006, i. h. 26.

⁴ Korchma Zsombor: *Nehézserelem*, in: *Roham* 4, 2007/tavasz, http://www.roham.hu/magazin_view.php?cmd=view&id=15

⁵ Vö. Georges Didi-Huberman: *Formlose Ähnlichkeiten oder die Fröhliche Wissenschaft des Visuellen nach Georges Bataille*, München, 2010.

¹ The 2009 erotica issue was the last edition of *Roham* published in printed form. After that, the 2010/Fall edition was prepared, but can be read only in electronic form on the rohamarchive.blogspot.hu website, where earlier magazines and other works of the *Roham*-collective can be found. The authors associated with the magazine still cooperate in a number of artistic projects (such as, for example, the *Organs & Ecstasy* (organsandextasy.blogspot.hu) group exhibition in Banska Bystrica), and news about the re-launch of the magazine is regularly heard. For these reasons, it is not clear whether it is worth talking about *Roham* in the past or present tense.

² There has been vast cooperation between the creative teams of *Symposion* and *Roham*. The most important of these is the Tolnai issue of *Symposion* (No. 59.), in which the visual artists of the two magazines created picture-text fusions, i.e. visualizations based on Ottó Tolnai's poems. The material of this issue was then, among other places, exhibited in the Roham Gallery in Budapest in September 2010.

³ ‘In the context of the Kádár era the expression *underground* meant in many cases the quite heterogeneous cultural world in which survivors of the pre-war *bourgeois* culture, groups of non-Communist left-wing intellectuals, prominent figures of the 1956 revolution, as well as the representatives of those cultural, scientific and artistic trends (avant-garde art, spiritual history, psychoanalysis) that have been marginalized by those in power were all included.’ József Havasréti (2006) in: *Alternatív regiszterek – A kulturális ellenállás formái a magyar neoavantgárdban* (Alternative Registers - Forms of Cultural Resistance to the Hungarian Neo-avant-garde), Budapest: Typotex, pp. 26.

⁴ Zsombor Korchma (2007), *Nehézserelem* (Difficult love), in: *Roham* 4, 2007/Spring, http://www.roham.hu/magazin_view.php?cmd=view&id=15

⁵ See Georges Didi-Huberman (2010) *Formlose Ähnlichkeiten oder die Fröhliche Wissenschaft des Visuellen nach Georges Bataille*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag

⁶ See Sándor Kertész (2012) *Képregény a homokozóban* (Comics in the sandbox), in: *Symposion-Híd*, 2012, pp. 64–69.

⁷ Attila Stark (2007) *Kulo City - Kula Jani kalandjai* (*Kulo City - The Adventures of Jani Kula*), Dóri Sirály (2008) *Kiberáda* vol. 1., ZAP Magazin (antology), Attila Stark (2008) *Kulo City - Bélváros* (*Kulo City - Gut City*), Szabolcs Tebeli(Brazil) (2008) *Johnny Fellow - A navigátor* (*Johnny Fellow - The Navigator*), Iván Kemenes and Péter Varga (2009) *Bábel verme* (*The Hole of Babel*), Levente Szabó (2011) *Scrap*.

⁸ It is no coincidence that due to the absence of the Hungarian context, *Symposion*, coming from Serbian comics culture, has become a major creative partner.

⁹ See Hermann Josef Schnackertz (1980), *Form und Funktion medialen Erzählens – Narrativität in Bildsequenz und Comicstrip*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, pp. 42.

¹⁰ Aleksandra Sekulic and Radovan Popovic (2012) *Láthatatlan képregények – Az alternatív képregény Szerbiában 1980–2010* (*Invisible comics: The alternative comic in Serbia, 1980–2010*), translated by Petra Bakos Jarrett, in: *Symposion-Híd*, 22–42, pp. 24.

¹¹ Hans Belting (2003) *Kép-antropológia* (*An Anthropology of Images*), translated by Pál Kelemen, Kijárat, pp. 14.

¹² Zsombor Korchma (2007) *Nehézserelem* (Difficult love), in: *Roham* 4, 2007/Spring, http://www.roham.hu/magazin_view.php?cmd=view&id=15

¹³ Gyula Szűcs, Stark Attila szakított a majmokkal (*Attila Stark broke up with the apes*), http://index.hu/kultur/klassz/kakakul0929/

¹⁴ In Spanish: ‘Kaka, kulo, pedo, pis’, i.e. ‘shit, ass, fart, piss’.

¹⁵ Michel de Certeau (2011) *A cselekvés művészete* (*The Art of Practice*), translated by Sándor Sajó, Dávid Szolláth and Zoltán Z. Varga, Kijárat, pp. 121.

¹⁶ ‘I do not like to think while I paint, I rather let myself; I think the pictures don't come out of me, they just pass through me. If I try to force something I

6 Vö. Kertész Sándor: Képregény a homokozóban, in: *Symposion-Híd* 2012, 64-69.

7 Stark Attila: *Kulo City - Kula Jani kalandjai* (2007), Sirály Dóri: *Kiberiáda vol. 1.* (2008), ZAP Magazin (antológia) (2008), Stark Attila: *Kulo City - Bélváros* (2008), Tebeli Szabolcs (Brazil) (2008); *Johnny Fellow - A navigátor* (2008), Kemény Iván-Varga Péter: *Bábel verme* (2009), Szabó Levente: *Scrap* (2011).

8 Nem véletlen, hogy a magyar kontextus hiányában épp a szerb képregénykultúra felől érkező *Symposion* válhattott jelentős kreatív partnerré.

9 Vö. Hermann Josef Schnackertz: *Form und Funktion medialen Erzählers - Narrativität in Bildsequenz und Comicstrip*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1980, i. h. 42.

10 Aleksandra Sekulić - Radovan Popović: *Láthatatlan képregények - Az alternatív képregény Szerbiában 1980-2010*, fordította Bakor Petra Jarret, in: *Symposion-Híd*, 2012, 22-42, i.h. 24.

11 Hans Belting: *Kép-antropológia*, fordította Kelemen Pál, Kijárat Kiadó, 2003, i. h. 14.

12 Korchma Zsombor: *Nehéz szerelem*, in: *Roham 4*, 2007/tavasz, http://www.roham.hu/magazin_view.php?cmd=view&id=15

13 Szűcs Gyula: *Stark Attila szakított a majmokkal*, <http://index.hu/kultur/klassz/kakakul0929/>

14 Spanyolul: „Kaka, kulo, pedo, pis”, vagyis: „kaka, segg, fing, pisi”.

15 Michel de Certeau: *A cselekvés művészete*, fordította Sajó Sándor, Szolláth Dávid, Z. Varga Zoltán, Kijárat, 2011, i.h.121.

16 „Gondolkozni nem szeretek festés közben, inkább hagyom magam, azt hiszem a képek nem belőlem jönnek, csak áthaladnak rajtam. Ha valamit erőltetni próbálok, abból idegeskedés lesz, a festék elkezd ragadni, minden összekened, és a folyamat megtörik. Szóval inkább hagyom magam, és nem tudok mit mondani arra, hogy miért majmok, de szeretem a füleket, fogakat, ínyt, szemeket, a grimaszokat és a mozdulatokat. Szeretek mindenféle húst, a levegőt, a zsúfoltságot, és mindennek a fordítottját is.” – jegyzi meg Stark a figura születéséről, ugyanakkor a *Kulocity* (2010) című filmből kiderül, hogy a majomember vizuális forrása Edward Muybridge (1830-1904) egyik fotósorozata.

17 Stark Attila: *Kulo City - Kula Jani kalandjai*, Roham, 2007, 2.

18 <http://www.daazo.com/kulocityfilm/films>

19 Kula Janit maga Stark Attila játszsa egy majommaszkban, illetve az ő narrációja kíséri végig a filmet.

20 Dunai Tamás: *Újraalkotott emlékek - A képregényes önéletírások jellegzetességei*, in: *Műút* 2013/37, 44-47, i.h. 47.

start to worry, the paint starts to stick, I smear everything and the process is broken. So I rather let myself; and I don't know what to say about why apes, but I like the ears, teeth, gums, eyes, grimaces and the gestures. I love all kinds of meat, the air, the crowd, and the opposite of all these, too.' Stark here describes the character's birth, but from the film *Kulocity* (2010) it becomes clear that the visual source of the ape-man is one of Edward Muybridge's (1830-1904) series of photographs.

17 Attila Stark (2007) *Kulo City - Kula Jani kalandjai (Kulo City - The Adventures of Jani Kula)*, Roham, 2007, 2.

18 <http://www.daazo.com/kulocityfilm/films>

19 Jani Kula is played by Attila Stark himself in an ape-mask, and his narration follows the film.

20 Tamás Dunai (2013) *Újraalkotott emlékek - A képregényes önéletírások jellegzetességei (Recreated memories - The characteristics of comics biographies)*, in: *Műút* 2013/37, pp. 44-47.

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<http://www.daazo.com/kulocityfilm/films>



Attila Stark, *Kulo City*, 2007 (pictures this page and page 80)



Novo poglavje slovenskega stripa

Odgovori na spremenjeno politično in ekonomsko stvarnost v samostojni Sloveniji

Ciril Horjak & Jasmina Hlaj

„V našem življenju in v zgodovini slovenstva se resnično pričenja novo poglavje ... Nocoj so dovoljene sanje. Jutri je nov dan.“
(Nocoj so dovoljene sanje, jutri je nov dan, Slovesnost ob razglasitvi samostojnosti Republike Slovenije, Govor predsednika Predsedstva Republike Slovenije Milana Kučana, 1991)

„Having an active mind entails asking the question, ‘What is going on here?’ rather than pronouncing ‘This is the law here.’“
(Oliver E. Williamson, 2010)

Takratni predsednik Slovenije Milan Kučan je v govoru ob osamosvojitvi Slovenije napovedal za našo deželo novo poglavje. Hkrati pa je namignil, da nas ob tem čaka soočenje s kruto realnostjo, ki nas je hitro tudi doletela. V to zgodbo so se vmešali tudi strip, ki so sanjali s Slovenijo in v nastali situaciji ustvarili povsem novo zgodbo. Zgodbo, ki je lastna Sloveniji in se je oblikovala ter se še vedno oblikuje avtonomno ter iz leta v leto bolj udarno.

Začetno navedeno predpostavko O. E. Williamsona razumeva takole: vsako stvar je možno pogledati z več zornih kotov in ničesar na tem svetu ni nujno jemati kot neizpodbitno dejstvo. Moramo se spraševati, kaj natančno se „tukaj dogaja“ in „zakaj je temu tako“. Citat iz Williamsonovega govora ob prejemu Nobelove nagrade sva prenesla na razvoj stripovskega medija in na njegov razvoj v Sloveniji. Odprl se nama je širok – že skoraj težko obvladljiv horizont. Na strip je mogoče pogledati iz novih vidikov, za katere meniva, da so bili do sedaj prezrti.

A New Chapter in Slovene Comics

Responses to the altered political and economic reality in independent Slovenia

Jasmina Hlaj & Ciril Horjak

‘Indeed a new chapter is beginning in our life and in the history of the Slovene nation ... This evening, dreams are allowed. Tomorrow is a new day.’

(This evening, dreams are allowed. Tomorrow is a new day. Ceremony marking the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Slovenia, Speech by the President of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 1991)

‘Having an active mind entails asking the question, “What is going on here?” rather than pronouncing “This is the law here.”’
(Oliver E. Williamson, 2010)

In his speech marking the independence of Slovenia, Milan Kučan, then president of Slovenia, foretold a new chapter for our country. In the next breath, however, he implied that alongside it a harsh reality awaits us – which was indeed soon upon us. Comics also wove their way into this story; they dreamt with Slovenia and in this new situation created a whole new story, a story which is Slovenia’s own, a story which formed itself and continues to shape itself autonomously and ever more strikingly.

We understand the initial quoted hypothesis by O. E. Williamson as follows: It is possible to view every single thing from several points of view and it is not necessary to deem anything in this world as irrefutable fact. We must ask ourselves what exactly is ‘going on here’ and ‘why this is so’. We took the quote from Williamson’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech and applied it to

Najprej ugotavlja, da je za razumevanje stripa potrebno upoštevati njegov širši kontekst. V petih točkah nato pokaževo odgovore stripov na politične in ekonomske spremembe, ki so nastopile z osamosvojitvijo Slovenije. Nazadnje nazu to privede do zanimivega spoznanja, da kljub spremembam političnega in gospodarskega sistema ministrstvo, pristojno za kulturo, še vedno financira tudi stripovske izdaje. Prevladujoča produkcija stripov je še vedno stvar posameznikov in obrtniškega postopka.

Rojstvo stripa v kontekstu industrijske revolucije Slovenski strip in tradicija slovenskih časopisov

Iztok Sitar, slovenski risar in teoretik stripov, v knjigi *Zgodovina slovenskega stripa: 1927–2007* pravi, da je prvi slovenski strip *Zamorček Bu-Ci-Bu* avtorja Milka Bambiča iz leta 1927. Sitar to parodijo fašizma razume kot prvo zgodbo v sličicah, ki ima dovolj lastnosti stripovskega medija, da si zasluži titulo prvega slovenskega stripa (Sitar, 2007: 11–12). Največja težava z Bambičevim poskusom vizualne naracije je, da ni imela nobenih naslednikov, ki bi nadaljevali tradicijo pripovedovanja v sličicah.

Scott McCloud (1993) je napisal temeljno črto za razumevanje stripovske umetnosti *Understanding Comics*. To je delo, ki nam razlaga, kako naj gledamo na to sožitje likovne in literarne umetnosti, a pri tem se je omejil zgolj na njegovo semantiko in sintakso. S tem delom si je torej mogoče pomagati, potem ko nam je že razjasnjeno, kaj strip sploh je. Tudi pri tem nam McCloud nekoliko pomaga. In sicer z navodilom, da naj k stripom štejemo le tiste ilustrirane zgodbe, kjer se dogajanje nadaljuje s pomočjo sličic/okvirčkov. Vendar pa ta kvalifikator morda le ni dovolj. Prepričana sva, da je za razumevanje stripa nujno potrebno raziskati širši kontekst. Še posebej pri tistih, ki jih želimo označevati za začetnike, utemeljitelje in prve med prvimi. Če se ob tem vrnemo k Bambičevemu *Bu-Ci-Buju*, se pojavi še en dvom. In sicer dvom v njegovo izvirnost.

Ob raziskovanju konteksta tega stripa nama je padla v oko neverjetna podobnost z zgodnejšimi stripi italijanskega avtorja Mussinoja, pri čemer ni odveč poudariti, da je Bambič živel in deloval v Trstu. Mussino je morda prvi italijanski risar stripov, in sicer z delom *Bilbolbul* iz leta 1908 (Robinson, 2011: 304–305). Podobnost z *Zamorčkom Bu-Ci-Bujem* je očitna tako v slogu risbe kot v kadriranju in ritmu besedila. Kje je torej meja in kaj vse je pogoj, da se lahko nekemu izdelku zares in povsem brez slabe vesti reče strip in koliko so te meje strožje pri raziskovanju preteklosti, ko želimo ugotoviti, kaj je prvi strip?

Z dognanji, do katerih sva prišla, nikakor ne želiva vzeti pomembnosti Milku Bambiču v razvoju slovenskega stripa, a meniva, da so s svojim delom k razvoju stripa pripomogli tudi karikaturisti in ilustratorji pred njim.

the development of the comics medium in general as well as its development in Slovenia – a broad horizon, one almost difficult to handle, opened up to us. It is possible to view comics from new perspectives, ones which we think have so far been overlooked.

Firstly, we assert that in order to understand comics one needs to consider their wider context. In five points, we then show how comics reacted to the political and economic changes that arose from the independence of Slovenia. Lastly, this leads us to the interesting finding that despite changes in the political and economic system the Ministry of Culture continues to finance comics publications. The production of comics is still predominantly a matter of individuals and the artisan process.

The birth of comics in the context of the Industrial Revolution Slovene comics and the tradition of Slovene newspapers

Iztok Sitar, Slovenian draughtsman and comics theoretician, states in his book *Zgodovina slovenskega stripa: 1927–2007* (*The History of Slovenian Comics: 1927–2007*) that the first Slovene comic was *Zamorček Bu-Ci-Bu* by the author Milko Bambič published in 1927. Sitar considers this parody of fascism to be the first picture story possessing enough characteristics of the comics medium to deserve the title of the first Slovene comic strip (Sitar, 2007: 11–12). The biggest problem with Bambič’s attempt at visual narration is its lack of any successors who would have carried on the tradition of picture storytelling.

Scott McCloud (1993) wrote the seminal work for the understanding of the comics art form, *Understanding Comics*. It is a work which explains how to view this coexistence of art and literature, however in doing so it limits itself merely to semantics and syntax. It is therefore a work helpful only to those who already understand what comics are. Nevertheless, in this regard McCloud is also of some help, namely with the instruction that we should count as comics only those illustrated stories in which the plot is carried out through a sequence of panels or frames. However, this qualifier might not be enough after all. We are convinced that in order to understand comics it is essential to explore their broader context. Especially when it comes to comics we want to identify the beginners, the founders, the first among the first. With that in mind, if we return to Bambič and his *Bu-Ci-Bu*, another question arises – the question of originality.

While exploring the context of this comic strip, we noticed an incredible similarity to earlier comics by Italian author Mussino; in relation to this it is not insignificant that Bambič lived and worked in Trieste. Mussino is perhaps the first Italian comic strip artist, namely with his 1908 work *Bilbolbul* (Robinson, 2011: 304–305). The similarity to *Zamorček Bu-Ci-Bu* is obvious both in the style of drawing as well as the framing and rhythm of the

Zgodovino medija je torej mogoče razumeti tudi drugače, in sicer tako, da začnemo pripovedovati zgodbo v 19. stoletju. Prvi pomembnejši satirični list *Pavliha* je izhajal na Dunaju že leta 1870. Književnik in jezikoslovec Fran Levstik je s pomočjo posojil, med drugim tudi od kranjskega deželnega predsednika Conrada pl. Eybesfelda (Globočnik, n.d.), začel izdajati štirinajstdnevnik *Pavliha*. Ta je smešil predvsem nemškatarske Slovence, ki jih je risal češki karikaturist Karel Klíč. Sprva je bil *Pavliha* finančno uspešen – do šeste številke, ko so se zaradi neprimernosti izbora karikature začela trenja. Sedma številka je bila posledično cenzurirana v smislu, da je bil na karikaturi tuj državnik (Bismarck) in ne več Slovenec. Bila je tudi zadnja (Globočnik, n.d.). *Pavliha* je torej ilustriral češki, ne slovenski risar. Na prve stripovske forme bo potrebno počakati še nekaj desetletij in na londonske in newyorške tiskane medije.

Zakaj je torej *Pavliha* pomemben za razvoj slovenskega stripa?

1. Ker je eden od prvih izrazito vizualnih slovenskih tiskanih medijev.

2. Ker bosta denar in politika ostala dva fokusa elipse slovenskega stripa.

3. Ker bo problem cenzure ostal aktualen vsaj do slovenske osamosvojitve.

Koordinate, v katerih je začel in nehal izhajati *Pavliha*, bodo ostale v veliki meri podobne vsa leta do konca 80-ih let in slovenske osamosvojitve. Dobrih sto let! Prvemu *Pavlihi* je leta 1892 sledil nov list z enakim imenom in do druge svetovne vojne se je na slovenskem zvrstilo lepo število satiričnih listov (Valetič, 2012). Postopoma so se v teh listih oblikovali slovenski karikaturisti. Sodobni strokovnjak za zgodovino slovenskega časopisnega novinarstva Bernard Nežmah pravi, da politični humor v medijih rabi klimo in idealna klima je oblika ne prehude diktature. Trda diktatura vse zanulira, toda v obdobju Franca Jožefa so časopisi smešili in postavljal pod vprašaj tabuje (Valetič, 2012).

Leta 1944, v Kočevskem Rogu obnovijo *Pavliho*, katerega sestavni del so bile duhovite karikature, ki so smešile naciste in njihove sodelavce. Tega leta ga je ustanovila komunistična partija kot svoj legalni list. S satiro je izrekal stališča uradne jugoslovanske politike (Nežmah, 2012: 167–169). *Pavliha* je izhajal tudi po vojni vse do leta 1990 (Valetič, 2012).

Sitar pobucibujevske stripe sicer išče že v obdobju pred 2. svetovno vojno, a to so redki poskusi, ki so zgovorni v formiranju zgodbe in bi jih z McCloudovimi merili lahko umestili med stripe, vendar so to obrnbi poskusi.

Prvi med Slovenci, ki mu je uspelo z veliko nogo prodreti med ljudstvo, je bil Miki Muster, še danes eno največjih imen

text. So, where are the boundaries and what are the conditions that have to be met for a particular work to be well and truly without hesitation deemed a comic, and how much more stringent are these boundaries when it comes to exploring the past and defining the features of the first comic strip?

With our findings we are in no way trying to diminish the importance of Milko Bambič in the development of Slovenian comics, however we think that the work of caricaturists and illustrators before him have also contributed to the development of comics.

The history of the medium can therefore also be understood in a different way by beginning our story in the 19th century. *Pavliha*, the first satirical publication of importance, was published in Vienna as early as 1870. Writer and linguist Fran Levstik began publishing the bi-weekly *Pavliha* with the help of loans, including one from Carniolan provincial chairman Sir Conrad Eybesfeld (Globočnik, n.d.). The publication ridiculed mostly Deutschtümler (Germanomaniac) Slovenes drawn by Czech caricaturist Karel Klíč. At first, *Pavliha* was a financial success – until the sixth issue, when conflicts arose due to the inappropriate choice of caricature. Consequently, the seventh issue was censured in the sense that the caricature was now of a foreign statesman (Bismarck) and no longer a Slovene. It was also the last (Globočnik, n.d.). Thus, *Pavliha* was illustrated by a Czech and not by a Slovene artist. The first comic strip forms will require another few decades to appear in the London and New York printed media.

So, why is *Pavliha* so important for the development of Slovene comics?

1. Because it is one of the first distinctly visual Slovene printed media.

2. Because money and politics will continue to be the two foci of the ellipse of Slovene comics.

3. Because the problem of censorship will remain current at least until the independence of Slovenia.

The circumstances in which the publication of *Pavliha* began and ended will remain largely similar over the years until the end of the eighties and the independence of Slovenia. For a hundred years! The first *Pavliha* was followed by a new publication with the same name in 1892, and by the Second World War a considerable number of satirical publications had appeared in Slovenia (Valetič, 2012). These publications gradually moulded Slovenian caricaturists. Bernard Nežmah, a contemporary expert in the history of Slovene newspaper journalism, says that political humour in the media requires a certain climate and the ideal

slovenskega stripa. To se je zgodilo šele slabih 10 let po končani drugi svetovni vojni in da bomo razumeli, kako je do tega prišlo, se moramo ozreti na stanje in priljubljenost stripa v takratni Jugoslaviji. V državo, ki se je tvorila po drugi svetovni vojni in del katere je bila takrat danes samostojna Slovenija, je kot drugod po svetu prodrlo ime Walt Disney in vse mlado je ob boku s svojimi starši norelo za prigodami o Mickey Mousu in Donaldu Ducku (ti so izhajali v *Politikinem zabavniku* že nekaj let pred vojno). Medvojna kriza je pustila posledice in *Politikin zabavnik* se je vrnil šele sedem let po osvoboditvi. Do tega leta je bil strip preveč negativno povezan s politiko in riziko je bil prevelik, da bi si uredniki delali preglavice z izdajanjem stripov (Gale, 1981: 22). Omenjenega leta pa se je *Politkin zabavnik* okrepil in obnovil in najverjetneje prav ta dal zagon, da so začeli stripe bolj pogumno objavljati tudi drugod. Taistega leta je imel namreč tudi slovenski tednik *Poletove podobe in povesti* naročene stripe s slavnimi junaki Walta Disneyja. Ti so bili na carini pridržani¹ in ker s čakanjem na njih tednik ne bi šel pravočasno v tisk, so naročili svojemu ilustratorju Mikiju Mustru, naj zapolni prostor. Želja je bila jasna – ustvariti nekaj, kar bi se lahko kosalo in bilo dovolj podobno naročenemu stripu (Sitar, 2007: 20–25).

Miki Muster se je sicer po Disneyu zgledoval, je pa daleč od tega, da bi ga kopiral. Namesto univerzalnih je za junake vzel slovenske avtohtone živali, poimenoval jih je z ličnimi slovenskimi tvorjenkami. Izobil je torej priložnost, da dela samostojno in se le ohlapno držal navodil. Ta tvegan korak se mu je skoraj čudežno obrestoval in postal je ljubljenc mnogice. Še več – z risanjem stripov si je ustvaril zaslužek za preživetje. Necenzuriran je izhajal za otroke, odrasle in mladino. S tem je postal vodilno ime slovenskega stripa. Posredno je zaslužen za prvo množično priljubljeno slovensko stripovsko revijo, ki si je nadela ime prav po njegovi lisici Zvitorepcu in je v svojih zlatih letih dosegla letno naklado 60.000 izvodov (Sitar, 2007: 48). *Zvitorepec* je izhajal kot tednik v letih od 1966 do 1973. Letnice, mimogrede, sovpadajo z obdobjem gospodarske liberalizacije in njenim zatrtjem, ki sta bila posledica zadolževanja države v 70-ih letih (Horvat, 2008: 1–31).

Če torej McCloudovim kvalifikatorjem dodamo še pomembnost kasnejšega vpliva, množično produkcijo in izvirnost, lahko z gotovostjo trdim, da je v resnici prvi pravi slovenski strip še Mustrov *Zvitorepec*, ki je ožigosan z letnico 1952, torej kar četrto stoletja kasneje od vprašljivega *Bu-ci-buja*.

V sledečih letih je močan primat v priljubljenosti revija *Zvitorepec* suvereno držala, začela pa se je že kaliti veja slovenskega alternativnega stripa. Tu je prvak Kostja Gatnik s svojo nepozabno *Magno Purga*, izdano leta 1977. To je stripovski album, kjer so zbrani vsi Gatnikovi stripi od leta 1969–1973, ki so bili objavljeni v *Pavlihi*, *Tribuni* in *Stopu*. Močna satira in družbena kritika v vsebini ter eksperimentiranje s tradicionalnimi formami so

climate is a form of lax dictatorship. A firm dictatorship annuls everything, however in the period of Franz Joseph the newspapers ridiculed and questioned taboos (Valetič, 2012).

In Kočevski Rog in 1944, *Pavliha* was renewed. An integral part of it was witty caricatures, which ridiculed Nazis and their collaborators. The communist party established it in this year as its legal publication. It used satire to express the views of the Yugoslav authorities (Nežmah, 2012: 167–169). *Pavliha* continued to be published after the war up until 1990 (Valetič, 2012).

Sitar starts his search for *Bu-Ci-Bu's* successors as early as the period before the Second World War and finds a few rare attempts which are significant in the formation of the story and which could be included among comics according to McCloud's criteria, but are nevertheless marginal attempts.

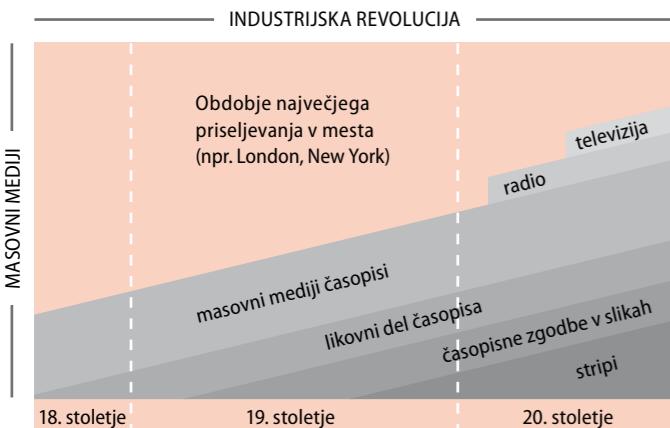
The first Slovene who managed to garner fame from the public was Miki Muster – until this day, still one of the greatest names in Slovene comics. This happened no sooner than about ten years after the end of the Second World War and in order to understand how it occurred, we must look back on the state and popularity of comics in former Yugoslavia. Just like elsewhere in the world, the name Walt Disney made an impact in the country, which began forming after the Second World War, a part of which was the now independent Slovenia. Readers both young and old were fascinated with the adventures of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck (these were already being published in *Politkin zabavnik* a few years before the war). The wartime crisis left its mark, and *Politkin zabavnik* did not reappear until seven years after liberation. Until that year, comics had been far too negatively linked with politics and the risk was too great for editors to trouble themselves with the publishing of comics (Gale, 1981: 22). That year, however, *Politkin zabavnik* strengthened and renewed itself and most likely provided the impetus needed for others elsewhere to start publishing comics with more courage. In fact, that very same year the Slovene weekly *Poletove podobe in povesti* had also ordered comics with Walt Disney's famous heroes. These were held at customs¹ and since waiting for them would have made the weekly late for print, they commissioned their illustrator Miki Muster to fill the space instead. The request was clear – to create something which could rival and be similar enough to the comics ordered (Sitar, 2007: 20–25).

Miki Muster did model himself on Disney; however, he far from copied him. He used indigenous Slovenian animals as his heroes instead of universal ones and gave them neat Slovene compound names. He took the opportunity to work independently and only loosely followed the instructions. This risky move paid off almost miraculously and he became the darling of the crowd. Even more surprisingly – he earned a living by drawing comics. His uncensored works were available for children, young people and adults, and made him the leading

odlike alternative, ki se je skoraj sočasno razbohotila z Robertom Crumbom v Ameriki in prestopila tudi jugoslovanske meje (Sitar, 2007: 25–39). Kostja Gatnik je pomemben tudi zaradi prvih stripov, ki so bili narisani z namenom izobraževati in motivirati. Iskra, eno izmed najbolj inovativnih podjetij v Jugoslaviji, mu je leta 1983 naročilo serijo stripov, ki so na duhovit način kazali, kako lahko z inovativnim ustvarjalnim načinom mišljenja optimiziramo delo v podjetju. Stripi so spodbujali nov pogled na delovne procese in obsegali različne teme: izrabo delovnega časa, varstvo pri delu, uporabo domačih materialov ipd.²

V 10-ih letih od izdaje *Magne Purga* je strip v Sloveniji močno pridobival na ugledu. Čedalje več avtorjev se je bolj ali manj uspešno lotevalo te vabljive in na nek način še vedno precej skrivnostne forme. Dobili smo prve poskuse ustripanja leposlovja, stripe namenjene zgolj otrokom in na drugi strani drzne poskuse v podtalnem stripu.

Skrajnost v minimalizaciji risbe je dosegel Tomaž Lavrič, ko je začel risati pasični strip *Diareja* za tednik *Mladino* (Sitar, 2007: 66). *Diareja* je od svojih začetkov pa do danes, kar je že celih 25 let, med domačo publiko najbolj priljubljena pasica, tudi pri tistih, ki tednika *Mladine* sploh ne berejo³.



Nastanek stripovskega medija moramo razumeti v kontekstu industrijske revolucije, ki je vplivala na nastanek masovnega medija: časopisa. V časopisih se je proti koncu 19. stoletja besedilo vse bolj umikalo podobam. Strip je posebna zgodba v slikah, katere specifični jezik se je oblikoval na prelomu 19. in 20. stoletja. O stripu lahko govorimo šele takrat, ko so koordinate jezika vzpostavljene. Za mnoge teoretičke stripova je newyorški Yellow Kid koordinata nič stripovskega medija.

The formation of the comics medium needs to be understood in the context of the Industrial Revolution, which influenced the formation of a mass medium: the newspaper. Towards the end of the 19th century, text in newspapers increasingly gave way to images. A comic is a special type of picture story whose specific language was formed at the turn of the 20th century. We cannot talk about comics before the characteristics of the language were established. Many comics theoreticians consider the New York Yellow Kid to be the origin of the comics medium.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION / MASS MEDIA: 18th century / 19th century / 20th century — The period of the greatest immigration into cities (for example: London, New York); television; radio; mass media: newspapers; fine arts sections of newspapers; newspaper stories in pictures; comics

name in Slovene comics. The first massively popular Slovene comics magazine indirectly owes its existence to him; it named itself after his fox Zvitorepec and in its golden years reached an annual circulation of 60,000 copies (Sitar, 2007: 48). *Zvitorepec* was published weekly between 1966 and 1973. These years, incidentally, coincide with the period of economic liberalisation and its suppression, a consequence of the country's debt accumulation in the seventies (Horvat, 2008: 1–31).

Therefore, if we also add the importance of subsequent influence, mass production and originality to McCloud's qualifiers, we can claim with certainty that the first real Slovene comic is in fact Muster's *Zvitorepec* stamped with the year 1952, about a quarter of a century later than the questionable *Bu-ci-bu*.

In the years that followed, *Zvitorepec* effectively maintained its popularity, and Slovene alternative comics already began to take root. Of these, the champion is Kostja Gatnik with his unforgettable *Magna Purga* published in 1977. This is a comics album, a collection of Gatnik's comics published in *Pavliha*, *Tribuna* and *Stop* between 1969 and 1973. Strong satire, social criticism, and experimentation with traditional forms are virtues of alternative comics, which flourished almost simultaneously with Robert Crumb in America and crossed the Yugoslav border as well (Sitar, 2007: 25–39). Kostja Gatnik is also important in connection with the first comics that were drawn with the intent to educate and motivate. In 1983, Iskra, one of the most innovative companies in Yugoslavia, commissioned him to produce a series of comics humorously illustrating how to optimize work in a company with innovative and creative ways of thinking. The comics encouraged new ways of looking at work processes and encompassed a variety of topics: utilisation of working hours, safety at work, use of domestic materials, etc.²

In the ten years following the publication of *Magna Purga*, the reputation of comics in Slovenia greatly improved. An increasing number of authors more or less successfully tackled this enticing, and in a way still rather mysterious, form. We experienced our first attempts at adapting literature into comics, comics intended solely for children and, on the other hand, daring attempts in underground comics.

Tomaž Lavrič achieved extreme minimalism in drawing with his comic strip *Diareja* (*Diarrhoea*), which he started drawing for the weekly *Mladina* (Sitar, 2007: 66). *Diareja* has, since its beginnings a good 25 years ago, remained the most popular comic strip with domestic audiences, even with those who do not read *Mladina*.³

In the seventies and eighties, comics by foreign authors were also read throughout the former Yugoslav region. The Serbo-Croatian translation of *Alan Ford* by writer Max Bunker and illustrator Roberto Raviola-Magnus was among those who made their way into the hearts of Slovene readers.



Ciril Horjak: Pripadnik slovenske teritorialne obrambe uniči jugoslovanski tank, ilustracija, 2010

Ciril Horjak: A member of the Slovenian Territorial Defence destroys a Yugoslav tank, illustration, 2010

V 70-ih in 80-ih letih 20. stoletja se je po celotnem območju nekdanje Jugoslavije bralo tudi stripe tujih avtorjev. V srbohrvaščino prevedeni *Alan Ford* pisca Maxa Bunkerja in risarja Roberta Raviola-Magnusa je eden tistih, ki se je vselil v srca slovenskih bralcev.

V tem času se je na področju gospodarstva mnogo dogajalo, a na prve resne poskuse spremembe gospodarstva je morala Slovenija počakati do konca osemdesetih, prve resnične spremembe pa so se zgodile šele po osamosvojitvi v začetku devetdesetih let (Horvat, 2008: 18–31).

Zgoraj navedene misli so kratek prikaz dogajanja na področju stripa v Sloveniji do leta 1991. Namen nadaljnega razmišljanja je namreč poskus prikaza korenitih preobratov, ki jih je leto 1991 prineslo za strip na slovenskem trgu. To je leto, ko se je Slovenija odcepila od Jugoslavije in postala samostojna Republika. Do tega trenutka se je vsakršno dogajanje v navezi s stripom neposredno ali posredno navezovalo na celotno območje nekdanje Jugoslavije, od tu naprej pa to ni bilo več mogoče. Tudi če bi si želeli sodelovanja, je bilo to za vsaj nekaj let zaradi vojnih razmer na Balkanu primorano k prekiniti. Slovenija je torej, če je želela nadaljevati izvrstne zmetke, morala vzeti stvari v svoje roke in jim vdahnuti svežino.

Spremembe po osamosvojitvi Slovenije

Na dan slovenske osamosvojitve 26. junija 1991 so ukinili *Pavliho* (Valetič, 2012).

Slovenija je izgubila stik z do tega trenutka vodilnimi kulturnimi centri v Jugoslaviji – Novim sadom in Beogradom. Poleg fizične ločitve pa je Slovence sedaj dokončno ločil tudi zgodovinski razvoj in z njim povezan nastanek jezika. Slovenščina je namreč precej drugačna od srbsčine in hrvaščine, ki sta si zelo sorodni. Tudi na političnem področju so se snovale drastične spremembe. Razcep Jugoslavije je pomenil konec socialistične ureditve in sprejem v svetu vzpenjajočega se kapitalizma.

At the time, a lot was happening in the economic sphere, but Slovenia had to wait until the end of the eighties for the first serious attempts at economic change; the first substantial changes did not occur until after independence at the beginning of the nineties (Horvat, 2008: 18–31).

The abovementioned thoughts are a brief overview of the developments in Slovenian comics until 1991. The purpose of the reflections that follow is an attempt to illustrate the radical changes that the year 1991 brought to comics in the Slovene market. 1991 is the year when Slovenia seceded from Yugoslavia and became an independent republic. Up until that moment, anything that happened in connection with comics was directly or indirectly related to the whole of the former Yugoslav region; from that point on, however, that was no longer possible. Even if cooperation had been desired, it was forced to a halt for at least a few years due to war conditions in the Balkans. Therefore, if Slovenia wanted to continue its excellent beginnings, it had to take matters into its own hands and breathe new life into them.

Changes after the independence of Slovenia

On the first day of Slovenian independence, 26 June 1991, *Pavliha* was cancelled (Valetič, 2012).

Slovenia lost contact with what were until then the leading cultural centres in Yugoslavia – Novi Sad and Belgrade. Besides the physical separation, however, Slovenes were now also irrevocably separated by historical development and the associated language change. The Slovene language differs considerably from the Serbian and Croatian languages, which are very similar to each other. Drastic changes were also forming in the political sphere. The collapse of Yugoslavia marked the end of the socialist regime and acceptance into the world of rising capitalism.

The change in the perception of the comics art form on the Slovene market between 1991 and today can be condensed into 5 observable stages:

1. Start of publication of *Stripburger* magazine, which raised alternative comics to the level of high art and created an extensive international network.

2. Attempt to reissue before the eclipse of popular mainstream comics.

3. Shifts in the perception of the usefulness of comics, which start to make their way into schools, businesses, and other areas and emphasise their educational value.

4. Start of widespread use of new media – the computer and associated World Wide Web.

Od leta 1991 pa do danes se lahko spremembo v dojemanju stripovske umetnosti na slovenskem trgu strne v 5 opaženih ravn:

1. Začetek izhajanja revije *Stripburger*, ki je povzdignila raven alternativnega stripa na raven visoke umetnosti in ustvarila obsežno mednarodno mrežo.

2. Poskus ponovne izdaje pred odcepitvijo priljubljenih mainstreamovskih stripov.

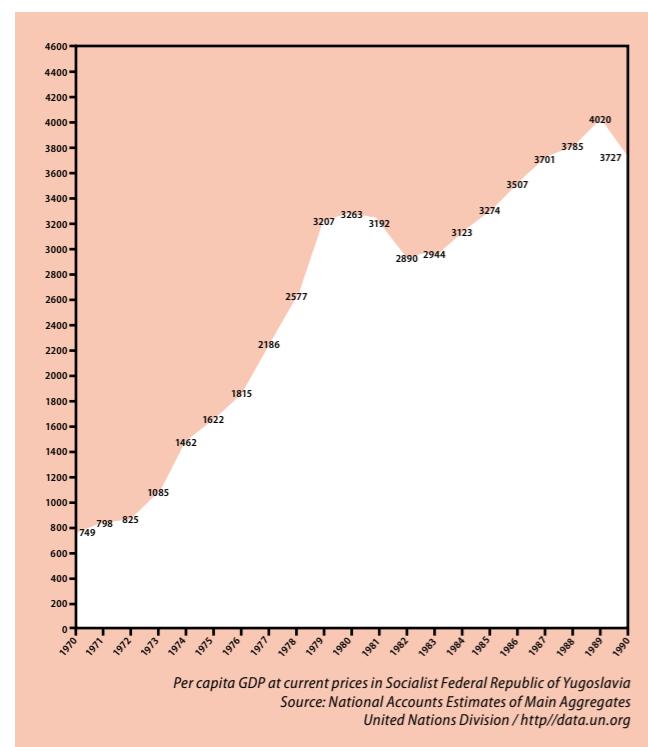
3. Inovacija v percepciji uporabnosti stripa, ki se začne seliti v šole, podjetja in na druga področja ter poudarja svojo edukativno vrednost.

4. Začetek uporabe novih medijev – računalnika in z njim povezanega svetovnega spletja.

5. Percepcija stripov kot umetnostno delo in posledično njihovo pogosteje pojavljjanje v muzejih in galerijah v Sloveniji.

1. Stripburger

Stripovski entuziasti se že prvo leto po osamosvojitvi začeli z nečim, kar je preraslo v legendu, kakršne si nihče verjetno ni



Grafični prikaz bruto domačega proizvoda SFRJ

Slovenija je bila ves čas gospodarsko uspešnejša od jugoslovanskega povprečja, a se ji je v začetku devetdesetih poznašla izguba tržišča nekdanje širše domovine. Pretok blaga (tudi stripovskih revij) med državami nekdanje Jugoslavije je bil za nekaj let prekinjen. V ta stripovski vakuum je leta 1992 vstopila revija *Stripburger*.

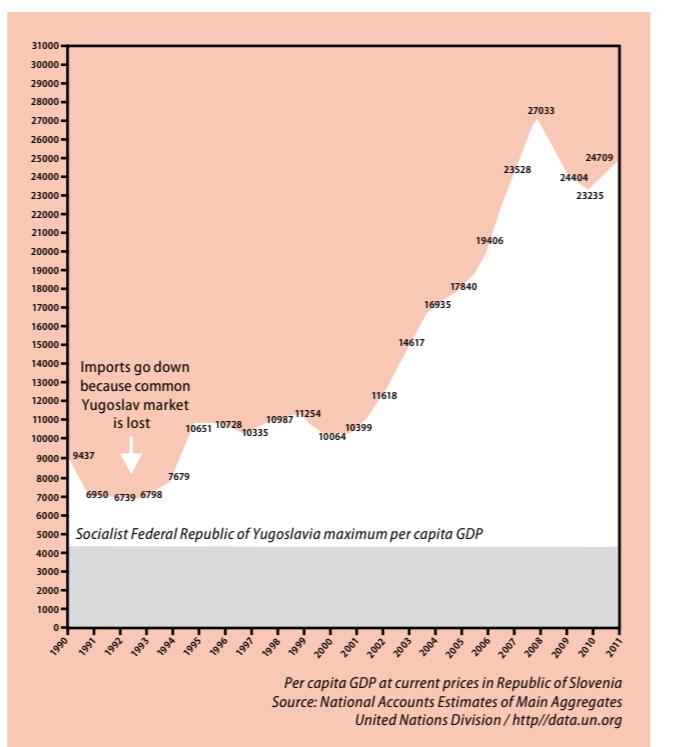
Graph showing the gross domestic product of SFRY

Slovenia was consistently more successful economically than the Yugoslav average, however the loss of the market of the larger former homeland in the beginning of the nineties was evident. The flow of goods (including comics magazines) between the former Yugoslav countries was interrupted for a few years. In 1992, the magazine *Stripburger* entered into this comics vacuum.

5. Perception of comics as a work of art and consequently their more frequent appearance in museums and galleries in Slovenia.

1. Stripburger

As early as the first year after independence, comics enthusiasts started something which has since grown into a legend no one probably even dared dream of. In 1992 the first volume of the world famous magazine *Stripburger* was published. In 1994 it defined proper guidelines and clearly demonstrated its central focus; these are no longer strictly socio-critical and satirical comics, but predominantly experimental comics exploring their dimensions within the fundamental idea (Sitar, 2011: 19). However, *Stripburger* has for a long time been more than a magazine. It is a movement that strives for international cooperation. It also publishes foreign authorial works and forms connections with foreign countries. Its voice is heard across Europe as well other continents; since the independence of Slovenia it has been at the forefront of the Slovene comics market. It is a kind of mainstream alternative, which excellently and with incredible drive presents Slovenian comics to the world.



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Graph showing the gross domestic product of Slovenia

Slovenia was consistently more successful economically than the Yugoslav average, however the loss of the market of the larger former homeland in the beginning of the nineties was evident. The flow of goods (including comics magazines) between the former Yugoslav countries was interrupted for a few years. In 1992, the magazine *Stripburger* entered into this comics vacuum.

niti upal želeti. Leta 1992 je izšla prva številka svetovno znane revije *Stripburger*. Leta 1994 je postavil prave smernice in jasno razodel, kaj želi v svoji sredici objavljati. To niso več strogo družbeno-kritični in satirični strip, ampak predvsem eksperimentalni strip, ki naj raziskuje svoje razsežnosti znotraj temeljne ideje (Sitar, 2011: 19). *Stripburger* pa že dolgo časa ni zgolj revija. Je gibanje, ki se zavzema za mednarodno sodelovanje. Objavlja tudi tuje avtorske izdelke in se povezuje s tujino. Njegov glas seže po vsej Evropi in tudi na ostale kontinente in je od osamosvojitve do danes postal vodilo slovenskega stripovskega trga. Je nekakšen mainstream alternative, ki slovenski strip več kot odlično in z neverjetnim zagonom predstavlja svetu.

2. Ponatis

Za bolj nagnjene k tradiciji, se je našel človek s poizkusom nadaljevanja mogočnega mainstreama, ki je z letom 1989 (ko je izšla zadnja št. *Zabavnika*, nadomestila za *Zvitorepca*) poniknil v nežurnost. To se je zgodilo precej kasneje, leta 2006 z revijo *Strip Bumerang* (Sitar 2011: 22). Ta je ali zamudila val navdušenja ali pa se je preprosto vsespolno zanimal za mainstreamovske stripe poleg oziroma preobrnilo v drug format. V teh časih se je namreč tudi pri nas začel razvijati grafični roman. Na police knjigarn je sedlo mnogo prevodov, čedalje več pa se pojavlja tudi izdelkov domačih avtorjev, ki so bolj kot nad kontinuiteto navdušeni nad strnjeno obliko. Kljub temu da *Strip Bumerang* ni dosegel (verjetno pričakovanega, če ne pa vsaj želenega) števila bralcev, pa je vendarle do neke mere dosegel duh časa, ko je bil tradicionalni strip prva in edina želja za branje predvsem med mladino.

Bolje se je izšlo za avtorje, ki so se usmerili na mlajše bralce – otroke. Marjan Manček je denimo tako pred kot po osamosvojitvi risal predvsem zanje, glede na odziv in kontinuiteto objavljanja pa je moč reči, da je po letu 1991 prej povečal, kot pa zmanjšal delež priljubljenosti.

3. Edukativni stripri

Nekaj povsem novega pa je povprečnemu bralcu stripa nekolikanj manj znan pristop do te umetnosti. To je ustvarjanje stripa v edukativni namen.

Največji pobudnik takšne vrste stripa je v Sloveniji Ciril Horjak, ki si je s tovrstnim udejstvovanjem priboril unikaten prostor v svetu slovenskega stripa. Misija je jasna – ljudem približati učno snov prek stripa z izobraževalno vsebinou. Ti stripi verjetno ne bodo nikoli dobavljeni v trafikah ali knjigarnah, saj so stripi, ki so namenjeni izključno učenju publike in se osredotočajo na specifična področja, ki jih ta publika zahteva. Gre predvsem za ljudi, ki so ob svojem delu primorani udeležbe doizobraževanj. Če jim pri tem predočiš strip, bo možnost, da izobraževanja ne bodo več le nujno zlo, ampak zabaven dodatek

2. Reprints

For those more inclined towards tradition there was an attempt to continue the mighty mainstream, which had fallen behind the times in 1989 (the year the last issue of *Zabavnik*, the replacement for *Zvitorepec*, was published). This happened much later, in 2006, with the magazine *Strip Bumerang* (Sitar 2011: 22). It had either missed the wave of excitement, or the general interest in mainstream comics had simply died down or turned into another form. These were the times when the graphic novel began to develop in our region as well. Many translations appeared on bookshop shelves, however an increasing number of works by domestic authors, who were more enthusiastic about compact form than continuity, also began to appear. Despite *Strip Bumerang* not reaching the expected (or at least desired) number of readers, it nevertheless to some extent tapped into the zeitgeist of the period, when the traditional comic was the first and only choice on the reading lists of young readers in particular.

Things turned out better for authors who focused on younger readers. Marjan Manček, for example, both before and after the independence of Slovenia drew works intended primarily for children, and considering the response and longevity of publication it can be said that his popularity increased after 1991, rather than decreased.

3. Educational Comics

However, one approach to this art form is somewhat less known to the average reader of comics. That is the creation of comics for educational purposes.

The biggest initiator of this type of comics in Slovenia is Ciril Horjak, who has won a unique place in the world of Slovene comics with this type of work. The mission is clear – to bring the subject matter closer to the people through the use of comics with educational content. These comics will probably never be available at newsstands or in bookshops, because they are designed exclusively for the learning audience and focus on specific fields. The audience are mostly people who are obliged to attend courses in addition to their work. If you present them with a comic in such a course, the potential for it to no longer be viewed as a necessary evil, but a fun addition to work, drastically increases. So far, this approach has proven to be more than successful. Ciril Horjak regularly keeps up with the feedback from participants of such courses and constantly receives commissions for new comics.

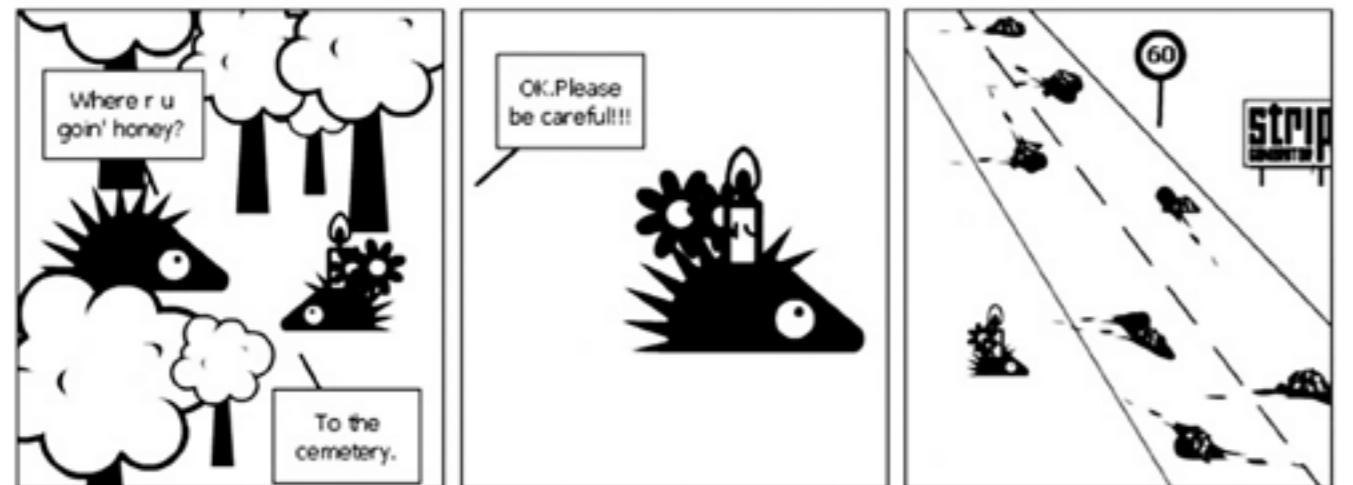
4. Stripgenerator

With the computer, which many artists soon started using as a drawing tool, came the World Wide Web. Žiga Aljaž employed a unique approach to tackle the Internet. He created



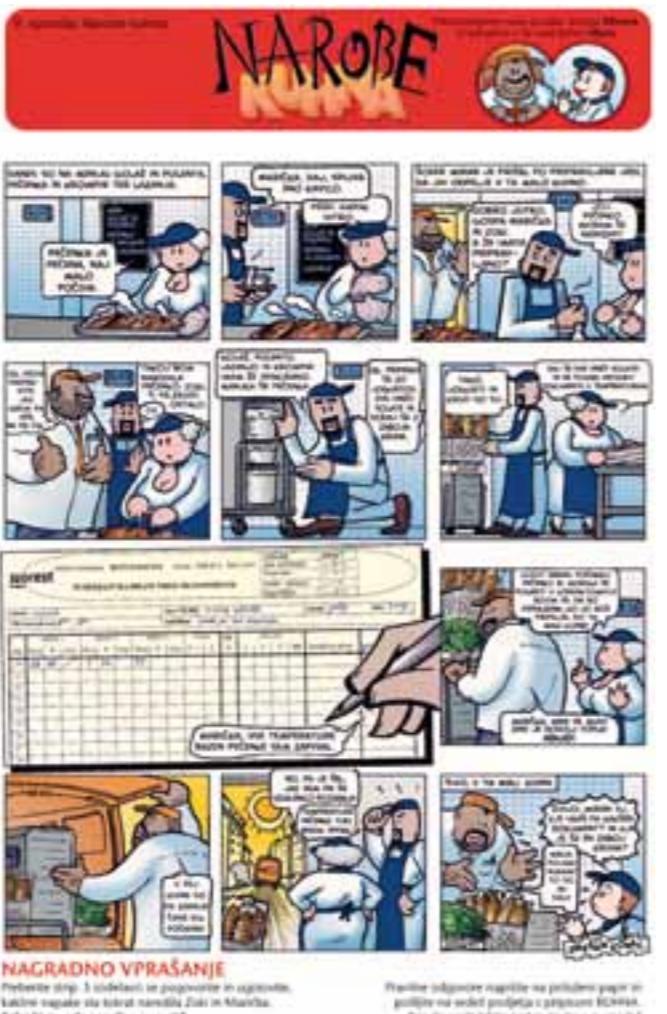
Ciril Horjak, *Kuhna*, izobraževalni strip za potrebe podjetja Slorest, 2009

Ciril Horjak, *Kuhna*, educational comic for the needs of the company Slorest, 2009



Strip, ustvarjen na spletni strani Stripgenerator⁴

Comic created on the Stripgenerator⁴ website



k delu, drastično povečana. Do tega trenutka se je ta pristop izkazal za več kot uspešnega. Ciril Horjak redno sledi povratnim informacijam udeležencev izobraževanj in redno dobiva naročila za nove stripe.

4. Stripgenerator

Z računalnikom, ki so ga mnogi risarji kmalu začeli uporabljati za risarski pripomoček, je prišel tudi svetovni splet. Z izjemnim pristopom se je interneta lotil Žiga Aljaž. Ustvaril je *Stripgenerator*. To je spletna stran, kjer lahko vsak posameznik s pomočjo stripovske zgodbe ustvarja stripe, deli mnenja ali pa sprošča svoj humor. Že samo vstop na prvo uvodno stran ti poda jasno sliko, da kljub nekaterim vnaprej izrisanim elementom, ustvarjalnost posameznega uporabnika ni prav nič omejena. Od leta 2004 do danes ima *Stripgenerator* že več kot 150.000 registriranih uporabnikov (Žiga Aljaž, n.d.).

Na podoben način se lahko privrženci *Diareje* igrajo z različnimi liki tega kultnega pasičnega stripa, ki je postal jedro neodvisnega tednika *Mladine*.

Svetovni splet pa izrabljajo risarji stripa tudi v druge namene. Skorajda ni časnika v Sloveniji, ki ne bi vseboval pasičnega stripa. Avtor pasičnega stripa *Večerko* v mariborskem časniku *Večer*, Ciril Horjak, na internetu objavlja postopek nastajanja takega stripa, da bi bralcu približal še pogled v notranje dogajanje in s tem deli ne samo izdelek pač pa tudi svoje delo v samem procesu.

5. Strip kot umetnost

Zadnja ugotovitev se nanaša na pojmovanje stripa kot likovne umetnosti. Še posebej v zadnjih letih se je pojav stripa kot galerijskega eksponata v Sloveniji opazno razširila. Spomin nama seže najprej v leto 2004, ko je bila zgoraj omenjena *Diareja* vzeta iz revije in postavljena na stene Bežigrajske galerije. Njen avtor Tomaž Lavrič je dobil svoje mesto leta 2010 v Moderni galeriji z retrospektivno razstavo svojih stripov. Leta 2011 pa sta sočasno potekali otvoritvi samostojne razstave Marjana Mančka v Trubarjevi hiši literature in za ovinkom, v Mestni galeriji Ljubljana, velike razstave *Risba v stripu na Slovenskem*. Obsežna razstava je pokazala natančno zgodovino in razvoj slovenskega stripa, ob njej pa je izšel tudi zajeten katalog. Omenjene razstave so le izbor tistih bolj odmevnih in najkasnejših in še te so omejene zgolj na prestolnico Slovenije, Ljubljano. So pa nedvomno dovolj velik pokazatelj, da se je po osamosvojitvi tudi v smeri cjenjenja umetnikov, ki ustvarjajo stripe na našem ozemlju, storil pozitiven preobrat.

Leto 1991 je bilo torej za Slovenijo in njene državljanе prelomno. To je vplivalo na delovanje kulture, v katero se vklaplja-

Stripgenerator. *Stripgenerator* is a website where visitors can create comics with the help of a comics story, share opinions or simply joke around. Entrance onto the main page alone makes it clear that despite some pre-drawn elements, the creativity of the individual is not limited in any way. Since 2004 *Stripgenerator* has attracted more than 150,000 registered users (Žiga Aljaž, n.d.).

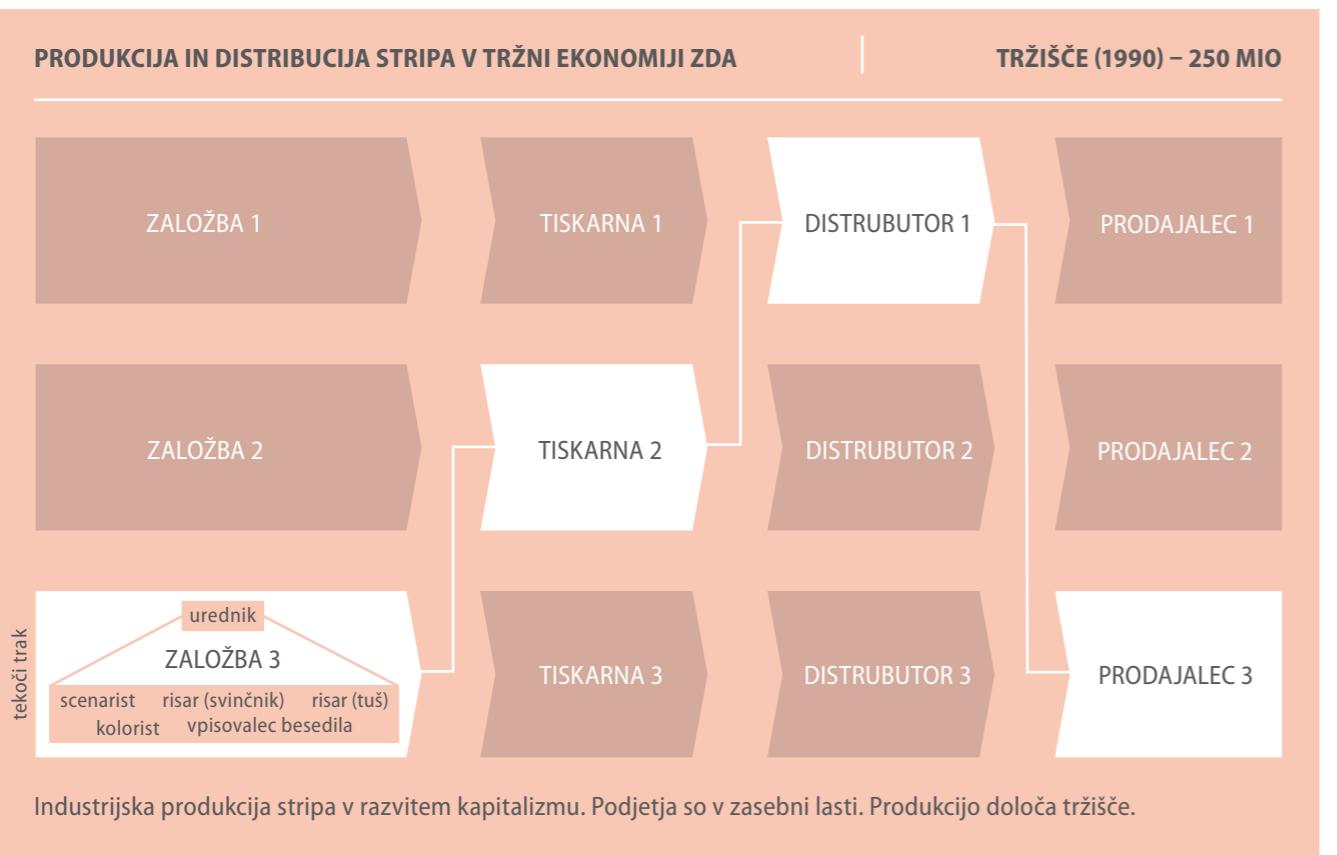
Similarly, fans of *Diareja* (*Diarrhoea*) can play around with different characters from this cult comic strip, which has become the heart of the independent weekly *Mladina*.

The World Wide Web is, however, used by comics artists for other purposes as well. There is hardly a newspaper in Slovenia which does not contain a comic strip. Ciril Horjak, author of the comic strip *Večerko* which runs in the Maribor newspaper *Večer*, publishes the process of creating such a comic on the Internet in order to give the reader an insight into the inner workings of its creation, and so shares with the public not only his product but his work in the production process itself.

5. Comics as art

The finding just mentioned relates to the perception of comics as a fine art. Especially in recent years the phenomenon of comics as gallery exhibits has noticeably spread in Slovenia. Our memory first takes us back to 2004, when the abovementioned *Diareja* was taken out of the magazine and placed upon the walls of the Bežigrad Gallery. Its author Tomaž Lavrič gained his place in the Museum of Modern Art in 2010 with a retrospective exhibition of his comics. Further, 2011 saw the simultaneous opening of Marjan Manček's independent exhibition at the Trubar Literature House, and the large exhibition *Risba v stripu na Slovenskem* (*Drawing in Slovene Comics*) around the corner from it in the Ljubljana City Art Gallery. The extensive exhibition presented the comprehensive history and development of Slovene comics and a comprehensive catalogue was published alongside it. The exhibitions mentioned are merely a selection of the more high-profile and recent exhibitions, and even these are limited only to the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana. However, they are undoubtedly a sufficient indicator that after independence a positive change had also taken place with respect to the appreciation of local comics artists.

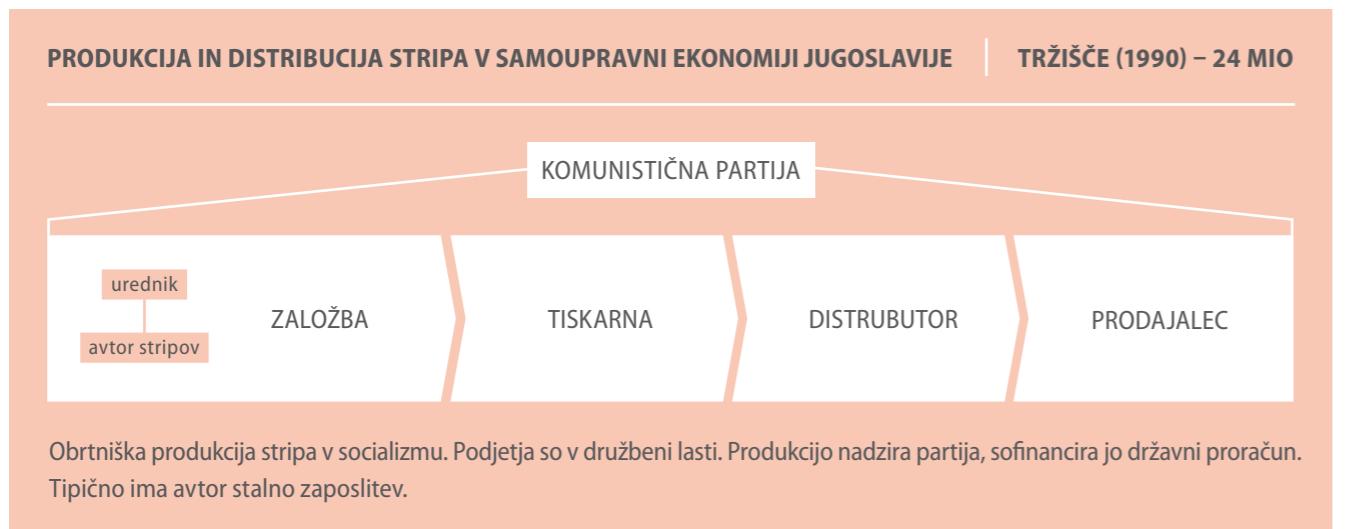
The year 1991 was thus a turning point for Slovenia and its citizens. It influenced the workings of a culture in which comics were playing an increasingly important role. We can see that a major shift occurred in this branch of art, mostly in regards to the representation of the mainstream and alternative scenes. Any attempt to revive the mainstream was overshadowed by an increasingly strong alternative current, which was established and



Model industrijske stripovske produkcije na tipičnem (ameriškem) kapitalističnem tržišču. Pri izdelavi stripa sodeluje več ljudi, njihove naloge so sistematizirane. Založba na tržišču poišče najbolj ugodna podjetja za tisk, distribucijo in prodajo stripa.

Model of industrial comic strip production in a typical (American) capitalist market. Several people cooperate in the production of a comic; their tasks are systematized. The publisher seeks out the most favourable businesses in the market for printing, distribution and sale of the comic.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMICS IN THE AMERICAN MARKET ECONOMY — MARKET (1990) – 250 MIL
From left to right: publisher 1/2/3 (editor; writer; penciller (pencil); inker (ink); colourist; letterer; assembly line); printing house 1/2/3; distributor 1/2/3; seller 1/2/3
 Industrial production of comics in developed capitalism. Companies are privately owned. The market determines the production.



PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMICS IN THE SELF-GOVERNING YUGOSLAV ECONOMY — MARKET (1990) – 24 MIL
 The communist party / *From left to right: publisher (editor; comics author); printing house; distributor; seller — The artisan production of comics in socialism. Companies are publicly owned. The party oversees the production; it is co-financed by the state budget. Typically the author is permanently employed.*

tudi strip. V tej veji umetnosti lahko ugotavljamo, da se je zgodil velik preobrat predvsem pri zastopanju mainstreama in alternativ. Vsak poskus ponovne oživitve mainstreama je bil zasenčen s čedalje močnejšim alternativnim tokom, ki ga je vzpostavil in ga še danes vodi *Stripburger*. Nov pristop so edukativni stripi, ki se ne morejo umeščati ne v eno ne v drugo kategorijo, saj so namenjeni izbrani publiki in pri njej izpričano uspešni. Slovenija je šla v korak s časom in tudi na spletu postavila slovenskim stripom prav posebno in priljubljeno mesto. Vse te ugotovitve pa so pripomogle k temu, da je strip z velikim prstom opozoril nase in vrata so mu odprle tudi eminentne slovenske galerije. Veliko spremembo v prepoznavanju stripa kot medija prinaša še dejstvo, da stripe izdaja Znanstveno raziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti. Kaj takega si v Jugoslaviji ni bilo mogoče predstavljati.

Modeli stripovske produkcije

Randy Duncan in Matthew J. Smith v knjigi (Duncan and Smith, 2009: 88), ki je pisana kot učbenik za ameriške dodiplomske študije, katerih del je študij stripa, delita stripovsko produkcijo na dva tipa: industrijsko in obrtniško. Pri prvem je delo razdeljeno med več sodelavcev, kar pomeni, da so v produkciji stripa zaposleni različni strokovnjaki, ki pokrivajo svoje področje. V najožjem smislu so to scenarist, risar, kolorist in vpisovalec besedila, kjer njihovo delo nadzira urednik. Govorimo lahko o tekočem traku (assembly line).

Drugi način, torej obrtniški, je delo enega samega avtorja (artisan process) (Duncan and Smith, 2009: 88). Slovenski strip je v obdobju jugoslovanske industrializacije imel visoke naklade, značilne za to obdobje, način ustvarjanja stripa pa je ostal izrazito obrtniški in v rokah posameznika. Nad delovnim procesom so vsaj posredno bdele inštitucije socialistične republike.

Tako kot ameriški *Yellow Kid*, je tudi na področju današnje Slovenije nastanek stripa izrazito povezan z industrijsko revolucijo. *Yellow Kid* je bil formiran leta 1895 – v času prvega množičnega preseljevanja v ZDA in bil namenjen prav priseljencem. Slovenija je leta 1952 dobila *Zvitorepca*, ki je dobro izkoristil takratno tržišče, na stežaj odprto s koncem 2. svetovne vojne. Po 2. svetovni vojni se je strip razšril tudi v marsikateri druge države in celo celini! Zgodba o širjenju stripa je torej del zgodbe o industrijski revoluciji, ki se je začela leta 1712, ko je škot Thomas Newcomen izumil prvi parni stroj (Allen, 2009: 156).

Zaključek

Za uvod v najino razpravo sva uporabila citat prejemnika Nobelove nagrade za leto 2009 na področju ekonomije. Oliver E. Williamson je v svoji raziskavi, za katero je dobil prestižno

is until this day led by *Stripburger*. A new approach is educational comics, which cannot be placed into either category, because they are intended for select audiences and are undoubtedly successful with them. Slovenia has kept pace with the times and has even created a very special and very popular place for Slovenian comics on the Internet. All these findings have helped comics call attention to themselves, causing even eminent Slovenian galleries to open their doors to them. A significant change in the recognition of comics as a medium was also brought about by the fact that comics are published by the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, something which was unimaginable in former Yugoslavia.

The models of comic strip production

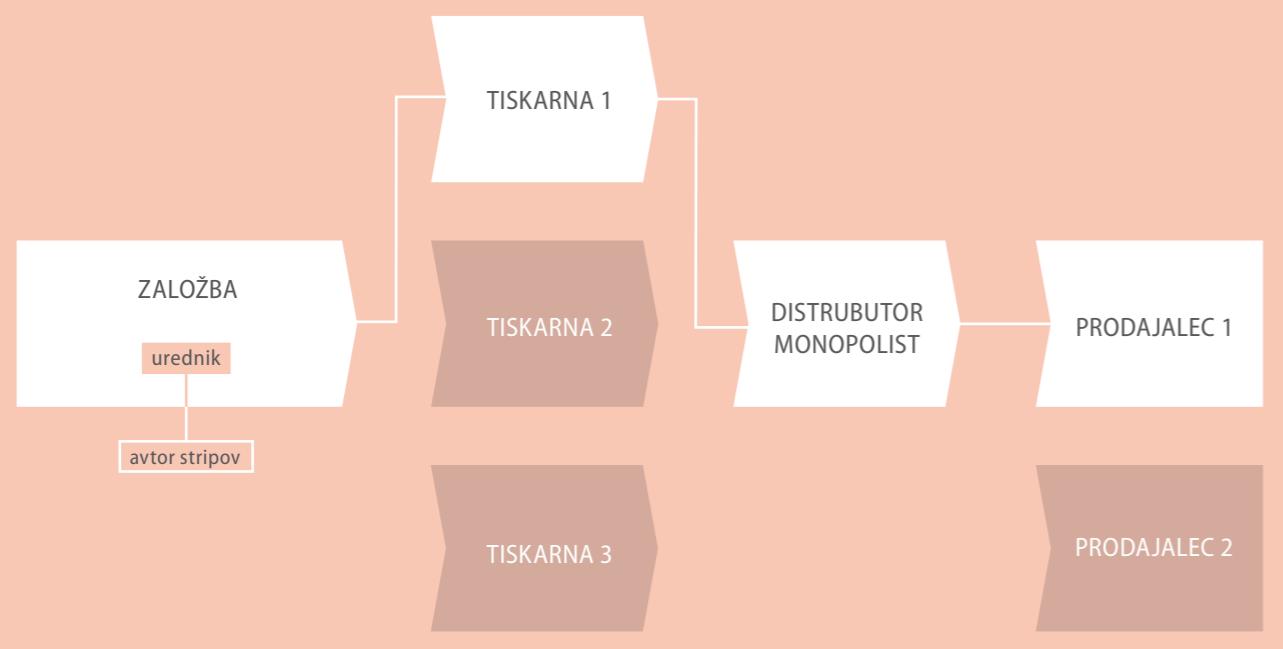
Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith in their book (Duncan and Smith, 2009: 88) written as a textbook for American undergraduate studies (a part of which is the study of comics) divide the production of comics into two types: industrial and artisan. In industrial comic strip production, the work is divided between several collaborators, which means that various experts in various fields are employed in the production. In the narrowest sense these are the writer, illustrator, colourist and letterer, with the editor supervising their work. We can speak here of an assembly line.

The second method is the work of a single author – it is an artisan process (Duncan and Smith, 2009: 88). In the period of Yugoslav industrialisation, Slovene comics had large circulations typical of this period, however the method of comic strip production remained distinctly artisan and in the hands of the individual. The work process was at least indirectly under the watchful eye of the institutions of the socialist republic.

Just as with the American strip *The Yellow Kid*, the creation of comics in present-day Slovenia is also distinctly connected to the industrial revolution. *The Yellow Kid* was formed in 1895 – in the period of the first mass migration to the USA and was intended specifically for immigrants. In 1952 Slovenia received *Zvitorepec*. It took advantage of the market at the time, which had been opened wide following the end of the Second World War. After the war, comics also spread to many other countries and even continents. The story of the proliferation of comics is therefore a part of the story of the Industrial Revolution, which began in 1712 when Scotsman Thomas Newcomen invented the first steam engine (Allen, 2009: 156).

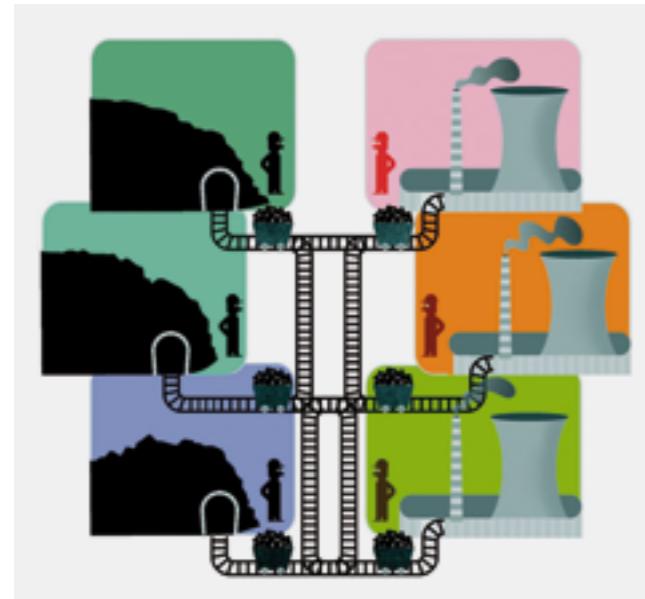
Conclusion

As an introduction to our discussion we inserted a quote by the 2009 Nobel Prize recipient in economics. In his research for



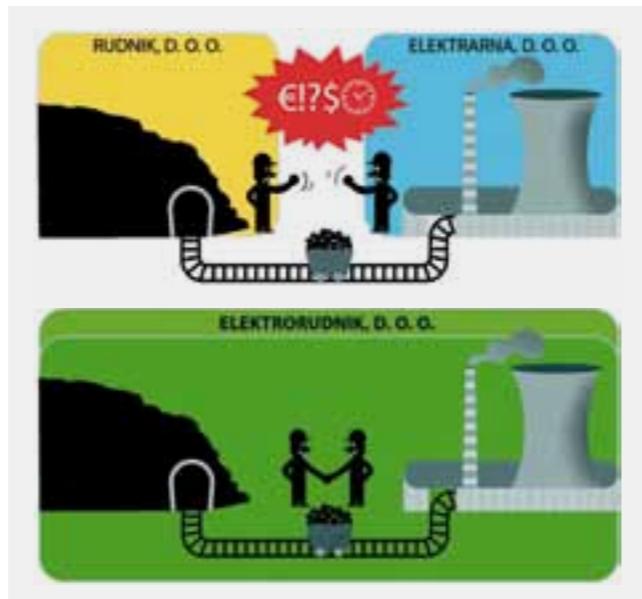
Obrtniška produkcija stripa v zgodnjem slovenskem kapitalizmu. Podjetja so v mešani lasti ali povsem zasebni lasti. Avtor nima stalne zaposlitve, ponavadi strip v celoti ustvarja sam, kadar ima sodelavce je to ponavadi le scenarist.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMICS IN THE YOUNG MARKET ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA — MARKET (1990) – 2 MIL
From left to right: publisher (editor; comics author); printing house 1/2/3; monopolist distributor; seller 1/2
 The artisan production of comics in early Slovenian capitalism. Companies are in joint venture or entirely privately owned. The authors are not permanently employed, they usually create the comic entirely on their own, and if they do have co-workers, a writer is usually the only one.



Če se v poslu obe strani ne strinjata, si bosta pač našli nove poslovne partnerje.
 Če je trg dovolj velik, seveda.

If both parties in a transaction disagree, they will simply find new business partners – if the market is large enough, of course.



Če pa je trg premajhen in je vsaka stran preveč odvisna od druge, je boljše, da se združita pod streho enega podjetja.

If, however, the market is too small and both parties are too dependent on each other, it is better for them to merge under the roof of one company.

nagrado, ugotavljal razlike poslovanja na trgu, kjer je primerljivih ponudnikov veliko – na velikem tržišču, s tistim, kjer možnost izbire ni tako obsežna – majhnem tržišču.

V svoji raziskavi ugotavlja, da trgi in podjetja spore rešujejo zelo preprosto. Če z enim od partnerjem nismo zadovoljni, ga bomo zamenjali. A to lahko storimo le tam, kjer imamo dovolj možnosti. Če pa na trgu ni veliko ponudnikov, pri tem nastane težava. Williamson pravi, da je v takem primeru najbolje, da se dve strani, ki druga brez druge ne moreta poslovati, združita v enakovredna partnerja (Stojan, 2009: 6–7).

V produkciji stripa ima Slovenija majhno tržišče. Ali morda tu tiči razlog, da se nikoli ni zares razvila industrijska oblika izdelovanja stripov? Kaj pa če imamo možnosti za vzpostavitev velikega tržišča in je razlog v tem, da v Sloveniji ostaja zelo pomembna vloga vlade pri financiranju kulturne produkcije in s tem tudi stripovske kulture? Kot v SFRJ tudi v Sloveniji torej država prekomisij za dodelovanje sredstev ohranja nadzor nad proizvodnjo. Kaj pa če se brez tega nadzora strip v Sloveniji sploh ne bi razvil in ne bi imeli niti obrtniške oblike? V kolikšni meri je slovenski strip odvisen od politične ureditve države? Bi ga imeli v isti obliki, če se Slovenija ne bi osamosvojila? Je imela socialistična Jugoslavija večjo možnost za odprtje industrijske oblike⁵?

Računava na pogum vseh, ki nas preučevanje stripovskega fenomena vznemirja. Verjameva, da si je moč z redefinicijo vprašanj priznati, da strip ni le kulturni fenomen, ampak je tesno povezan vsaj še s politiko in ekonomijo.

1 Miki Muster pravi, da je povsem verjetno, da so table z naročenimi stripi prišle v Slovenijo, a so obstale v urednikovem predalu (vir: zasebni pogovor z Mikijem Mustrom).

2 Vir: zasebni pogovor s Kostjo Gatnikom.

3 Njegove stripe je mogoče opaziti med transparenti, ki jih nosijo ljudje na protestih.

4 stripgenerator.com

5 Sodelovanje jugoslovenskih stripovskih avtorjev v industrijskih procesih stripovske produkcije je bilo zelo redko, vezano na sodelovanje s tujimi založbami ali na izdajanje licenčnih stripov v Jugoslaviji, primer Tarzan Branislava Kerca.

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which he received the prestigious award, Oliver E. Williamson studied the differences in market transactions between a large market with many comparable providers and a small market with fewer choices.

In his research he concludes that markets and businesses solve disputes in a very simple manner. If we are not satisfied with one of our partners, we replace it, but we can only do so if we have enough options. However, if there are few providers in the market, a problem occurs. Williamson states that in this case it is best for the two sides, neither of which can operate without the other, to merge and become equal partners. (Stojan, 2009: 6–7).

Slovenia has a small comics production market. Maybe that is the reason why the industrial model of comic strip production never truly developed. But what if we do have the potential to establish a large market and the real reason lies in the fact that in Slovenia the government continues to play a very important part in the financing of cultural productions, and therefore comics culture? Thus in Slovenia, as was the case in SFRY, the state maintains control over the production through committees for the allocation of resources. But what if without this supervision comics in Slovenia had never even developed and we now would not even have the artisan form? To what extent are Slovene comics dependent on the country's political system? Would Slovene comics today exist in the same form if Slovenia had never gained independence? Did socialist Yugoslavia have a greater potential for the development of the industrial form?⁵

We are counting on the courage of all who are excited by the study of the comics phenomenon. We believe that by redefining the questions one can acknowledge that comics are not only a cultural phenomenon, but are also closely connected at least to politics and economics.

1 Miki Muster says it is perfectly likely that the storyboards with the comics ordered did arrive in Slovenia, but ended up in the editor's drawer (source: private conversation with Miki Muster).

2 Source: private conversation with Kostja Gatnik.

3 His comics can be spotted among banners carried by protesters.

4 stripgenerator.com

5 The involvement of Yugoslav comic authors in the industrial processes of comics production was very rare, tied to the cooperation with foreign publishers or to the publishing of licensed comics in Yugoslavia, for example *Tarzan* by Branislav Kerc.

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Dobro pognojena zemlja

Poskus orisa najpomembnejših trendov v objavljanju prevedenih stripov v Socialistični federativni republiki Jugoslaviji

Jakob Klemenčič

Nobenega dvoma ni, da lastnosti zemlje vplivajo na lastnosti sadežev, ki zrastejo iz nje. To velja tudi o stripovski kulturi – vsaj do časa pred zmagovitim pohodom interneta (pred desetletjem in še malo), ki je vsakovrstne vizualne informacije napravil instantno dostopne, razširil polje pojmovanja stripovskega izraza (tudi s povečanimi možnostmi bralčeve interakcije) in je daljinsko nakupovanje papirnatih publikacij od kjerkoli na planetu postalо prava malenkost. Pred obdobjem klikanja pa je bilo obdobje, ko je bil temeljni obred stripovskega konzumenta obhod kioskov in drugih prodajnih mest periodičnega tiska. V svojem besedilu želim skicirati glavne tende v objavljanu uvoženih, t.j. prevedenih stripov (predvsem v obdobju od konca druge svetovne vojne do začetka vojn na območju bivše socialistične Jugoslavije), in orisati specifike, ki bi lahko vplivale na razvoj lokalne stripovske kulture.

Pojem *lokalen* tu ni čisto enoznačen. Čeprav se bom pretežno posvetil stanju v Sloveniji, je treba vedeti, da je bil tisk v srbskem in hrvaškem jeziku (ki smo ju takrat skupaj imenovali kot en, „srbohrvaški“ jezik), vsaj tisti s količajem resno naklado, naprodaj po vsej Jugoslaviji, pri čemer je bil prav pri stripovskih publikacijah delež obeh omenjenih največjih jezikov še posebej močan.

Tako je bilo že v času pred drugo svetovno vojno, ko je bilo, po Draginčiću in Zupanu, objavljenih okrog 15.000 strani stripa v

Well Fertilised Soil

An attempt at outlining the most important trends in the publishing of translated comics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Jakob Klemenčič

There is no doubt that the characteristics of the soil affect the characteristics of the fruits it bears. This is also true of comics culture – at least it was until the triumphant march of the Internet (a decade and a bit ago), which made all sorts of visual information instantly accessible, expanded the borders of our understanding of the comics expression (also with increased options for reader interaction) and made the remote purchase of paper publications from anywhere in the world a piece of cake. Before the time of the Internet, which brought the world to our doorsteps at the click of a button, the standard ritual of comics consumers was to ‘do the rounds’ of newsstands and other periodic print resellers. In this essay I want to outline the main trends in the publishing of imported, that is, translated comics (particularly in the period between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the wars in the former socialist Yugoslavia region) and give a summary of the specifics that could have influenced the development of the local comics culture.

The term *local* is not entirely unambiguous here. Although I will focus mostly on the situation in Slovenia, it is important to note that Serbian and Croatian (at the time known together as one: Serbo-Croatian language) printed material with at least a somewhat substantial circulation was available all across Yugoslavia. Both of these most commonly spoken languages had a particularly large share of comics publications.

okoli 20 publikacijah, od tega tretjina del domaćih avtorjev. Od uvoženih stripov je poleg Disneya treba omeniti vsaj Raymondovega *Agenta X-9*, ki je debitiral l. 1935 v beograjskem časopisu *Politika*. V Sloveniji je bil v tem času od prevedenih avtorjev najpopularnejši G.Th. Rotman s slikaničnimi priповедmi (niz uokvirjenih sličic z besedilom pod vsako). Med drugo svetovno vojno, ko so si Jugoslavijo razdelili okupatorji, je strip še vedno živel, omejen na lokalne centre, po vojni pa je nekaj časa veljal za nezaželen produkt kapitalističnega Zahoda.

Kot sem namignil že v prvem odstavku, je bila stripovska kultura v Socialistični federativni republiki Jugoslaviji izrazito stvar periódich publikacij. Strip je v knjižni obliki nastopal le sporadično in šele v drugi polovici osemdesetih se je pojavilo nekaj knjižnih izdaj, ki so se po obliki in opremi jasno navezovale na takrat za Evropo še vedno najtipičnejo knjižno stripovsko formo, tradicionalni franco-belgijski album formata A4 (ali tam nekje) z 48 stranmi, po možnosti trdo vezanega in v barvah. Ostale stripovske-knjjižne publikacije s prevedenim materialom so bile ne samo redke, ampak tudi vsebinsko in/ali formalno netipične: takšne so bile npr. prevedene poučne knjige Fernanda Fernandeza o ustroju in delovanju človeškega telesa in ko je leta 1980 začel izhajati kompleten Fosterjev opus *Princa Valianta*, je bilo to v mehkovezanih knjigah velikega formata (33,5 x 23,7 cm) na supergladkem brezlesnem papirju.

Osnovna nosilca stripovske kulture sta bila torej stripovska revija in stripovski zvezčič. Revije so, vsaj spočetka, stripovski material praviloma kombinirale z ilustriranimi besedili (pustolovske in zabavne zgodbe, pa tudi poučna besedila) na podoben način kot npr. britanski *Look and Learn*. Klasični predstavnik takega tipa revije je *Politikin Zabavnik*; revija s tem imenom je izhajala že v letih 1939-41 in bila znova oživljena (z novo numeracijo) leta 1952. Med letoma 1973 in 1989 je izhajala tudi v slovenščini. V obliki, ki se je ustalila leta 1968, je imela poleg enostranskih barvnih humorističnih stripov še 24-stransko sredico (črnobelno, prvotno z enim dodanim barvnim tonom), v kateri so pomembno vlogo (še vedno) imeli ameriški sindikalizirani strip, poleg njih pa – ob le sporadični prisotnosti domaćih avtorjev – vse takrat pomembnejše stripovske produkcije: britanska, italijanska, franco-belgijska in celo španska (npr. *Jekleni gusar* – *Corsário de hierro*) kar je glede na ne najboljše odnose med državama v tem času, še vedno pod pečatom Francovega režima, pravzaprav presenetljivo. Britansko produkcijo je seveda zastopal material, ki ga je licenciral IPC/Fleetway; poleg stripov je ta hiša priskrbela tudi veliko poučnega materiala, tiskanega na barvnih straneh (drugi vir tovrstnega gradiva, zlasti dvostranskih spreadov z resnično zgodbo v 6-8 barvnih ilustracijah s kosi besedila pod njimi – formo so za priovedi z jugoslovansko

Such was already the case in the time before the Second World War when, following Draginčić and Zupan, around 15,000 pages of comics were published in about 20 publications; a third of these were works by domestic authors. Among imported comics, besides Disney it is important to mention at least Raymond's *Agent X-9*, which made its debut in 1935 in the Belgrade newspaper *Politika*. In Slovenia the most popular translated author at the time was G. Th. Rotman with his picture stories (a series of framed drawings with text underneath each one). During the Second World War when Yugoslavia was divided among its occupying forces, comics carried on, albeit restricted to local centres. After the war, however, they were for a time considered an unwanted product of the capitalist West.

As implied in the first paragraph, comics culture in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was distinctly a culture of periodic publications. Comics in book form appeared only sporadically and it took until the latter half of the eighties for some book editions to appear, clearly linked in both form and content to the most typical comic book form for Europe at the time, the traditional Franco-Belgian album (approx. A-4 size with 48 pages, if possible hard-cover and printed in colour). Other comic book publications containing translated material were not only rare but also unusual in both content and/or form. Such were, for example, the translated educational books by Fernando Fernández about the structure and function of the human body, and Foster's complete opus of *Prince Valiant*, which began publication in 1980 in the form of large-format (33,5 x 23,7 cm) paperback books printed on super-smooth wood-free paper.

The basic media of the comics culture were therefore the comics magazine and the comics booklet. At least in the beginning, magazines as a rule combined comics with illustrated texts (adventure and humour tales, also educational texts) in a manner similar to the British *Look and Learn*. A classic representative of this type of magazine is *Politikin Zabavnik*; a magazine was already issued under the same name between 1939 and 1941 and was revived (with new numeration) in 1952. Between 1973 and 1989 it was also published in the Slovenian language. In 1968 it settled on a form consisting of the one-page humour comics in colour along with an additional 24-page comic at its centre (black-and-white, originally with one added colour tone). In it, American syndicated comics continued to play an important role, and also – alongside a sporadic presence of domestic authors – all the more important comics productions of the time: British, Italian, Franco-Belgian and even Spanish (for example *Jekleni gusar*, *Corsário de hierro*), which was actually surprising considering the rather bad relations then between the countries still under Franco's regime. The British production was of

tematiko prevzeli tudi domači ilustratorji – je bil nizozemski *Oberon*. Od kvalitetnejših stripov italijanske produkcije, objavljene v *Politikinem Zabavniku*, gre omeniti predvsem Prattovega *Corta Malteseja*, pa stripe Dina Battaglie in Jacovittijevega *Cocco Billa*.

Druga pomembna revija s kombinacijo stripa in ilustriranih besedil je bil *Plavi Vjesnik* (1954 – 1973), ki je izhajal v Zagrebu, njegov nosilni strip pa je bil precej časa britanski *Dan Dare*.

Najizrazitejša oblika stripovske publikacije, ki je jugoslovenskemu bralstvu prinašala kvaliteten tuj strip, pa so bile revije podobnega formata, torej spet približno A4, katerih strani so v celoti zavzemali stripi; vrstile so se zgodbe v nadaljevanjih, daljše in krajše kompletne epizode ter enostranski humoristični strip, slednje včasih tudi kot zaporedje nekaj dnevnih pasic. Če je bilo kaj pisane besedila, se je to neposredno nanašalo na strip: šlo je za intervjuje z avtorji, recenzije in tudi bolj poglobljene eseje, lahko pa tudi za pisma bralcev in male oglase. Revije so bil tiskane v črnobelji tehniki, čeprav jih je nekaj začelo svojo pot v širibarnem tisku. Ta se je po pravilu izkazal za prezahteven zalogaj in revija je prešla na črnobelji tisk, kar je poleg očem blagodejnejše reprodukcije imelo še dodatno vrednost: precej uveljavljeno je mnenje, da je črnobelji tisk avtorjem, ki so se ob njem oblikovali, pod kožo vsadil občutek za učinkovit črnobel kontrast.

Za primer vzemimo *Stripoteko*, vsekakor centralno jugoslovansko stripovsko publikacijo, ki tako kot *Politikin Zabavnik* še vedno izhaja (izdajatelj, novosadski Forum, se je medtem preimenoval v Marketprint). Svojo pot je začela leta 1969 kot odvod stripovske revije *Panorama*. Naslovica prve številke je najavljala Goscinnyjev in Uderzov strip *Oumpah-Pah* in tudi sicer je v reviji na začetku prednjačil francosko-belgijski humoristični strip prvega kakovostnega razreda (*Lucky Luke* in *Asterix*). V nadaljevanju se je med aktualno produkcijo – poleg frankobelgijske tudi italijansko, špansko in argentinsko – ter nekatrimi klasičnimi stripovskimi serijami vzpostavilo ravnotežje; ob boku *Blueberryju* (Charlier in Giraud), *Bernardu Princeu* in *Comanche* (Greg in Hermann), *Gastonu* (Franquin), *Brodomcem časa* (Forest in Gillon), *Valerianu* (Christin in Mezières), *Cortu Malteseu* (Pratt), *Mortu Cinderju* (Oesterheld in A. Breccia) in *Torpedu* (Abulí in Bernet) so stali *Prince Valiant* (Foster), *Spirit* (Eisner), *Steve Canyon* (Caniff) in *Rip Kirby* (Raymond), če se omejim na najpomembnejše. Za nekaj disonance je skrbel le Marvelov strip (*Conan*, *Silver Surfer*, *Thor*). Takoj ko je revija za platnicami uvedla še en barvni list, se je na teh straneh pojavit Corben z *Bloodstarom*, ki sta mu kasneje sledila *Svet mutantov* in *Den*. Pomembno je omeniti, da so bile francosko-belgijske albumske epizode po pravilu objavljene v celoti v enem kosu.

course represented by material licensed under IPC/Fleetway. Besides comics this publishing house also issued a lot of educational material printed in colour (the second source of this type of material, especially two-page spreads featuring true stories in the form of 6-8 colour illustrations with text underneath, was the Dutch *Oberon* – the form was also adopted by domestic illustrators for their tales containing Yugoslav themes). Among the higher quality Italian comics published in *Politikin Zabavnik*, Pratt's *Corto Maltese*, as well as Dino Battaglia's comics and Jacovitti's *Cocco Bill* are particularly noteworthy.

A second important magazine that combined comics and illustrated text was *Plavi Vjesnik* (1954 – 1973). Published in Zagreb, its central comic was for quite some time the British *Dan Dare*.

The most distinct form of comic strip publication brought quality foreign comics to Yugoslav readers: magazines of a similar format, again approximately A4-size, whose pages were entirely covered in comics. Stories in several instalments, longer and shorter complete episodes, and one-page humour comics, the last sometimes even as a series of several daily strips, lined up on its pages. If there was any written text, it related directly to comics: interviews with authors, reviews and in-depth essays as well as readers' letters and small ads. The magazines were printed in black and white, though some had started out in four-colour printing. This as a rule proved too difficult and the magazines switched over to black-and-white printing. This type of reproduction was more soothing to the eye, but also had an added value: it is a rather established opinion that black-and-white printing instilled in its authors a deep sense of how to efficiently employ black-and-white contrast.

Let us take *Stripoteka* as an example. This publication fundamentally central to Yugoslav comics is still published today, as is *Politikin Zabavnik* (although its publisher, Forum in Novi Sad has since been renamed to Marketprint). It started its journey in 1969 as a derivative of the comics magazine *Panorama*. The cover of the first volume advertised Goscinny and Uderzo's comic strip *Oumpah-Pah*; otherwise it was also first-class Franco-Belgian humour comics (*Lucky Luke* and *Asterix*) that led the way in the beginning. Later on, a balance was struck between the current production – besides Franco-Belgian also Italian, Spanish and Argentinian – and some classic comics series: alongside *Blueberry* (Charlier and Giraud), *Bernard Prince* and *Comanche* (Greg and Hermann), *Gaston* (Franquin), *Brodomci časa* (*Lost in Time*, Forest and Gillon), *Valerian* (Christin and Mezières), *Corto Maltese* (Pratt), *Mort Cinder* (Oesterheld and A. Breccia) and *Torpedo* (Abulí and Bernet) stood *Prince Valiant* (Foster), *Spirit* (Eisner), *Steve Canyon* (Caniff) and *Rip Kirby*

V drugi polovici osemdesetih, v času inflacije in ekonomske krize v počasi razpadajoči socialistični Jugoslaviji, je *Stripoteka* iz tedenskega izhajanja prešla na mesečnega, pa ugasnila in se spet pojavila malo pred dokončnim razpadom države. O statusu, ki ga je revija imela, nekaj pove podatek, da je sredi devetdesetih na Hrvaskem izšlo pet številk revije z enakim imenom in celo grafičnim oblikovanjem logotipa (da o formatu in konceptu niti ne govorimo), le podnaslov je bil spremenjen iz „jugoslovanske“ v „hrvaško“ strip revijo.

Edina slovenska revija, ki je bila v tem času v celoti posvečena stripu, je bil tednik *Zvitorepec* (1966-1973), ki pa je stripe dosledno objavljaval v nekajstranskih nadaljevanjih (tako kot npr. novosadska *Panorama* ali prva inkarnacija sarajevskega *Strip Arta*). Tudi tukaj je bil izbor stripov dovolj reprezentativna mešanica ameriškega časopisnega stripa, francosko-belgijske in angleške produkcije – *Jerry Spring*, *Bernard Prince*, *Asterix*, *Lucky Luke*, *Tiffany Jones*, *Popeye* itd. –, slovenskim bralcem pa se je bogove zakaj najbolj priljubil Tullyjev in Blascov *Steel Claw*.

Poleg *Stripotekе* in omenjenih luksuznih izdaj *Princa Valianta* bi od Forumovih izdaj veljalo omeniti vsaj še *Spunk* (med letoma 1979 in 1983 je izšlo 17 številk), ki je objavljala stripe podobnega profila kot *Stripoteka*, vendar je bila večina revije dostojno natisnjena v barvah, in *Asteriksov Zabavnik* s kompletнимi epizodami *Asterixa* in *Lucky Lukea*, publikaciji, ki je bila namenjena prodaji na kioskih in je izhajala v broširani vezavi in (ne povsem posrečenem) barvнем tisku, ta pa je bil poskus približka klasični francosko-belgijski kulturi strip albumov.

Če so se stripu posvečene revije, vsaj najboljše med njimi, konceptualno – če so že bile omejene pri tehničnih možnostih – poleg britanskih zgledovale po francoskih in belgijskih (*Spirou*, *Pilote*, *Circus*), ima druga pojavnova oblika stripovske publikacije korenine v sosednji Italiji. Gre za zvezčice formata 20 x 15 cm in navzdol, ki za velik del tukajnjih stripovskih konzumentov, za neposvečene pa sploh, predstavljajo sinonim za strip. Eksplozijo so doživeli v sedemdesetih letih. Iz Italije pa ni bila uvožena le oblika, temveč pretežno tudi vsebina. Po eni strani je šlo za žanrsko produkcijo milanske založbe Bonelli in satelitov, ki jo je v Jugoslaviji zastopal novosadski *Dnevnik*; klub nepotrebnim cenzorskim posegom, ki so včasih mejili na paranojo, in klub naslovnicam iz domače kuhinje so junaki, kot so Zagor, Blek, Tex, kasnje tudi Dylan Dog in Martin Mystère izhajali v bombastičnih nakladah (tudi čez 100.000 izvodov).

Drugi pol stripovskih zvezčičev so predstavljalje izdaje zagrebškega *Vjesnika*; izdajali so sicer mdr. tudi prevode britanskih zvezčičev iz serije *War Picture Library* (ki so v slovenščini izhajali

(Raymond), to name but the most important. Only Marvel comics (*Conan*, *Silver Surfer*, *Thor*) provided some dissonance. As soon as the magazine introduced another colour section, Corben appeared on its pages with *Bloodstar*, followed later by *Svet mutantov* (*Mutant World*) and *Den*. It is important to mention that as a rule Franco-Belgian album episodes were published together in one volume. In the latter half of the eighties, in the time of inflation and economic crisis in the slowly disintegrating Yugoslavia, *Stripoteka* went from being published weekly to monthly, faded away and reappeared shortly before the final disintegration of the country. The fact that in the mid-nineties five volumes of a magazine were published with the same name and even the same graphic logo design as *Stripoteka* (to say nothing of the format and concept), with only the description in the subtitle changed from 'Yugoslav' to 'Croatian', says something about the magazine's status at the time.

The only Slovene magazine at the time entirely dedicated to comics was the weekly *Zvitorepec* (1966-1973), although it consistently published its comics in instalments a few pages long at a time (as did, for example, *Panorama* in Novi Sad, and the first incarnation of *Strip Art* in Sarajevo). Here also, the comics selection was a sufficiently representative mix of American newspaper comics and Franco-Belgian and English productions: *Jerry Spring*, *Bernard Prince*, *Asterix*, *Lucky Luke*, *Tiffany Jones*, *Popeye* etc. However, surprisingly it was Tully and Blasco's *Steel Claw* that endeared itself most to Slovene readers.

Worth mentioning among Forum's publications besides *Stripoteka* and the aforementioned luxury editions of *Prince Valiant* are at least *Spunk* (17 issues were published between 1979 and 1983), which published comics of a similar profile to *Stripoteka*, although most of the magazine was decently printed in colour; and *Asterix's Zabavnik* with the complete episodes of *Asterix* and *Lucky Luke*, a publication that was designed for sale at newsstands, was published in paperback, and (not entirely successfully) printed in colour (an attempt at copying the classic Franco-Belgian comics album culture).

While magazines dedicated to comics, at least the best among them, conceptually modelled themselves after British as well as French and Belgian (*Spirou*, *Pilote*, *Circus*) comics magazines, the second form of comics publication had its roots in neighbouring Italy – booklets of 20 x 15 cm or less in size, which for a great number of comics consumers, the uninitiated especially, are synonymous with comics. They experienced a boom in the seventies and it was not only their form that was an Italian import, but also chiefly their content. On the one hand, these booklets were a genre production of Milan publishing house Bonelli and

kot posebne izdaje *Zvitorepca*), zares pa je zaslovel le *Alan Ford*. Črnohumorni strip Bunkerja in Magnusa (ter naslednikov) je predvsem zaradi duhovitega prevoda, za katerega velja, da je bil boljši od originala, v Jugoslaviji postal še popularnejši kot v domovini Italiji. In še več – postal je edini resnično kulturni strip na področju bivše Jugoslavije, saj so se in se še vedno po likih ter pojmih iz stripa imenovali lokali, napisana in uprizorjena je bila kakšna dramska predstava po motivih stripovske serije, sledijo si vedno novi ponatisi, in kar je najpomembnejše – citati iz oblačkov se še vedno vpletajo tako v pogovore kot v publicistiko. Nekje daleč zadaj (po kulnosti) *Alanu Fordu* sledi *Zagor*, v Sloveniji pa občasno po vseh teh letih še vedno slišite citat iz zgoraj omenjenega *Steel Claw*: „Ni miru za Jekleno pest!“.

Kaj nam pokaže pogled na izbor prevedenega stripovskega materiala? Če seštejemo vse, kar je bilo objavljenega od sredine petdesetih do začetka devetdesetih in odmislimo občasne cenzurne posege ter splošno ne previsok tehnični nivo, dobimo pravzaprav precej dobro odslikavo situacije v globalni stripovski publicistiki. Edina resnična luknja med klasiki je kvečemu Hergéjev *Tintin*, katerega zgodnja epizoda *Črni otok* se je pojavila leta 1979 v celoti v reviji *Eks Almanah*, čez mnogo let (1990) pa sta sledila še dva albuma, *Faraonove cigare in Let 714*, pa Jacobsova *Blake in Mortimer* (še le 1989 v *Politikinem Zabavniku*) ter Caniffov *Terry and the Pirates*. Od sodobnih avtorjev najbolj izstopajoče manjka Moebius; z izjemo nekaj v kontekstu njevega opusa nepomembnih kratkih zgodb se je pojavil šele z albumi o *Incalu*, ki jih je l. 1985 izdal privatni založnik. Nekakšen pogled skozi priprta vrata so v tem primeru (in podobnih) nudili reportažni prispevki, ki so bili ilustrirani z navadno precej pomanjšanimi ilustracijami, sicer pa so Moebiusove likovne stileme jugoslovanski bralci najbolje spoznali prek del srbskega risarja Zorana Janjetova.

Lakoto po nekaterih vrhunskih imenih alternativnejšega aktualnega stripa so delno lajšale „padalske“ objave v nestripovskem tisku: slovenska literarno-družboslovna revija *Problemi* je npr. v svojih tematskih številkah, posvečenih punk kulturi, objavila Moebiusa (*Rock City*), Druilleta, Caroja ter kratko zgodbo Tamburinjevega in Liberatorevega Ranxeroxa.

Zanimivo je dejstvo, da so stripi, ki jih je po svetu licencirala pariška založba Editions Vaillant in so bili zaradi komunističnega pedigreega založbe lepo sprejeti po Vzhodni Evropi, v takratni Jugoslaviji predstavljeni le precej obstransko epizodo.

Nekateri vrhunski stripi pa so v teh krajih objavljeni celo premerno. Osebnemu prijateljstvu Hermanna Huppenu s sarajevskim založnikom Ervinom Rustemagićem gre zasluga za to, da sta

its branches, represented in Yugoslavia by the Novi Sad *Dnevnik*. Despite unnecessary censorship which sometimes bordered on paranoia and homespun covers, comics with heroes such as *Zagor*, *Blek*, *Tex*, later also *Dylan Dog* and *Martin Mystère* had massive circulations (even as much as over 100,000 copies).

On the other hand, publications by Zagreb newspaper *Vjesnik* represented these booklets. *Vjesnik* published, among other things, translations of British booklets from the *War Picture Library* series (which were published in Slovenian as special editions of *Zvitorepec*); the only one to truly make it big, however, was *Alan Ford*. This black humour comic book by Bunker and Magnus (and successors) became even more popular in Yugoslavia than in native Italy mainly due to its witty translation, which is considered to be better than the original. Moreover, it became the only true cult comic in the former Yugoslav region. Bars were and continue to be named after its characters and concepts, a few theatre pieces based on its motifs have been written and staged, new reprints continue to follow, and most importantly its speech bubble quotes still weave their way into conversations as well as journalism. Somewhere far behind *Alan Ford* (in cult status) is *Zagor*, and in Slovenia one can occasionally, after all these years, still hear the following quote from the abovementioned *Steel Claw*: ‘Ni miru za Jekleno pest!’ (‘No rest for the Steel Claw!’).

What can we see by looking at the selection of translated comics material? By adding up everything that was published between the mid-fifties and the beginning of the nineties and subtracting occasional censorship and a generally low level of technicality, we end up with an actually rather good reflection of the situation in international comics journalism. The only true gap among the classics is perhaps Hergé’s *Tintin*, whose early episode *The Black Island* appeared in 1979 in its entirety in the magazine *Eks Almanah*; many years later (1990) it was followed by two other albums: *Cigars of the Pharaoh* and *Flight 714*, as well as Jacobs’ *Blake and Mortimer* (only in 1989 in *Politikinem Zabavnik*) and Caniff’s *Terry and the Pirates*. Among contemporary authors, the most conspicuously absent is Moebius. With the exception of some unimportant short stories, he first appeared with his albums about the *Incal* published by a private publisher in 1985. In this case (and similar ones), newsreels illustrated with usually rather small illustrations offered a sort of glimpse behind closed doors; apart from that, Yugoslav readers got to know Moebius’ artistic stylistics best through the works of Serbian artist Zoran Janjetov.

The hunger for some of the finest names of current alternative comics was somewhat sated by random publications in non-

bila tako Jeremiah kot *Tours de Bois Maury* prvič objavljena v socialistični Jugoslaviji, in sicer v drugi inkarnaciji Rustemagićevega *Strip Arta*, revije, ki je l. 1984 na mednarodnem salonu stripa v Lucci dobila nagrado Yellow Kid za najboljšega tujega založnika.

In kako je ta bogati in raznoliki uvoz vplival na domači strip? Najbolj očitni so primeri avtorjev, ki so se slogovno oblikovali po enem avtorju – za primer naj služi hrvaški risar Željko Beker, ki je svoje bogate grafizme gradil po vzoru Britanca Franka Bellamyja. Tudi gosto naseljene kadre stripov Dubravka Matakovića z množico dodatnih dogajanj v ozadju ter končno tudi njegovo nekoliko cevasto stilizacijo figur si težko razložimo brez Jacovitti. Po drugi strani pa so, če se omejim na slovensko sceno, pri treh najpomembnejših prebojih sodelovali tuji stripi, ki so fizično prišli od zunaj. Svet Mikija Mustra je – poleg Disneya – pomembno zaznamoval Walt Kelly, katerega strip *Pogo* je v obliki zvezčiča iz ZDA prinesel novinar. Na Kostjo Gatniku je tako grafično kot vsebinsko bistveno vplival ameriški underground strip, ki ga je lahko spoznal zaradi bližine zahodne meje (živel je v Novi Gorici). Tudi vzorov, ki jih Tomaž Lavrič navaja kot odskočne deske za svoje raznorodne sloganove pristope (Edika, Baru, Frank Miller) v času tozadevnih Lavričevih objav še nismo imeli prevedenih in jih je on lahko spoznal le prek uvoženih publikacij.

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comics print: Slovenian socio-literary magazine *Problemi*, for example, in its thematic issues dedicated to punk culture published Moebius (*Rock City*), Druillet, Caro, and a short story from Tamburini and Liberatore’s *Ranxerox*.

It is interesting that comics licensed across the world by Paris publishing house Editions Vaillant and well accepted across eastern Europe due to the publishing house’s communist pedigree still played a rather marginal role in former Yugoslavia.

Some of the greatest comics, however, were even published for the first time in our region. Owing to the personal friendship between Hermann Huppen and Sarajevo publisher Ervin Rustemagić, both *Jeremiah* and *Tours de Bois Maury* were first published in socialist Yugoslavia, namely in the second incarnation of Rustemagić’s *Strip Art*: a magazine that in 1984 received the Yellow Kid award for best foreign publisher at the International Comics Salon in Lucca.

So how did this rich and varied import affect domestic comics? The most obvious examples are of authors who modelled themselves stylistically after a single author – take, for example, the Croatian artist Željko Beker who built his rich graphics on the model of Briton Frank Bellamy. Dubravko Mataković’s densely populated frames with a multitude of added background happenings and also his somewhat tubular stylisation of figures is hard to explain without Jacovitti. On the other hand, if we limit ourselves to the Slovenian scene, foreign comics that physically came to Slovenia from abroad played a part in three most important breakthroughs. The world of Miki Muster was – besides Disney – significantly influenced by Walt Kelly, whose comic *Pogo* was brought from the USA by a journalist in the form of a booklet. Kostja Gatnik was both graphically and content-wise substantially influenced by American underground comics, with which he became familiar due to the physical closeness of the western border (he lived in Nova Gorica). Even role models cited by Tomaž Lavrič as springboards for his diverse stylistic approaches (Edika, Baru, Frank Miller) were not yet translated at the time of his works being published; he could only become familiar with them through imported publications.

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On Publishing Comics

A birthday suit view of the use vs. exchange value particular to this rare commodity

Octav Avramescu

'Interested in comics?' 'No, thanks! I don't use those.'

This is the uncanny answer I got when I approached an elderly man browsing through a bunch of local mini-comics and graphic novels on display at a Bucharest book fair. *Book-arrest* – the pun is not intended; books aren't faring spectacularly here now, while comics, the subspecies under discussion, are for the same commercial reasons (or lack thereof) to be considered virtually outside the trade. Their presence at a book fair or elsewhere is often entirely the result of a cultural project. The gentleman mentioned above couldn't have suspected that, and most likely did not quite recollect on the spot what *drawn stripes* (or benzi desenate, the name for comics in Romanian) mean. Did he think he was about to be talked into buying some useless, modern contraption or another? Are non-brand, local independent comics – and not the international trademarked ones that always seem to go under the name of the main character/s – really some sort of shady concept and feeling at the same time?

A disclaimer is thus in order: it is uncertain whether this is merely accidental or reflects something that needs to be acknowledged. It seems strange not to recognize comics when you see them, and this is in fact not that uncommon among the public, when there's one to be had at all. The few Romanian authors who create works in that format without anybody asking them to do it are all too familiar with the response. As such, it makes little sense to discuss here grand narratives or designs that are supposed to legitimate a 'who's who' and 'what's what' in the

Romanian sequential narrative field. Not short, but shorter reclamations and recontextualisations work best for now, when so little gets published and author reputations are built and lost on works few and far between.¹

Luckily, under the general confusion concerning the *per se* of the *thing*, nothing seems outside of its time. Both future and past are present. For the time being, anybody that publishes is an *independent*; there's no real need to talk of *alternative* comics (to what?); all quarrels between Ancients and Moderns feel like neighbourly feuds (but treat pompously such subjects as immorality corrupting young people!). All this should be much more interesting in a situation where supply baffles demand, providing added value, fetishism. From the little that gets made, it looks like the local comics commodity is in its DIY phase, which almost always involves art graduates. What good are obscure art comics? Only market exchange value for the mini-comics artists produce without anybody telling them to do so will eventually make some of them less obscure in the future, and develop the readership passion which their creators recognize. These are raw comics that have now only a use value, and it comes in handy that artists have a certain know-how in publishing or can easily get some. To be more specific, the genre not only touches but links diverse individuals through works they want to make public, i.e. that they publish. Without that, comics would truly be a ghost economy worldwide, not only locally.

How does one, then, fight to revolutionize such comics production? Here we have to reckon with some of the newest local standards. A trend of decentralized national folklore heroes turned superheroes, as well as some horizontal revisionist re/collections of preteen and gag comics rescued from the proverbial past. Not quite marketable yet, but eagerly waiting to make a comeback from their respective repressed pasts, loaded with meanings unclear as to what they might represent today, both stand poised around the corner to paint the town red (again). Nationwide, kids have sizable buying power through the pockets of their parents, who are hard pressed to find anything of special interest in bookstores or newsstands for them. And parents are given to nostalgia, as we know. Not least from the rise of manga that kids consume to stand their own. The format fascinates here, too. Some gets made locally, mostly entry level manga fan stuff, and several authors have moved on as they got older.

Comics moguls and larger print runs are expected to appear alongside obscure art and to cover all sorts of grounds. Politically, this can easily take the spotlight. Patronage for collective experiences takes the form of a book-launch/exhibition around the general theme of a comeback of innocence and valiance with some local tinge, and this just goes to show that the future is better protected than the past from appropriation. In the meanwhile, graphic narratives dealing with the recent

past still seem too delicate to attempt: too much insight and politics/liberalism for now. Given the craze for graphic novels elsewhere, this could be the ticket to greater things, like some cultural media attention. It's all still up for grabs - even the specialised cultural media.

As for some really engaged comics, however obscure, perhaps they do exist if we consider the Dadaist, surrealist rhizome buried deep in the Romanian soil. It's pushing forth situationist, psycho-geographical flanneries, blooming into psychodoodlia, facing the religious orthodox visual cannon or even more Eastern ones. Other paradoxical comics prefer to dissect or propagate consumerist indigestion. More singular directions include meta-comics that double as autofiction, ping pong strips and a dystopic soccer graphic novel, some mixed violence and war stuff, and ... no autobiographical craze! Often just the oneiric, erotic, cartoon style, a different form altogether of being trapped inside your own story. In this way, the graphic-narrative conflict is often not really the core of a story but of a situation, where the characters created do not need to have a clear identity beyond the ambiguity and confusion they seem to represent. It often justifies the choice of comics as a system of signs more appropriate than those of other mediums because it feels so new. For the sake of this newness, comics can betray any preset form, and also forgo publication; some great comics appeared simply because the artist needed a problem format. Can we want more of that?²

Something is not yet ripe in the city, and the artistic scene is young and super concentrated. Publish or perish, the sensation is all too real. This is the moment, so close to the never before seen diversity, yet still not quite there. Comic art scripting is down the hole, little can be said about writerly texts. This is the other extreme of the local scene, whose works talk about what the imaginary is like in reality, here/today. And also about a non-scene: at its best, an outside without a mainstream, a paradox of the general extremely reduced ability to self-publish. It's this that should change first. More DIY tokens of use value need to be introduced in the system for exchange value to appear. In terms of actual books, two or three of the Romanian authors in the exhibition have been edited abroad, but most are known locally through small contributions, of which the number and frequency are minuscule. The Romanian dimension of the *comiXconnection* event could be this one: it might be your last chance to see these artists, who are not quite authors. Or maybe it testifies to a transitional phenomenon, an eternal return of the underground standard where we can hope that what's missing today in the field will grow tomorrow? As a collective experience summed up for now, it gives only the inevitability of the concept/feeling of a Romanian alternative comics uncanny.³

And because individual micro-comics are so rare, here are some thoughts about how to escape from the above story and live it up:

Publish and distribute: wheel and deal for yourself and others!

Put out something sooner rather than later, or people will forget about you!

Ok, if you want to publish a graphic novel expect to work hard at it (3 years is not even bad), and at least you get to decorate it nicely...!

If the local scene seems too crowded for what it's doing, travel to specialised conventions elsewhere, and paradoxically you'll feel better about what you still need to accomplish!

Do not expect to make a living from comics before publishing at your own expense, fantasy and leisure all your early opus!

But also,
Try all the grant schemes – think of it as an occasion to prove your artistic maturity!

Do not go all digital, paper seems to still be around for a while!
Social media can help you publish/edit your short form comics but soon you'll feel like you're working for an internet company and not getting paid!

Advanced printing technology is expensive while the look of a cheaply printed mini-comic in the future might not even be too artsy!

If comics seem too serious and grown up, do not despair, the times are always changing!

Read!

Don't hate other authors or you'll get stuck (which is probably best for all of us)!

¹ It might also be said, considering the range of artists selected for this collective exhibition, that the opposite is also true: larger slippages and decontextualisations are needed now for comics to step out of their bubble and find a larger, potential ... use.

² Praise be to autobiography/autofiction; it has worked wonders for comics authors in the true sense of the word. This is a difficult task for the local drawing pool that seems so fragile without this self-mirroring. Collective exercises as cultural projects have tried to introduce it, but no native effort really pursues it.

³ Uncanny: x is merely a coincidence=x is not just coincidence; Freud's unheimlich: x is familiar=x is strange; doppelgangers, the phenomenon of doubling; ghosts as questioning of reality, suspicion as grounds for theory.



Das Individuum im Netzwerk

Der Independent Comic in Slowenien, Kroatien, Serbien, Ungarn und Rumänien

Jörn Nuber

Wie in nur wenigen Bereichen der Kunst sammeln sich um den Independent Comic individuelle Künstler in Kollektiven zur gemeinsamen Herausgabe von Magazinen, organisieren sich in Netzwerken mit unterschiedlicher Reichweite und nehmen wechselseitig an von anderen Gruppen vorbereiteten Veranstaltungen und Veröffentlichungen teil.

Hier soll versucht werden, die bestehenden Netzwerke des Independent Comic in den Ländern Slowenien, Kroatien, Serbien, Ungarn und Rumänien beschreibend zu kontextualisieren.¹ Die Auswahl der Länder ermöglicht den direkten Vergleich fünf unterschiedlicher, einander angrenzender Comic-Kulturen.² Trotz ihrer unterschiedlichen Größe sind die einzelnen Netzwerke ähnlich angelegt, insbesondere insofern sich die Künstler und Herausgeber von Independent Comics für gewöhnlich an den Entwicklungen des westlichen Comics orientieren, jedoch bislang nur eingeschränkt an einer Verknüpfung mit den Netzwerken ihrer Nachbarn arbeiten – obwohl diese vielleicht viel versprechend wäre.

Herkunft

Die Ursprünge des Independent Comic (auch: Alternative Comic) reichen in die USA der 1960er und 1970er Jahre zurück, als sich zunächst die Künstler der sogenannten Underground-comix-Bewegung in Zeiten des gesellschaftlichen Aufbruchs von dem bis dahin verbreiteten Schema des Superhelden in kommerziellen Comics emanzipierten und die formalen und inhaltlichen Möglichkeiten dieser Kunstform ausloteten – dies

The Individual in the Network

Independent Comics in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and Romania

Jörn Nuber

Almost an anomaly among the arts, independent comics draw individual artists together into collectives with the common goal of publishing magazines, organising into networks of varying size and scope and participating in events and publications initiated by other groups.

The existing networks centred around independent comics in the countries of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and Romania shall be described here in context.¹ This country selection allows a direct comparison of five different neighbouring comics cultures.² Despite their differences in size, the individual networks are similar inasmuch as the artists and publishers of independent comics are normally oriented to the developments in the Western comics world, while still working towards a connection with their neighbouring networks only to a limited extent – although this could prove quite promising.

Background

The origins of independent comics (also: alternative comics) can be traced back to the United States in the 1960s and 70s, when the artists of the so-called underground comix movement first broke away from what was then the widespread superhero template in commercial comics and explored the art form's possibilities for both form and content – and this most often with a clearly antibourgeois, provocative stance (Hatfield, 2005: IX-XI). In the early 1980s, this now tired movement received new inspiration. The anthology *RAW* (1980-1991) published by Art Spiegelman and his wife Françoise Mouly as well as the magazine *Weirdo*

zumeist in deutlich antibürgerlicher, provozierender Haltung (Hatfield, 2005: IX – XI). Anfang der 1980er Jahre erhielt diese nunmehr ermüdete Bewegung neue Impulse. Der von Art Spiegelman und seiner Frau Françoise Mouly herausgegebenen Anthologie *RAW* (1980-1991) sowie dem Magazin *Weirdo* (1981-1993) von Robert Crumb gelang es, den Underground Comic thematisch weiterzuentwickeln und boten den Zeichnerinnen und Zeichnern eine künstlerische Plattform mit professioneller Aufmachung. Diese von Großverlagen unabhängigen Publikationen konnten in den seit den 1970er Jahren eröffneten Läden, die sich allein auf den Verkauf von Comics spezialisieren, vertrieben werden. So entstand am Rande des Marktes für Mainstream-Comics eine Absatzmöglichkeit für Produkte der Szene des sogenannten Alternative Comics. Der Alternative Comic richtet sich im Gegensatz zum Mainstream-Comic in der Regel an Erwachsene, wird von einem Künstler allein und zumeist ohne inhaltliche und formale Vorgaben erstellt, er entsteht „zeitverschwendisch und spielerisch wie bei den hoch anerkannten Künstlern legitimer Kultur“ (Becker, 2009: 244). Er findet sein Publikum in vorgebildeten Leserkreisen, die auch vor fragwürdigen Themen, einer ungewöhnlichen Erzählweise und einer experimentellen Erscheinung nicht zurückshrecken. Der Mainstream-Comic dagegen will insbesondere unterhalten, wird oft in Zusammenarbeit großer Teams hergestellt und mit dem Ziel der Gewinnsteigerung vertrieben.

Als mit Art Spiegelmans Graphic Novel *Maus* schließlich 1992 zum ersten Mal ein Comic den renommierten Pulitzer-Preis erhielt, wurde offensichtlich, dass der Alternative Comic sich längst als ernstzunehmende Kunstform etabliert hatte. Dabei vertrat Spiegelman eine Reihe von Zeichnern und Autoren, „(...) for whom comics were first and above all an acutely personal means of literary expression.“ (Hatfield, 2005: XI)

Die *Maus* erschien in loser Folge in der Anthologie *RAW*. 1988 hatte das Magazin eine Auflage von 20.000, wovon etwa 4.000 Exemplare nach Europa geliefert wurden (Knigge, 2004, S. 379). Von Belgien und Frankreich (es war ein Franzose, der die *bande dessinée* bereits 1971 als „neunte Kunst“³ anerkannte) gingen ebenfalls globale Einflüsse aus. Auch hier schlug sich der gesellschaftliche Wandel in Inhalt, Form und Vertrieb des Comics ab den 1970er Jahren nieder. Diese Bewegungen trafen in den 1970er Jahren auf die seit Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts bestehenden, lebendigen Comictraditionen im damaligen blockfreien Jugoslawien,⁴ wo neben den Eigenproduktionen auch ausländische Comics erhältlich waren. Die Regierung unter Tito verstand den Comic als Kulturgut, unterstützte die regionale Produktion und ließ den Import zu – offenbar war Jugoslawien darin entschiedener als Länder wie Österreich, wo Politiker ein Verbot zum Schutze der Jugend forderten.⁵ Neben den Erzeugnissen internationaler Massenkultur (hervorzuheben

(1981-1993) by Robert Crumb succeeded in further developing underground comics thematically and offered the artists a more professional platform. These publications were independent of the large publishing houses and could be distributed in shops that since the 1970s were able to specialise only in the sale of comics. Thus, a potential niche appeared on the margins of the mainstream comics market for products of the so-called alternative comics scene. In contrast to mainstream comics, alternative comics are usually geared towards adults, composed by a single artist mostly without prerequisites as to form or content, and come into being “playfully and impractically just as with the prestigious artists of legitimate culture” (Becker, 2009: 244). Their audience consists of educated readers who do not flinch at questionable themes, unusual narrative structures and an experimental appearance. Mainstream comics, on the other hand, aim in particular to entertain, are often by large teams of artists and are aimed at profit-oriented distribution.

When Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (*Mouse*) won the renowned Pulitzer Prize in 1992 as the first comic book to finally achieve the distinction, it was obvious that alternative comics were now an art form to be taken seriously. In this context, Spiegelman represented a series of artists and authors“ (...) for whom comics were first and above all an acutely personal means of literary expression” (Hatfield, 2005: XI).

Maus appeared as a loose series in the anthology *RAW*. In 1988 the magazine printed 20,000 copies, of which about 4,000 were delivered to Europe (Knigge, 2004, S. 379). Belgium and France likewise exerted global influence (it was a French critic who already in 1971 recognized the *bande dessinée* as a *ninth art*³). Here, too, social changes were reflected in the content, form and distribution of comics beginning in the 1970s. These movements encountered in the 70s a thriving comics tradition alive since the beginning of the 20th century in the former non-aligned Yugoslavia,⁴ where both local and foreign comics were available for sale. Tito's government recognised comics to be a cultural treasure, supporting regional production and allowing importation – in so doing, Yugoslavia was clearly more influential than countries like Austria, where politicians proposed a ban to protect young people.⁵ Besides the products of international mass culture (noteworthy here is the Italian series *Alan Ford*), also local independent works⁶ that criticized the political system were successfully distributed. The first large-scale platform for independent comics admittedly appeared alongside the dissolution of Yugoslavia: In 1992 in Ljubljana the magazine *Stripburger* appeared, showing works by foreign artists from the very beginning. Even today it is seminal in the field and enjoys substantial international recognition.

Comparable imported comics could be bought in private sector niches of the equally unrestrictive Hungarian socialism.

ist dabei die aus Italien kommende Reihe *Alan Ford*) fanden auch lokale Independent-Produktionen⁶ Verbreitung, die das politische System kritisierten. Die erste große Plattform für den Independent Comic entstand allerdings erst mit dem Zerfall Jugoslawiens: 1992 erschien in Ljubljana das Magazin *Stripburger*, das von Anfang an auch Werke ausländischer Künstler zeigte. Es ist bis heute wegweisend und findet international große Anerkennung.

In den privatwirtschaftlichen Nischen des ebenfalls wenig restriktiven ungarischen Staatssozialismus konnten gleichermaßen importierte Comics gekauft werden. So waren in ungarischen Urlaubsgebieten zumeist deutschsprachige Comics erhältlich.⁷ Ungarische Jugendmagazine druckten Übersetzungen aus dem französischen und belgischen Raum (z.B. *Asterix*). Auch die beachtliche Zahl einheimischer Produktionen zielte vor allem auf Kinder und Jugendliche ab. Produktionen, die man heute eher dem Independent Comic zuordnen würde, blieben jedoch eine Randerscheinung des Samisdat.

In Rumänien waren Produktion und Vertrieb von Comics offenbar strenger kontrolliert. Das Magazin *Licurici* (bis 1967) diente ausdrücklich dazu, „familiarising children with the new times, at training them into all sort of community actions“⁸ Das daraus hervorgehende, wöchentlich erscheinende Magazin *Cutezătorii* bot neben patriotischen Gedichten, Fortsetzungromanen, Berichten über die Leistungen rumänischer Pioniere auch zwei Seiten Comics. Trotz des geringen Umfangs konnte sich eine ganze Generation rumänischer Comicautoren über diese Rubrik profilieren. Das Magazin *Cutezătorii* war auch für die bis in die 1980er Jahre veröffentlichten Übersetzungen des französischen Kindercomics *Pif Gadget* verantwortlich.

Bedingungen

Dass Ungarn eine Sprachinsel bildet, während sich die rumänischen Eliten traditionell an der französischen Kultur orientieren, ist sicher noch heute spürbar. Zu erwähnen ist an dieser Stelle außerdem der unterschiedliche Verlauf der politischen Transformation, und damit einhergehend, die abweichenden Reise- und Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten.

Mit Ausnahme von Slowenien (und eingeschränkt Kroatien) sind allen Ländern die im Vergleich zu (nord-)westlichen EU-Ländern mehr oder weniger schwierigen wirtschaftlichen Voraussetzungen gemeinsam: ein geringes Durchschnittseinkommen, schwach ausgebauten Sozialsysteme, eine hohe Arbeitslosigkeit sowie geringe Arbeitsplatzsicherheit haben direkte Folgen für die Wahrnehmung von Chancen und Handlungsoptionen der Menschen. Korruptionsskandale, und allgemein verbreiteter Nepotismus dürfte das Vertrauen in Inhaber einflussreicher Positionen einschränken.

Mostly German-language comics were available in Hungarian holiday resort towns.⁷ Hungarian youth magazines printed translations from French and Belgian works (e.g. *Asterix*). Also, the considerable number of local works mainly targeted children and young adults. Works that would today be considered independent comics, however, were only distributed rarely by way of the samizdat.

In Romania, the production and distribution of comics was clearly more strictly regulated. The magazine *Licurici* (published until 1967) served the express function of ‘familiarising children with the new times, (of) training them into all sort of community actions’⁸ The subsequent weekly magazine *Cutezătorii* offered its readers, next to patriotic poems, serial novels and reports on the accomplishments of Romanian pioneers, two pages of comics. Despite the limited scope, an entire generation of Romanian comics authors were able to distinguish themselves through this venue. *Cutezătorii* also published translations of the French children’s comics *Pif Gadget* through the 1980s.

Conditions

It is still evident today that Hungary stands alone as a linguistic island, whereas the Romanian elite traditionally oriented themselves around French culture. Of note here are also the two countries’ diverging paths of political transformation and the accompanying differences in travel and communication opportunities.

With the exception of Slovenia (and to a limited extent, Croatia), all countries share more or less difficult economic conditions compared to (north)western European countries: low average income, poorly developed social systems, high unemployment as well as low job security all have direct consequences regarding the population’s perception of chances and opportunities for engagement. Corruption scandals and general widespread nepotism serve to limit trust in individuals occupying influential positions.

Drawing in a protected space

Independent comics free themselves almost completely from the bourgeois economy, proudly displaying their anti-commercial insignia. This is consequential for all those active in independent comics networks: In the entire region, not even a handful of artists or publishers can fully support themselves by means of independent comics alone. Even when the comics are able to be published and sold, they do not bring in great returns. Almost all the authors have an artistic education and work, for example, as illustrator, designer or art teacher. Nevertheless, along with this work the drawing and publishing of comic books and the organisation of comics workshops or exhibitions occupies a special place in the lives of all.

Zeichnen im geschützten Raum

Der Independent Comic löst sich nahezu vollständig von der bürgerlichen Ökonomie und steht unter antikommerziellen Vorzeichen. Dies hat Auswirkungen auf jeden, der sich in den Netzwerken des Independent Comic bewegt: In der gesamten Region lebt nicht einmal eine Handvoll Künstler bzw. Herausgeber allein von ihren Aktivitäten im Bereich Independent Comic. Auch wenn die Comics publiziert und verkauft werden können, macht das nicht reich. Fast alle Autoren haben eine künstlerische Ausbildung und arbeiten zum Beispiel als Illustrator, Designer oder Kunstlehrer. Doch nimmt neben dieser Arbeit das Zeichnen, Herausgeben von Comic-Magazinen, Veranstalten von Comic-Workshops oder Comic-Ausstellungen einen besonderen Platz im Leben eines Jeden ein.

Der lokale Markt für die Produkte des Independent Comic ist offenbar überschaubar. Die Künstler produzieren gegenwärtig vorwiegend für sich, ihre Mitstreiter und für eine spezialisierte Leserschaft. Ob sie damit einer Produzentengemeinschaft entsprechen, die sich an ein zukünftiges Publikum richtet, steht zur Diskussion.

Das Verhältnis der Gesellschaft zum Independent Comic wird als vergleichsweise unterentwickelt beschrieben – dies trifft insbesondere auf Rumänien und Ungarn zu. In den anderen Ländern findet der Comic offenbar mehr öffentlichen Zuspruch, aber auch hier wird der Independent Comic gesondert wahrgenommen. Der Comic ist vor allem als Unterhaltungsform für Kinder akzeptiert, nicht aber als Kunstform anerkannt. Wenn Erwachsene sich überhaupt damit beschäftigen, sind sie in der Regel nicht bereit, Geld dafür auszugeben. Doch offenbar interessieren sich tendenziell auch immer weniger Jugendliche für das Lesen von Comics. Wenn der Comic allerdings in die Unterrichtspläne der Schulen aufgenommen würde, könnte langfristig ein anspruchsvoller Publikum entstehen, da Erwachsene, die sich in ihrer Jugend nicht mit Comics beschäftigt haben, normalerweise keinen Zugang mehr dazu finden. Während in Rumänien aufgrund der rigiden Ablehnung durch das Schulpersonal gar nicht daran zu denken ist, den Comic in den Lehrplan aufzunehmen, wird in einigen Ländern (Slowenien, Serbien) mehr oder weniger erfolgreich dafür geworben. Darüber hinaus präsentieren sich die Independent Comic-Kollektive allgemein offen und zugänglich. Immer wieder werden Interessierte aufgerufen, die Initiative zu ergreifen und bei Workshops oder den zumeist in kleiner Auflage hergestellten Magazinen mitzumachen.

Aufgrund der Marktsituation sind eigentlich alle auf die Region bezogenen Comic-Zeichner dem Independent Comic zuzuordnen: Selbst wer es wollte, findet keinen angemessenen Markt vor, der einen regelrechten Mainstream-Comic halten

The local market for the products of the independent comics scene is clearly limited. The artists currently produce their work mainly for themselves, their fellow comrades and for a very specialised readership. It is debatable whether they thus correspond to a production community that hopes to target a larger audience in the future.

The relationship between society and independent comics can be described as relatively underdeveloped – this particularly applies to Romania and Hungary. In the other countries, comics clearly enjoy a larger public reception, but even in this case independent comics are perceived separately. Comics are first and foremost accepted as a form of entertainment for children, but not recognised as an art form per se. If adults take interest in them at all, they are usually not prepared to spend money on them. Nevertheless, clearly fewer and fewer young people are interested in reading comics. If comics were to be included in school lesson plans, though, a more sophisticated audience could emerge for the long term, since adults who did not read comics as children normally never gain access to them later. While including comics in lesson plans in Romania cannot even be considered due to the rigid refusal of school personnel, it has been more or less successfully proposed in a few countries (Slovenia and Serbia). Moreover, independent comics collectives in general present themselves openly and accessibly. Interest is always being sparked to take initiative and participate in workshops or work with the mostly low-circulation magazines.

Due to the market situation, actually all of the regional comics artists can be classified under independent comics: even if they wanted to, they would not be able to find an appropriate market that would support established mainstream comics. Only occasionally do artists succeed in introducing their drawings undisguised, so to speak, as textbook illustrations or even in brochures and handouts for adults. Usually, however, they work on assignments for which formal requirements must be satisfied or certain purposes must be achieved, and are not considered independent comics.

One possibility for professionalization as a comics artist lies abroad, where the markets are larger. Even if one observes the developments in the West (especially France and the US) and occasionally also publishes there, however, this does not appear to be a real option because the work would have to bend to the expectations of publishers and audiences there. On the other hand it would be difficult meanwhile to keep their place in their home network – because the task of occupying a position in such an organically growing, self-organising web should not be underestimated. Still, many artists write their texts in English in the hope also of gaining international attention; this is above all more of an exchange with a specialised audience.

könnte. Nur in Ausnahmen gelingt Künstlern der Spagat, ihre Zeichnungen sozusagen unverstellt als Illustration von Schulbüchern oder gar in Broschüren und Informationsblättern für Erwachsene einzusetzen. In der Regel jedoch werden Auftragsarbeiten, die formalen Vorgaben genügen müssen oder zu bestimmten Zwecken eingesetzt werden sollen, nicht dem Independent Comic zugeordnet.

Eine Möglichkeit zur Professionalisierung als Comic-Zeichner bestünde in einer Karriere im Ausland, wo die Märkte größer sind. Auch wenn man die Entwicklung im Westen (insbesondere Frankreich und den USA) beobachtet und gelegentlich auch dort veröffentlicht: Eine wirkliche Option scheint dies nicht zu sein, da man sich einerseits ungern an die Erwartungen der dortigen Herausgeber und des Publikums anpasst. Andererseits wäre es so schwierig, seinen Platz im heimischen Netzwerk zu halten – denn das Ausfüllen einer Position in einem derart organisch gewachsenen, sich selbst organisierenden Gewebe ist ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Motiv. Dennoch schreiben viele Künstler ihre Texte in englischer Sprache, um auch internationale Aufmerksamkeit zu erhalten; dabei geht es vor allem um den Austausch mit einem Fachpublikum.

Hier liegt eine Besonderheit des Feldes, die vielleicht einzig in ihrer Art ist und auch nicht mit Untergruppen in anderen Bereichen der Kunst verglichen werden kann: Der Independent Comic scheint den Künstlern eine Art Schutzraum zu bieten, den preiszugeben einem Tabu gleicht. Dieser Schutzraum ermöglicht einen freien kreativen Prozess, der oft gänzlich ungeplant verläuft und dem Künstler als Ausdrucksmöglichkeit sehr wichtig, wenn nicht heilig ist. Träume gehen in diesen Prozess ein, und Erlebtes wird außerordentlich subjektiv verarbeitet. So erklärt sich, dass ein Auftragswerk, ein absichtlich auf den Massengeschmack abzielendes Werk oder ein Werk, bei dem sich der künstlerische Aspekt einer Botschaft unterordnet, von den Künstlern zumindest am Rande des Independent Bereichs verzerrt wird bzw. dem Mainstream oder schlicht der Illustration zugesprochen wird. Dieses fest eingebaute Wahrnehmungsschema sorgt dafür, dass der Independent Comic grundsätzlich zur Selbstreflexion neigt.

Politisch ist der Independent Comic insofern, als der Künstler sich inhaltlich und formal von allem emanzipiert, was sich von einem Publikum außerhalb der Szene vereinnahmen ließe. Wenn man so will, ist dies, neben dem persönlichen Ausdruck, eines der wenigen Gestaltungsprinzipien. Nur in Ausnahmen beschreiben Künstler ihre Werke explizit als politisch. Wenn der Independent Comic gelegentlich sozial engagiert ist oder politische Implikationen aufweist, dann zumeist nur, weil der Autor sich mit dem Thema identifiziert, es ihn persönlich beschäftigt und sich so artikuliert. Die Kosten für die Erhaltung dieses Schutzraums sind

Here one peculiarity in the art form comes to light, which is perhaps unique to its kind and cannot be compared to other subgroups in other art fields: independent comics seem to offer their artists a kind of protective space, the abandonment of which is practically taboo. This protective space permits a free creative process that often develops totally unplanned and is a very important, if not sacred, outlet for the artist's self-expression. Dreams enter into the process, and personal experiences are worked through extremely subjectively. This explains why an assignment, a work consciously targeting the taste of the masses or a work in which the artistic aspect is subordinate to the message is at the very least relegated to the edges of the independent realm by artists, or even considered mainstream or simply illustration. This deeply ingrained perspective ensures that independent comics basically tend towards self-reflection.

Independent comics are political in the sense that the artist emancipates the work in terms of form and content from everything that bows to the pressures of an audience outside of the scene. It could be said that this is one of the few creative principles besides personal expression. Only rarely do artists explicitly describe their works as political. If independent comics are on occasion socially engaged or have political implications, this is mostly only because the author personally identifies with the topic and articulates it as such. The costs of maintaining this protective space are relatively high: one artist can be named who turned down an offer to create an ad campaign for a well-known beverage distributor, because the company's values were not in line with her own. Another artist rejects all assignments with content requirements as a matter of principle, because he refuses to limit his freedom.

Rejecting the bourgeois economy represents a not unproblematic relationship to institutions and the institutionalisation of the field, which is always attended by controversy. The disadvantage of this low degree of institutionalisation is that the artist's network or local scene is always dependent on the desire and receptivity of individuals,⁹ and the network as a whole remains unsecured. The advantage lies in the liveliness, flexibility and continuously new structures to be organised and negotiated. Because there seems to be a consensus regarding general values, and because the networks are not defined by power struggles, this form of organisation is considered thoroughly productive. Finally, this also makes up the *vibe* of the movement, as one artist observed.

The development of independent comics' role in society has been observed and examined. The assumption that the passage of time must necessarily bring greater recognition and with it distinction, institutional positions, awards and money, as may be the case with other movements and artistic directions,

relativ hoch: Exemplarisch sei hier eine Künstlerin genannt, die das Angebot zur Gestaltung der Werbekampagne eines bekannten Limonadenherstellers ablehnte, weil ihre Werte nicht mit denen des Konzerns vereinbar seien. Ein anderer Künstler lehnt Auftragsarbeiten mit inhaltlichen Vorgaben grundsätzlich ab, da er seine Freiheit nicht einschränken möchte.

Der Ablehnung der bürgerlichen Ökonomie entspricht auch ein nicht unproblematisches Verhältnis zu Institutionen und der Institutionalisation des eigenen Feldes, die immer mit Kontroversen einhergeht. Nachteil dieses geringen Institutionalisationsgrades ist, dass die Vernetzung der Künstler oder der lokalen Szenen immer vom Willen und der Ansprechbarkeit einzelner Personen abhängt⁹ und das Netzwerk als Ganzes so keine Absicherung erhält. Der Vorteil liegt in der Lebendigkeit, Flexibilität und ständig neu zu organisierenden und auszuhandelnden Struktur. Da über die generellen Werte Konsens zu herrschen scheint und sich die Netzwerke nicht durch Kämpfe um Machtpositionen definieren, stellt sich diese Organisationsweise als durchaus produktiv dar. Schließlich mache das den „Vibe“ der Bewegung aus, wie ein Künstler bemerkt.

Die Entwicklung der Rolle des Independent Comic in der Gesellschaft wird beobachtet und intensiv reflektiert. Der Anspruch, dass mit der Zeit auch mehr Anerkennung und damit Auszeichnungen, Posten in Institutionen, Preise und Geld kommen müssten, wie es bei anderen Bewegungen und Kunstrichtungen der Fall sein mag, gehört nicht zum Selbstverständnis der Angehörigen der Netzwerke. Offenbar besteht kein immanentes Interesse, sich dem Feld der Macht anzunähern oder aus der eigenen Position heraus Profite außerhalb des Feldes zu machen. Die konsequente Ablehnung der künstlerischen Vereinnahmung, die strikte Abgrenzung zu einem eher bürgerlichen Kunstgeschmack bei gleichzeitigem Argwohn gegenüber Institutionen und Institutionalisation erinnert in seiner Konstellation am ehesten an Pierre Bourdieus (1999: 127-128) Beschreibung der avantgardistischen Künstler der *L'art pour l'art*-Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert. Dass die Netzwerke des Independent Comic zwischen vergleichbaren Positionen aufgespannt sind, bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass sie mit dem Begriff Avantgarde hinreichend erfasst wären. Die von Bourdieu beschriebene Avantgarde stellt eine Bewegung dar, die längst von Gruppen und Institutionen vereinnahmt ist, gegen die sich der Independent Comic noch immer richtet.

Die Ablehnung etablierter bzw. bürgerlicher Kunstformen und die Wahrung des freien kreativen Ausdrucks beeinflusst freilich auch die Formensprache des Comics. Dem ungeschulten Auge mögen einige Produktionen mitunter wie einfache Kritzeleien erscheinen. Für den ausgebildeten Künstler mit seinem potenziell breiten Spektrum an Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten stellt diese Wahl nicht zuletzt eine Positionierung dar, es ist sein

cannot persist for the networks' members. Clearly there exists no intrinsic interest in approaching the power play or gaining profit outside of one's field. The consistent defence of artistic license, the strict confinement to a rather bourgeois artistic taste along with a simultaneous distrust of institutions and institutionalisation is most closely reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu's (1999: 127-128) description of the avant-garde artists of the *l'art pour l'art* movement in the 19th century. The fact that independent comics networks are stretched between comparable poles does not mean, however, that they can be sufficiently described by the concept of the avant-garde. Bourdieu's avant-garde represents a movement that has long been monopolised by groups and institutions against which independent comics still struggle.

The rejection of established or bourgeois art forms and the preservation of free creative expression certainly also influences the comics' design. To the untrained eye, some works may appear to be nothing but simple scribbles. For the educated artist who has access to a wide spectrum of means of expression, this decision represents not least a commentary on artistic traditions, the art market and art business, in which context the statement must be understood.

The networks are clearly held together by one attitude always implicitly or explicitly held by members of the networks: Membership in the independent comics network requires enthusiasm. This is reflected in the willingness to be satisfied with recognition from only local like-minded comrades with the same special interests; for most artists, free drawing seems to be so elementary that one has the impression they would do it even if the possibility of publication did not exist.

Enthusiasm and the protection of economic independence bring the members of the network into a position that affords them the highest possible degree of authenticity, artistic license and thus autonomy – autonomy at least in the sense that the artists reflect on their dependence (including that of their origins in US mainstream culture) (Frahm, 2009: 183). This distinguishes independent comics networks from other artistic realms marked by a less radical anti-economy attitude and which are represented in part by traditional institutions, a complex system of critique and counter-critique, galleries, professional buyers and collectors.

The particular living circumstances in the countries examined here require special consideration. It is more than justified to recognise membership in an independent comics network as entailing greater risks and higher stakes than in a wealthy western country.

Kommentar zur Kunstradition, zum Kunstmarkt, zum Kunstbetrieb, in dessen Kontext die Äußerung verstanden werden muss.

Zusammengehalten werden die Netzwerke offenbar durch eine Gesinnung, die von den Angehörigen der Netzwerke implizit oder explizit immer wieder beschworen wird: Die Zugehörigkeit zum Netzwerk des Independent Comic erfordert vor allem Enthusiasmus. Dieser schlägt sich etwa nieder in der Bereitschaft, sich bisweilen nur mit der Anerkennung lokaler Gefährten mit demselben speziellen Interessen zufrieden zu geben; für die meisten Künstler scheint das freie Zeichnen so elementar, dass der Eindruck erweckt wird, sie würden es auch tun, ohne je die Möglichkeit zur Veröffentlichung zu haben.

Enthusiasmus und die Bewahrung wirtschaftlicher Unabhängigkeit bringen die Angehörigen der Netzwerke des Independent Comic in eine Position, die ihnen größtmögliche Glaubwürdigkeit, Deutungshoheit (nicht zuletzt über sich selbst) und damit Autonomie verschafft - Autonomie zumindest in dem Sinne, als die Künstler ihre Abhängigkeit (auch die ihres Ursprungs vom amerikanischen Mainstream) mitreflektieren (Frahm, 2009: 183). Dies unterscheidet die Netzwerke des Independent Comic von anderen Bereichen der Kunst, in denen eine weniger radikale Antiökonomie herrscht und die durch teils traditionelle Institutionen mit einem verzweigten System von Kritik und Gegenkritik, von Galerien, professionellen Einkäufern und Sammlern vertreten werden.

Unter Berücksichtigung der Lebensbedingungen in den untersuchten Ländern verlangt dies besondere Beachtung. Sicher ist die Feststellung berechtigt, dass das Bekenntnis zur Zugehörigkeit zu einem Netzwerk des Independent Comic hier größere Risiken birgt und mit einem höheren Einsatz verbunden ist als in einem wohlhabenden westlichen Land.

1 Die Beschreibung wurde auf Basis übersetzter Transkriptionen insbesondere von Interviews und öffentlichen Diskussionen mit Künstlern, Herausgebern und Veranstaltern aller beteiligten Länder erstellt. Aus Gründen der Einfachheit und der besseren Lesbarkeit wird hier durchgehend die grammatisch männliche Form verwendet, weibliche Personen sind dabei stets mitgemeint.

2 Der Beitrag wurde begleitend zur Ausstellung *comiXconnection* verfasst. Die Ausstellung präsentiert Künstler und Herausgeber der Independent Comic-Szene der Länder Slowenien, Kroatien, Serbien, Ungarn und Rumänien und soll zu einer vertieften Vernetzung beitragen.

3 Rolf Lohse zitiert den französischen Kritiker François Lacassin (Lohse, 2009: 309)

4 Zur Geschichte des jugoslawischen Comics und seine Verbindungen der Zeichner zur westlichen Comickultur, siehe z.B. Knigge, 1996: 230-232.

5 Balkansky, Bogumil: Helden aus Papier und Tusche – Ex-Yu als Comic-Paradies. <http://www.dasbiber.at/content/helden-aus-papier-und-tusche%E2%80%93-ex-yu-als-comic-paradies> (6. Februar 2013)

6 In der Folge wird der Begriff *Independent* verwendet um den besonderen Freiheitsaspekt der Netzwerke zu betonen. Der Begriff *Alternativ* versteht sich eher in Abgrenzung zum Mainstream. Auch wenn sich die öffentliche

1 This description is compiled from translated transcriptions particularly of interviews and public discussions with artists, publishers and event organisers from all participating countries.

2 This contribution accompanies the *comiXconnection* exhibition presenting artists and publishers of the independent comics scene in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and Romania, and is meant to promote a deeper interconnection between them.

3 Rolf Lohse cites the French critic François Lacassin (Lohse, 2009: 309)

4 For the history of Yugoslavian comics and their artists' connection to Western comics culture, see e.g. Knigge, 1996: 230-232.

5 Balkansky, Bogumil: *Helden aus Papier und Tusche – Ex-Yu als Comic-Paradies*. <http://www.dasbiber.at/content/helden-aus-papier-und-tusche%E2%80%93-ex-yu-als-comic-paradies> (6 February 2013)

6 The term *independent* is used here to emphasise the freedom of the network. The term *alternative* is used rather as a contrast to the mainstream. Even when public perception in some countries is limited to a distinction between *classic comics* and *children's comics*, *independent* should identify individual artists and collectives that work and publish outside of these categories.

7 See <http://www.ddr-comics.de/ungarn1.htm> (6 February 2013)

8 From Oana Tănase in a description of Alexandru Ciubotariu's and Dodo Nită's *History of Romanian Comics. 1891-2010*. Bucharest: 2010. See <http://artactmagazine.ro/history-of-romanian-comics.html> (6 February 2013)

9 An efficient integration of local networks can only be found in the scene within former Yugoslavia.

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Tănase, Oana (2010) *History of Romanian Comics* <http://artactmagazine.ro/history-of-romanian-comics.html> (6 February 2013)

<http://www.ddr-comics.de/ungarn1.htm> (6 February 2013)

Wahrnehmung in einigen Ländern auf eine Unterscheidung zwischen *klassischen Comics* und *Comics für Kinder* beschränkt, sollen mit *Independent* hier individuelle Künstler und Kollektive bezeichnet werden, die unabhängig von diesen Kategorien arbeiten und veröffentlichen.

7 Siehe <http://www.ddr-comics.de/ungarn1.htm> (6. Februar 2013)

8 So Oana Tănase in einer Besprechung der von Alexandru Ciubotariu und Dodo Nită herausgegebenen *History of Romanian Comics. 1891-2010*. Bucharest: 2010. Siehe <http://artactmagazine.ro/history-of-romanian-comics.html> (6. Februar 2013)‡

9 Von einer effizienten Vernetzung der lokalen Netzwerke kann lediglich bei der Szene innerhalb der Länder Ex-Jugoslawiens gesprochen werden.

Mein besonderer Dank geht an: / My special thanks go to:

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Édition itinérante

Ateliers/Collectifs/Festivals

Johanna Marcadé

Pančevo – Belgrade, Belgrade – Zagreb, Zagreb – Pula, Pula – Ljubljana ...

Quand je suis arrivée en Serbie il y a six ans, il ne m'a pas fallu très longtemps pour trouver mes pairs. Je ne savais pas grand-chose, je connaissais juste le travail d'Aleksandar Zograf et le fanzine slovène *Stripburger*, mais contacter le premier à l'adresse mail trouvée à la fin de l'un de ses fanzines m'a suffi pour être invitée à un atelier de bande dessinée, et y rencontrer des auteurs. La bande dessinée indépendante crée un lien fort entre ses adeptes et ses auteurs, où qu'ils se trouvent. Comme le dit Anna Ehrlemark (artiste suédoise qui travaille entre la Suède et les Balkans), ils sont plus proches les uns des autres que des autres personnes qui les entourent.

Même si cela peut arriver en France de façon informelle ou lors de festivals, la pratique de la bande dessinée collective sous forme d'ateliers m'a parue ici plus fréquente et m'a semblé s'organiser et s'improviser dans toutes sortes de situations: au coin d'une table lors d'un concert, prévue lors de la venue d'un auteur étranger, durant toute la nuit chez les uns et les autres, dans n'importe quel contexte en présence de Wostok – auteur de Vršac et membre du groupe *Tehno muda*. Wostok répartit un texte sur des pages blanches, séparées en quatre cases et numérotées, et fait dessiner toutes les personnes présentes, tous les passants, et surtout tous les membres de sa famille, jusqu'à ce que l'histoire soit complètement illustrée. Il a ainsi publié 700 numéros de son fanzine photocopié *Krpelj*, composé de bandes dessinées ainsi réalisées, d'interviews, de collages, de chansons illustrées. Ce genre d'information fait vibrer les amateurs de fanzines, qui ont tous un peu un côté collectionneur.

Itinerant Edition

Workshops/Groups/Festivals

Johanna Marcadé

Pančevo – Belgrade, Belgrade – Zagreb, Zagreb – Pula, Pula – Ljubljana ...

When I arrived in Serbia 6 years ago, I did not need a lot of time to find my soul mates. I did not know a lot, I only knew the works of Aleksandar Zograf and the Slovenian fanzine *Stripburger*, but it was enough for me to contact the first email address I found at the end of one of his fanzines to be invited to a comics workshop and to meet authors there. The independent comics movement creates a very strong link between fans and authors, no matter where they are. As Anna Ehrlemark (Swedish artist who commutes between Sweden and the Balkans) rightly says, they are much closer to each other than to other people around them.

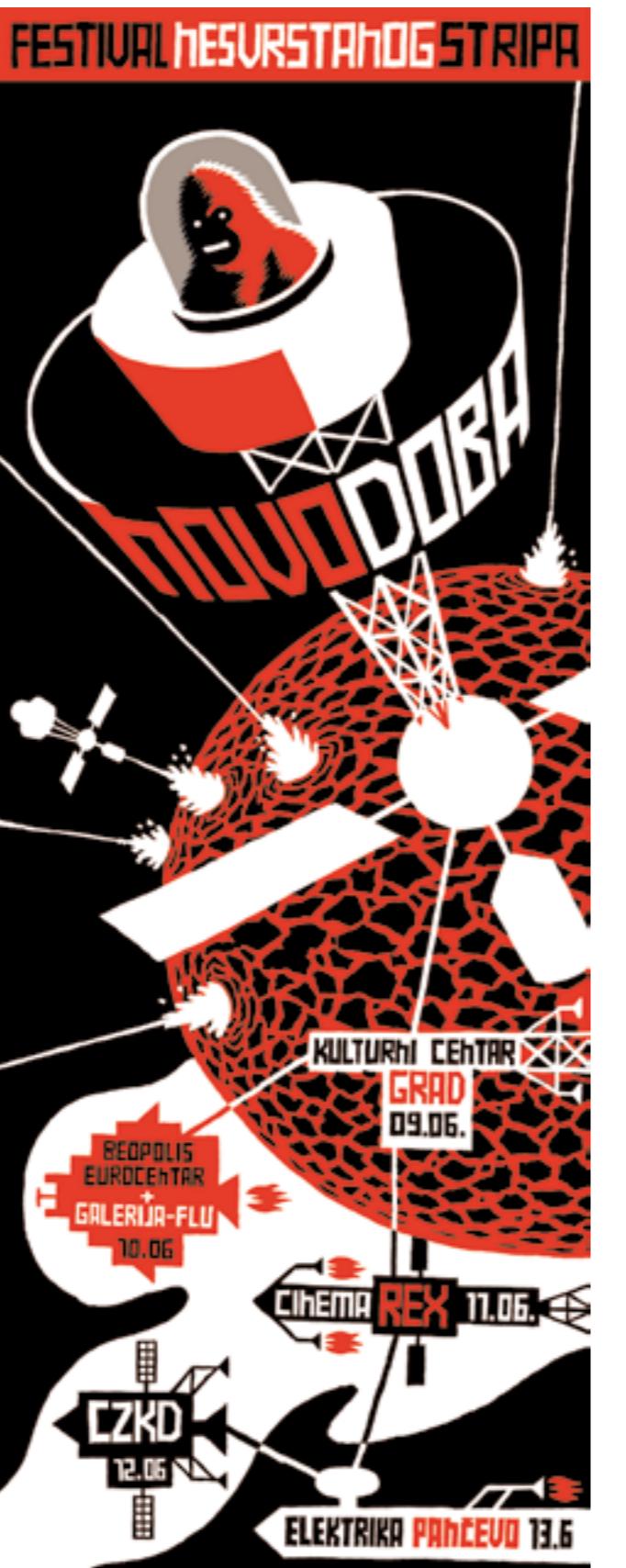
Even if this can happen in France in an informal way or in the context of festivals, the practice of the collective comic in the form of workshops seemed to me to be more frequent here and I had the impression that it sort of organised itself in an improvisational manner in all sorts of situations and places: around a table after a concert, as part of welcoming a foreign author, all night long at somebody's house, anywhere in the presence of Wostok, the author of Vršac and a member of the group *Tehno muda*. Wostok would, for example, distribute a text on white pages divided into four boxes and numbered and would ask each person present, all the passers-by and all the members of his family to draw something until the story was completely illustrated. This is how he published 700 volumes of his photocopied *Krpelj*, composed of comics that were created in the above-mentioned way and with interviews, collages and illustrated songs. This kind of information does seem to excite the fans of fanzines, who all have a bit of a collector's spirit.

La publication de fanzines et de livres dans la bande dessinée alternative s'organise souvent en groupes. *Stripburger* (magazine biannuel de Ljubljana), *Studiostrip* (groupe d'auteurs de Belgrade) et *Komikaze* (magazine annuel de Zagreb), respectivement créés en 1992, 2001 et 2002 et toujours productifs à ce jour, ont joué un rôle majeur dans les échanges entre les auteurs de la région, à travers publications, organisation d'expositions et d'ateliers. *Stripburger*, qui s'est fait connaître en France après avoir reçu le prix de la bande dessinée alternative au festival de la bande dessinée d'Angoulême, publie auteurs slovènes et auteurs étrangers en anglais, pour permettre de faire découvrir les uns aux autres; *Komikaze* publie principalement les auteurs de Serbie et de Croatie. Ces deux éditeurs organisent de nombreux événements autour de ces publications, des expositions et des ateliers. Le collectif *Studiostrip* rassemble les auteurs de bande dessinée dans le collectif *Kosmoplovci*, encore plus large et actif dans différents domaines comme la vidéo et la musique. Les auteurs de *Studiostrip*, Radovan Popović, Aleksandar Opačić, Danijel Savović et Lazar Bodroža, ont tellement dessiné ensemble, repassant sur les images de l'autre, découpant, recollant, modifiant, qu'ils rendent parfois impossible l'identification de l'auteur. Ils ont publié quelques fanzines, mais sont surtout présents sur internet, qu'ils considèrent comme un support éditorial à part entière. Sur le portail internet www.kosmoplovci.net sont réunis les travaux de leurs premières années d'activité, sous formes interactives. Aujourd'hui cette publication en ligne s'est déplacée vers les réseaux sociaux. Par ailleurs, le site *Kosmoplovci* continue de publier des ouvrages entiers sous formes de pdf à télécharger.

Ces dernières années sont venues s'ajouter de nouveaux groupes d'auteurs et/ou d'éditeurs comme *Symposion* (Subotica), *Elektrika* (Pančevo), *Mubareć* (Belgrade) et *Novo Doba* (Belgrade/Pančevo). Certains se consacrent plus particulièrement à la production, comme *Mubareć*, dont les membres, tous autodidactes et 'sur-actifs', se retrouvent chaque samedi depuis quelques années pour produire ensemble sculptures, collages, vidéos et performances. Côté publications, à part quelques fanzines, ils sont surtout omniprésents sur internet. Par contre, l'activité principale d'*Elektrika* est l'organisation d'événements dans la galerie du même nom à Pančevo, gérée depuis plusieurs années par Vladimir Palibrk et Aleksandar Zograf entre autres, mais ces auteurs publient aussi régulièrement des ouvrages collectifs de bande dessinée. *Symposion* est principalement un magazine bilingue serbo-hongrois de la ville du nord de la Serbie, Subotica, proche de la frontière avec la Hongrie (dont une grande partie de la population appartient à la minorité hongroise). A l'origine principalement éditeur littéraire, *Symposion* s'est depuis environ quatre ans ouvert à la bande dessinée. Quant à notre collectif *Novo Doba*, il consacre

The publication of fanzines and books in the alternative comic milieu is usually realised in groups. *Stripburger* (the biannual magazine of Ljubljana), *Studiostrip* (a group of authors from Belgrade) and *Komikaze* (the annual magazine of Zagreb), created in 1992, 2001 and 2002, respectively, and still productive to this very day, played a major role in promoting exchange among the authors of the region, with their publications and the organisation of exhibitions and workshops. *Stripburger*, which became known in France after having received the alternative comics prize at the international comics festival in Angoulême, publishes the works of Slovenian and foreign authors in English so that they can discover each other; *Komikaze* publishes the works of authors from Serbia and Croatia primarily. These two publishers organise a host of events around these publications as well exhibitions and workshops. The *Studiostrip* group draws in comic strip authors from the *Kosmoplovci* group, which is even larger and more active in different domains such as video and music. The authors of *Studiostrip*, Radovan Popović, Aleksandar Opačić, Danijel Savović and Lazar Bodroža, have worked together so intensively, completing each other's illustrations, cutting them, sticking them together again, that it is often impossible to identify the author. They have published a few fanzines but they are mostly present on the internet, which they consider a publishing tool. On the internet portal www.kosmoplovci.net the works from the first years of their activity can be found in an interactive form. Today this online publication has been transferred to the social networks. Besides this, the *Kosmoplovci* continues to publish entire works in a downloadable PDF format.

In the past few years, new groups of authors and/or publishers have emerged, such as *Symposion* (Subotica), *Elektrika* (Pančevo), *Mubareć* (Belgrade) and *Novo Doba* (Belgrade/Pančevo). Some of these are more devoted to production in particular, like *Mubareć*, whose members, all self-made artists and 'overly active', have been meeting every Saturday for a few years now to produce sculptures, collages, videos and performances together. Although they have published a few fanzines, they are omnipresent on the Internet. The main activity of *Elektrika*, on the other hand, is the organisation of events in the gallery in Pančevo bearing the same name. The gallery has been managed by Vladimir Palibrk and Aleksandar Zograf among others, but these authors also publish collective comic strips on a regular basis. *Symposion* is mainly a bilingual Serbo-Hungarian magazine from the north of Serbia, the city of Subotica, close to the Hungarian border (the majority of the population of this city belongs to the Hungarian ethnic minority). Originally mainly a literary and publishing community, *Symposion* has opened up and embraced comics for about four years now. And our group *Novo Doba* spends most of its time and



↑ Affiche / Poster Novo Doba Festival, 2010

← Affiche / Poster Novo Doba Festival, 2011

le plus gros de son énergie à organiser le festival du même nom dont je parlerai un peu plus loin, et ses autres activités sont la sérigraphie et l'édition.

Dans le milieu de la bande dessinée indépendante en Europe, c'est une chose courante que de travailler en collectif. Le principal avantage est de rendre les auteurs maîtres de leurs publications et indépendants des attentes des gros éditeurs. Si pour cette forme de bande dessinée, les éditeurs n'existent pas, il ne reste plus aux auteurs qu'à devenir éditeurs eux-mêmes. Pratiquement, travailler à plusieurs rend possible l'auto-publication, l'organisation d'événements et la circulation des livres et images ainsi imprimés. Souvent en Europe, les collectifs d'auteurs-éditeurs sont aussi imprimeurs. La pratique de la sérigraphie est la plus répandue, mais certains groupes utilisent d'autres techniques d'impressions, comme l'aquatinte, la lino gravure, la gravure sur bois, le pochoir, le tampon, le risographe ... C'est un phénomène récent et rare dans les Balkans où la photocopie est toujours le moyen le plus courant – et le favori – dans l'édition de fanzines. Son côté brut et bon marché a de nombreux et fidèles adeptes. La sérigraphie a ceci de particulier qu'elle permet de réaliser des tirages de plusieurs centaines d'exemplaires; elle permet aussi d'imprimer sur de nombreux supports (papier, textile, papier adhésif, plastique). Cela rend possible pour chaque collectif d'imprimer ses propres livres, ses propres affiches, éventuellement des tee-shirts, des autocollants, des cabas etc. Même si pratiquer régulièrement la sérigraphie nécessite un matériel important (table à insulter, karcher, bac pour laver les cadres, produits, encre etc.), cette technique a l'avantage de pouvoir s'adapter au contexte (insolation à la lumière du soleil pendant les beaux jours, lavage des cadres à l'eau de Javel dans une cabine de douche ...).

Ces collectifs sont donc composés d'auteurs et d'éditeurs 'auto-proclamés', mais souvent certains d'entre eux sont aussi musiciens, graphistes, peintres, poètes. C'est une des spécificités de cette forme de bande dessinée d'aimer à expérimenter les combinaisons possibles entre les différents domaines artistiques.

Dans cette situation sans hiérarchie où tout s'improvise et se bricole au fur et à mesure, et où l'on est jamais assez nombreux, chacun se retrouve à faire un peu de tout. Les besoins varient: rédaction, graphisme, impression, recherche de matériel, scénographie et installation d'exposition, peinture murale, recherche de fonds, envois de lettres, de paquets, de mails, coup de téléphones, rendez-vous, mise en page, visite chez l'imprimeur, animation d'ateliers, installation de stand, traitement d'images sur Photoshop, achat de billets de train et d'avion, réservation d'auberge de jeunesse ...

Trouver des volontaires pour le rédactionnel et le graphisme est un moindre problème dans le monde de la bande dessinée où chacun a des notions de l'un et de l'autre. Mais pour ce qui est des autres tâches, c'est un combat de chaque jour pour trouver

energy organising the festival bearing the same name which I shall describe below, and other activities including screen-printing and publishing.

In the context of the independent comic strip movement in Europe, it is a current trend to work collectively. The principal advantage of this is to make the authors the masters of their own publications, independent from expectations of the big publishers. If in this case there are no publishers, then the authors have no other choice but to become publishers themselves. Working practically together makes possible self-publication, the organisation of events, and the dissemination of books and pictures printed in this way. Often in Europe the collective author-publishers are printers as well. The practice of serigraphy is the most widespread, but certain groups use other printing techniques such as aqua ink, linoleum engraving, woodcut, stencil, stamping and risography. This is a recent and rare phenomenon in the Balkans where photocopying is the most current method – and most preferred – in the publishing of fanzines. Its crude and cheap character has many and loyal follower. The advantage of serigraphy is that it makes possible the printing of several copies of a given volume; it also allows for printing on different supporting materials (paper, textile, and adhesive paper, plastic). In this way, each group can print its own books, posters, and even T-shirts, stickers, tote bags, etc. Even if practised and applied regularly, screen-printing requires a lot of material (an insulation table, cleaning equipment, a small tub to wash the frames, ink and other material) yet the advantage of this technique is that it can be adapted to the context: insulation with sunlight during the sunny days and hours, washing the frames with bleach in a shower, and so on.

These groups are then composed of self-proclaimed authors and publishers, but often some of them are even musicians, graphic artists, painters and poets. One of the special features of this type of comics group is that it enjoys experimenting with the different artistic media.

In this situation where there is no hierarchy, where everything is improvised and put together step by step and where there are never enough hands, everyone does a bit of everything. The needs vary: writing, graphic design, printing, research and procurement of material, scenography and installation of exhibitions, mural painting, fund raising, mailing letters and parcels, phone calls, meetings, layout, meeting the printers, organising and hosting workshops, setting up stands, Photoshop-editing pictures, buying train and plane tickets, reserving youth hostels.

Finding volunteers for the editing and the visual part is not such a problem in the world of comic strips where everyone has an understanding of the one or the other. However, for the other tasks it is extremely difficult to find time and energy resources when everything is voluntary. The only driving

du temps et de l'énergie quand tout est bénévole. Le seul moteur est l'enthousiasme, et l'envie de voir tel livre imprimé ou tel auteur exposé.

Belgrade – Pančevo, Pančevo – Mali Lošinj, Mali Lošinj – Rome, Rome – Angoulême ...

Ces collectifs et éditeurs sont la plupart du temps très liés avec la scène musicale "équivalente" (noise, musique expérimentale ...), avec la littérature et les arts visuels. Ils sont bien plus proches en réalité de ces domaines artistiques que du milieu de la bande dessinée classique. Cette ouverture fait des concerts, des ateliers et des festivals des points de rencontres privilégiés, et même nécessaires pour ces collectifs. Il existe aujourd'hui un réseau, chaque année plus important, de festivals totalement consacrés à cette bande dessinée, à l'estampe et à l'auto-publication.

Ces moments sont importants pour ces collectifs, pour recevoir un feedback sur leur travail, vendre, échanger, brader, donner leurs publications, et continuer leur éternelle quête de nouveaux auteurs, de nouveaux éditeurs, de nouvelles techniques d'impressions, de nouveaux formats, de nouvelles reliures.

Parfois ils s'organisent en marge d'un festival de bande dessinée plus général, comme c'est le cas à Angoulême, où le festival *FOFF* a lieu en même temps que le festival officiel (le Festival international de la bande dessinée d'Angoulême, a priori le plus grand festival européen de bande dessinée – tous genres confondus); certains festivals sont exclusivement consacrés à la bande dessinée indépendante et underground, comme le festival *Crack!* à Rome et notre festival *Novo Doba* à Belgrade et Pančevo en Serbie; d'autres sont des festivals multimédias, comme Škver! en Croatie, dans lequel la bande dessinée est un domaine artistique parmi d'autres, comme la peinture murale, la performance ou la sculpture. Là encore, comme dans l'édition de bande dessinée indépendante, les organisateurs de ces festivals sont les mêmes personnes: auteurs de bande dessinée, graphistes, musiciens, sérigraphes etc. Le moteur est le même, l'enthousiasme. Le temps et l'énergie fournis sont encore plus grands, et toujours bénévoles. Ils ne sont pas formés dans l'organisation, mais à priori les invités le savent et sont tolérants par rapport au désordre et aux autres lacunes. Ils se retrouvent donc plus indépendants, et plus responsables de leur propre participation. Au festival *Crack!* à Rome par exemple, qui accueille chaque année depuis huit ans plusieurs centaines de collectifs, une cellule des catacombes de la forteresse Forte Prenestino (squattée depuis les années 80) est donnée à chaque collectif, qui y installe son stand lui-même. Mini exposition, peinture murale, projection, sculpture, chacun occupe son espace de la façon qui correspond le mieux à son travail. Chaque festival s'organise en accord avec le principe d'auto-organisation, et dans le contexte où il se trouve. Les organisateurs

force is enthusiasm and the desire to see this or that publication printed or exhibited.

Belgrade – Pančevo, Pančevo – Mali Lošinj, Mali Lošinj – Rome, Rome – Angoulême ...

These groups and publishers are very often strongly related to the equivalent musical scene (noise, experimental music, etc.), to literature and to the visual arts. In fact, they are very much closer to these artistic domains than to the classical comic strip scene. This open approach embraces concerts, workshops and festivals that are privileged meeting points which are vital for these groups. There is a network of festivals, which is becoming more and more important each year, that is totally devoted to this type of comic strip, embossing and self-publication.

These moments are important for these groups in order to receive feedback on their work, to exchange works, sell or give their publications to others and to continue their eternal quest for new authors, publishers, printing techniques, formats and bindings.

Sometimes they organise themselves as the *fringe* of a larger comic strip festival, as is the case in Angoulême, where the *FOFF Festival* takes place at the same time as the official festival (the *Festival international de la bande dessinée d'Angoulême*, in fact the largest European comic strip festival, with all genres present). Certain festivals are exclusively devoted to independent and underground comic strips like the *Crack! Festival* in Rome or our *Novo Doba Festival* in Belgrade and Pančevo in Serbia; then there are other festivals with a focus on multimedia, like Škver! in Croatia, where the comic strip represents but one of the many artistic media, such as mural painting, performance or sculpture. And there, as in the case of the independent comic strips, the organisers of the festivals are the very same people: authors of comic strips, graphic artists, musicians, serigraph specialists, etc. The driving force is the same: enthusiasm. The time and energy invested is even greater, and also on a voluntary basis. The volunteers do not receive any training within the organisation and the guests are aware of this and are also tolerant of the disorder and shortcomings. Thus, they are even more independent and responsible for their own participation. At the *Crack! Festival* in Rome, for example, where for the past 8 years several hundred groups have been hosted, a cell in the catacombs of the fortress Forte Prenestino (occupied by squatters since the 80s) is given to each group where they set up their own stand: a mini exhibition, or mural paintings, or projections, sculptures or anything else that is closest to their way of creating and working. Every festival is organised on the principle of self-organisation in the given context. The organisers of the *FOFF Festival* for example, find a place in the city of Angoulême, rent it for the duration of the festival, have electricity installed, print flyers and posters, and share the costs among all the participating groups, who in

du festival *FOFF*, par exemple, trouvent un local dans la ville d'Angoulême, le louent pour la durée du festival, font installer l'électricité, impriment flyers et affiches, et répartissent les frais entre tous les collectifs qui louent en quelque sorte leur stand, à un prix modeste. Un bar et des barbecues sont assurés, qui payent les groupes qui jouent chaque soir, assurant l'entrée gratuite pendant toute la durée de l'évènement.

Le festival *Crack!* à Rome a entièrement lieu, chaque année, à Forte Prenestino. La forteresse, un vrai labyrinthe à l'intérieur, n'a pas contre qu'une entrée. Lors du festival, à partir d'une certaine heure dans l'après-midi, elle devient payante, et l'argent ainsi récolté permet de couvrir les trajets de certains des collectifs et de participer aux autres frais du festival. La cuisine du squat, qui vend des repas aux visiteurs, permet de nourrir les participants, qui dorment tous dans la forteresse, dans différentes salles, dans des tentes ou des caravanes. Chaque année, durant quatre jours, une dizaine de milliers de spectateurs assiste à cette manifestation.

Notre festival, *Novo Doba*, ne peut pas se vanter d'une telle autonomie financière, à cause du manque de lieu dans lequel nous puissions produire l'ensemble des événements, et la priorité que nous mettons à ne proposer que des évènements gratuits pour le public. Nous faisons donc appel aux aides publiques, aux ambassades des pays d'où viennent nos invités, et parfois à des fondations étrangères. Avec l'argent obtenu, nous pouvons prendre en charge les trajets et le logement des invités, l'impression d'un catalogue qui est en réalité un recueil de bande dessinée, la production des expositions, et ce qui reste sert à offrir un repas par jour aux participants.

Škver!, festival qui a lieu sur l'île de Mali Lošinj en Croatie, a un système assez proche de *Novo Doba* en ce qui concerne la production. Dunja Janković, originaire de l'île, y a grandi avant de faire des études d'art à Zagreb puis à New York. Aujourd'hui elle partage son temps entre Mali Lošinj et Portland aux Etats-Unis. Elle organise le festival Škver! depuis trois ans sur sa petite île, dont la principale activité est le tourisme. Sa bonne connaissance de l'île et de ses habitants lui assure le soutien d'autres organisations de l'île: camping, auberge etc.

Ainsi ces quatre festivals ont en commun le bénévolat des organisateurs, puis selon leur contexte, ils trouvent une combinaison possible entre l'autonomie financière, la gratuité pour les collectifs invités et la gratuité pour le public.

L'accent mis sur la production est un lien entre les quatre festivals. La sérigraphie, par exemple, y est très présente. Soit imprimée sur les tee-shirts des visiteurs comme à *Novo Doba*, soit lors d'ateliers improvisés avec les moyens du bord comme au *FOFF* et à Škver!, soit comme à *Crack!*, où l'atelier de sérigraphie de Forte Prenestino est mis à la disposition des participants et tout le matériel est fourni par le festival. Dans celui-ci, nombreux

fact rent their own stand for a very modest price. There is a bar and a barbecue stand, the revenue of which pays for the groups who sing or perform every evening, thus ensuring free entry to all events of the festival the entire time.

The *Crack! Festival* in Rome takes place every year entirely in the Forte Prenestino. The fortress, a real labyrinth inside, has but one entrance. During the festival, from a certain time in the afternoon entrance requires a fee; this revenue helps cover the travelling costs of certain groups and contributes to other costs related to the festival. The squatters' kitchen that sells food to the visitors also helps feed the participants who all sleep in the fortress, in different halls, in tents or in caravans. Every year for four days, several thousand visitors take part in this event.

Our festival, *Novo Doba*, cannot boast of such financial independence as we do not have a place where we could organise all the events together and also because for us it is a priority that all events be free for the general public. Thus, we appeal to the local authorities for public aid, to the embassies of the countries from which our invited guests come and sometimes to foreign foundations. With the help of the money received we can cover the travelling and accommodation costs of our invited guests and costs related to the printing of the catalogue – in reality is a collection of comic strips, costs related to the exhibitions, and from the remaining amount we can offer a meal a day to the participants.

Škver!, the festival that takes place on the Island of Mali Lošinj in Croatia, has a system quite close to the one of *Novo Doba* with regards to the production aspect. Dunja Janković, originally from this island, grew up here before embarking on her art studies in Zagreb and then in New York. Today she divides her time between Mali Lošinj and Portland in the USA. She has organised the Škver! Festival on her little island, where the main activity is tourism, for three years now. The fact that she knows both the island and its people very well ensures support from other organisations: camping sites, restaurants, etc.

A common aspect of these four festivals is the voluntary contribution of the organisers. Then, depending on the context they find a possible combination between voluntarism and financial autonomy, ensuring that the participating groups and the general public enjoy free access to the events.

The fact that the main emphasis is laid on production is another element that links the four festivals together. Serigraphy, for example, is very much present in all of them: either as T-shirt prints for visitors as in the case of *Novo Doba*, or in the form of improvised workshops based on whatever material one can find as in the case of *FOFF* and Škver!, or as at the *Crack! Festival*, where the serigraphy workshop of Forte Prenestino is at the disposal of all the participants and where the festival provides all the necessary materials. In these cases there are many groups



Festival Novo Doba, Belgrade, 2011, photo Marko Krojač / Festival Novo Doba, Belgrade, 2012, photo Hannes Conrady / Crack! Festival, Rome, 2012, photo Johanna Marcadé



sont les collectifs présents qui organisent leur propre atelier dans leur espace: le Garage L, de Forcalquier en France, propose un atelier de linogravure; le collectif de Belgrade *Mubareć* a animé lors de la dernière édition un atelier de sculpture à base d'objets récupérés, pour ne citer que ces exemples. Le festival Škver!, lui, est entièrement consacré à la production artistique: la vingtaine d'artistes présents est invitée à investir le chantier naval (Škver!, dans la langue locale) toujours en activité sur l'île. Les ouvriers et les artistes partagent donc le lieu pendant une semaine, et chacun choisit son activité, peinture murale, sculpture, performance, vidéo, musique, sérigraphie. Lors du dernier FOFF, la Fanzinothèque de Poitiers a produit sur place un fanzine imprimé sur place au risographe, pour lequel tous les collectifs ont dessiné, et nous avons imprimé en sérigraphie des masques que l'on distribuait le soir lors des concerts. Pendant *Novo Doba*, sont aussi organisés des ateliers, comme par exemple de collage avec le collectif *Mubareć*, de bande dessinée avec *Wostok*, ou encore de scénographie avec Dunja Janković et Anna Ehrlemark. Chaque année, le festival itinérant pour enfants *KidsPatch* organise des ateliers pour les plus petits, animés par certains des auteurs invités au festival.

Enfin, ces manifestations sont aussi l'occasion pour les collectifs de présenter leurs publications. Les stands, activité centrale dans les cas de *Crack* et du *FOFF*, sont présents une journée lors de *Novo Doba*, et lors des évènements à Škver!. Chaque collectif/éditeur s'occupe d'installer et d'animer son stand. Les nouveaux livres et les nouvelles impressions se montrent, s'échangent, se comparent (combien de passages en sérigraphie, quel format, quel papier, quel nouvel auteur, avec quelle technique il dessine, dans quels fanzines il a déjà publié ...).

Ces festivals sont souvent la principale (voire dans certains cas l'unique) occasion pour ces collectifs de montrer et de vendre leur travail. Ce n'est certainement pas le but de ces évènements mais l'un des moyens qui les rendent possibles: la vente couvre une partie des frais des collectifs, parfois une partie du trajet. La distribution de ces publications, en dehors des festivals, est le plus souvent assurée sur internet ou dans un petit réseau de librairies. En Serbie, la plupart des librairies soit font partie de

who organise their own workshops on their own premises: *le Garage L* in Forcalquier, France, proposed a linoleum engraving workshop, and the *Mubareć* group from Belgrade organised a sculpture workshop based on all sorts of objects found, to mention just a few examples. The Škver! Festival is entirely devoted to artistic production: the approximately twenty artists present are invited to occupy the dockyard (Škver!, in the local language) still active on the island. This means that the workers and artists share the site for a week and everyone chooses their own activity: mural painting, sculpture, performance, video, music, and serigraphy. On the occasion of the last FOFF, the Fanzinothèque of Poitiers produced a fanzine on the spot printed with the risography technique and for which all the groups invited had drawn something; we printed masks produced with serigraphy and distributed them in the evening for the concerts. Workshops are also organised during the *Novo Doba* festival as, for example, the collage workshop with the *Mubareć* group, comic strip workshops with the *Wostok* group or scenography workshops held by Dunja Janković and Anna Ehrlemark. Every year the itinerant children's festival *KidsPatch* organises workshops for the very young held by certain invited authors of the festival.

Finally, these events are also an occasion for the groups to present their publications. The stands, the main attraction in the case of the *Crack* and *FOFF*, are present again at the *Novo Doba* for a day and during the events of Škver!. Each group/author installs and animates their own stand. The new books and publications are presented, exchanged and compared (how many paragraphs produced with serigraphy, what format, what type of paper, new authors and their techniques and which fanzines contain their works, etc.).

These festivals are often the main (in some cases even the only) occasion for these groups to show and sell their works. It is definitely not the main objective of these events, yet a means to make them possible: sales cover a part of the group costs, sometimes a part of the travelling costs. The distribution of these publications outside the festivals is most often assured via the internet or through a small network of bookshops. In Serbia most of the bookshops are either part of the big chains and do

grosses chaînes et n'acceptent pas les livres des petits éditeurs, soit elles dépendent d'une maison d'édition en particulier et ne vendent que leurs propres livres. Il y a un réel problème de diversité. Heureusement, quelques librairies indépendantes sont ouvertes sur les petits éditeurs et les éditeurs étrangers. C'est le cas des deux librairies belgradoises où nos livres sont disponibles, *Beopolis* et *Baraba*. Nos publications peuvent aussi se trouver à la librairie *Le Monte-en-l'air* à Paris, et nous souhaitons agrandir ce réseau. Nous travaillons actuellement sur le site *Fjuk* qui donnera le plus d'informations possibles sur les collectifs et auteurs de la région et qui leur permettra de vendre leurs livres et impressions.

Malmö – Timișoara, Timișoara – Zagreb, Zagreb – Lyon, Lyon – Vienne ...

Le fanzine et l'auto-publication dans la bande dessinée alternative ne sont pas des nouveautés: ils se sont développés sur plusieurs décennies, depuis le mouvement underground dans les années 60 aux Etats-Unis, en passant par le mouvement punk à partir des années 70. Musiciens et artistes se sont souvent ainsi autoproduits, surtout dans la musique et la bande dessinée. Cependant il semble que cela se passait de façon plus confidentielle et qu'aujourd'hui se développe un plus grand réseau de collectifs; il semble également que les outils nécessaires pour s'autoéditer sont plus accessibles qu'avant.

Chaque année, de nouveaux collectifs apparaissent. Chacun peut se laisser convaincre lors d'un festival de tenter sa chance. Quelques personnes, une photocopieuse, une agrafeuse, et l'on peut se lancer. Un fanzine, deux fanzines, on décide d'essayer la sérigraphie, un livre, une affiche, un premier stand lors d'un festival, dix livres, dix affiches, on part plus loin, on rentre chez soi, on décide de monter son propre festival.

Les festivals dont je parle sont relativement jeunes: *Novo Doba*, Škver! et le *FOFF* n'ont que quelques années. *Crack!* est le plus ancien, huit ans, et inspire les autres. Notre collectif *Novo Doba* est depuis quelques années présent à de nombreux festivals, et chaque année de nouveaux apparaissent. En Suède, le festival *Alt Com* à Malmö a eu lieu pour la troisième fois l'année dernière, en France, le *Grand salon de la micro-édition* à Lyon ouvrira sa quatrième édition en avril, et cette année apparaissent encore de nouveaux salons: *Vendetta* à Marseille, *Indélébile* à Toulouse.

En ce qui concerne la région qui nous intéresse, on y découvre aussi de nouvelles manifestations: le festival *Ohoho!* à Zagreb aura lieu très bientôt dans sa deuxième édition, comme le festival *C.A.T.A.* à Timișoara. Ces nouvelles manifestations, les récentes rencontres avec l'auteur grec Ilan Manouach, le collectif d'auteurs *Roham* de Budapest, Anamaria et Octav de *Librăria Jumătatea plină* (la Librairie à moitié pleine) de Bucarest et l'apparition de projets comme celui pour lequel j'écris à présent, promettent de nombreuses nouvelles collaborations.

not accept the works of small publishers, or they belong to and depend on one particular publisher and sell only their books. There is a real problem of diversity here. Fortunately, some independent bookshops are open to small publishers and foreign publishers. This is the case with the two bookshops in Belgrade where you can find our books: *Beopolis* and *Baraba*. Our publications can also be found in the *Le Monte-en-l'air* bookshop in Paris, and we would like to expand our network. We are currently working on the *Fjuk* site that will provide as much information as possible on the groups and authors of the region and that will make it possible for them to sell their books and publications.

Malmö – Timișoara, Timișoara – Zagreb, Zagreb – Lyon, Lyon – Vienna ...

The fanzine and self-publishing techniques in the alternative comic strip scene are not new: they have developed over the course of several decades, since the underground movement in the 60s in the USA and via the punk movement from the 70s on. Musicians and artists often 'created themselves' especially in the domain of music and comic strips. However, it seems that this process used to be more closed to the outside and that today a larger network of groups is developing. Also, the tools necessary for self-editing and publishing are more accessible than they used to be.

Each year new groups emerge. Everybody can convince themselves over the course of a festival that they can take this opportunity. One collects a few people around there, gets a Xerox machine and a stapler – and off one goes. One fanzine, two fanzines, one decides to try serigraphy, a book, a poster, a first stand at a festival, then ten books, ten posters, then one goes further and goes home and decides to organise one's own festival.

The festivals I am talking about are relatively new: *Novo Doba*, Škver! and *FOFF* are only a few years old. With its 8 years, *Crack!* is the oldest and inspires the others. Our group *Novo Doba* has been participating in several festivals for a few years now and each year new ones emerge. In Sweden, the *Alt Com Festival* in Malmö was organised for the third time last year. In France, the *Grand salon de la micro-édition* in Lyon will be opened for a fourth season in April. And even new salons will appear this year: *Vendetta* in Marseille, *Indélébile* in Toulouse.

Concerning the region that is of interest to us, one finds new events there as well: the *Ohoho!* festival in Zagreb will take place for the second time very soon, as will the *C.A.T.A. Festival* in Timișoara. These new events and the recent encounters with the Greek author Ilan Manouach, the group of authors called *Roham* from Budapest, Anamaria and Octav from *Librăria Jumătatea plină* (the 'Full Half' bookshop) in Bucharest and the appearance of projects like the one I am writing for right now promise a lot of new collaborative projects.



Biographies

Radovan Popović was born in Belgrade/Serbia in 1969. Film, literature and life in general led him to comics, a medium that both fascinates and consumes him, not only as reader. He constantly endeavours to make this graphical form of storytelling more popular. He is active as publisher and editor of magazines (*Striper*, *Super*) and fanzines. Founder of the festival *Novo Doba*. He organises exhibitions and workshops and has worked in the comic book store *Beopolis*. Member of *Kosmoplovci* and *Studio-strip*. His own comics, drawn digitally or with the traditional pen and pencil, thematise science fiction, horror, the occult and the weird. He lives and works in Belgrade.

Octav Avramescu doesn't know what a comic is when he sees one, but is willing to give it a try. This is partly due to some schooling in literature and history with a theoretical emphasis on the document and discourse, and consequently also due to the 'revelation' that authors (except for comics, and a few others) do not really make books (but rather manuscripts, mock-ups, etc). Octav thus discovered that there is more to literature than literature: while disassembling and observing what makes a comic a good comic, he and a colleague decided to present themselves as if they were a company, as this implies the possibilities of production, distribution, profit, deceit, and other unique activities in such a way as to blur the barriers of art and industry. Octav is now secretary of something larger than himself, called in translation, The Full Half.

Márió Z. Nemes (1982), poet, aesthete. Besides reviews and articles on contemporary films, fiction, poetry, and fine arts, he has extensively published studies dealing with contemporary artistic and literary discourses on the human body. Books: *Alkalmi magyarázatok a húsról* (*Casual Readings of Flesh*, Poems, 2006) and *Bauxit* (*Bauxite*, Poems, 2010) He lives in Budapest.

Johanna Marcadé (Paris, 1983) is a designer and publisher (*Turbo Comix*). Her first project was a book in French about comics in Serbia and Croatia, *Stripovi/Cmpunošu*. Since then, she has promoted comics from the Balkans in France. She is part of the collective *Novo Doba*, which organizes the comics festival of the same name in Belgrade and Pančevo, Serbia, working as a silkscreen printer and comics publisher, and setting up exhibitions, concerts and performances during the rest of the year. Parallel to that, she has her own practice as a graphic designer, illustrator and comics artist, mostly in the technique of photo-montage. She lives and works in Serbia.

Vjeran Kovljanić (1983) is a professor of Croatian language and literature. He writes about film and animation for *Filmonaut* and *Hrvatski filmski ljetopis* magazines. He is on the editorial board of *Q strip magazin* where he is currently publishing a series of interviews with Croatian art-oriented cartoonists. He is preparing a book of essays about all sorts of things.

Jasmina Hlaj was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1983. In 2010 she graduated from the Department of Arts with a work entitled *The history of comic books and their educational value*. In 2011 she co-wrote an article with Ciril Horjak about comic author Andrej Herman for a catalogue to the exhibition *Risba v stripuna Slovenskem* at the City Art Gallery of Ljubljana. In 2011 she volunteered at the Festival of Comic Books (at the Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art) in New York, USA. Currently she teaches Slovenian language and literature at a high school and helps with editing and operating at the Bežigrajska Galerija in Ljubljana.

Aleksandra Sekulić PhD candidate in art and media theory, University of Arts, Belgrade. MA in cultural management and cultural policy in the Balkans, University of Arts, Belgrade (MA thesis: *Archiving as a cultural form: creating video archives and databases*). BA in general literature and literary theory in the Department of Philology, University of Belgrade. Archive and project manager at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade. Member of: *Media Archaeology*, *Kosmoplovci* and *Low-Fi Video*.

Jakob Klemenčič — Born 1968 in Ljubljana (Slovenia), where he still lives. He is an art historian by profession and works part time at the University of Ljubljana as an assistant librarian. The rest of his time is mostly split between comics, illustration, printmaking and a (very occasional) article about comics. Co-founder of the Slovenian *Stripburger* comics magazine (first issue published in 1992). In the 1990s, he drew quite a number of mini-comics. His short stories have been published in many anthologies in Slovenia and abroad.

Iztok Sitar was born in 1962 in Ljubljana where he later graduated from the Graphics Department of the School of Design. His first and slightly autobiographical comic entitled *Who killed the comics' drawer?* was published in 1984 in the literary magazine *Mentor*. Since then, signed with his name or the pseudonym Ninel, his comics have been published in most Slovenian magazines and newspapers. In addition to drawing, Sitar also deals with the theory of comics. For the 80th anniversary of Slovenian comics in 2007 he published the first ever national monograph on this topic - *The history of Slovenian comics*. Sitar belongs to the third generation of Slovenian comic authors who at the end of the 1980s established the so-called *New Slovenian comic*. These comics were characterised by the freedom from any prejudices and traditional respect towards sex, politics and the Church.

Ciril Horjak was born in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia, in 1975. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana. In November 2003, *Stripburger* published his first graphic novel *Ride*. For the Slorest company he designed an educational comic book and received a prize for it in 2008 as the most innovative personal practice. Since 2007 he has been active for the newspaper *Vecer*. At Radio Študent's show *Risanka* he draws live cartoons. In 2011 he was awarded a prize by the Slovene Adult Education Centre for his educational work. With his dentist Rok Jurič he is currently preparing an educational comic about teeth treatment – *Endodontostrip*. As a guest lecturer he teaches at different Slovenian university departments.

Bojan Krištofić was born in 1987 in Zagreb, capital of Croatia. He received his MA degree from the School of Design - Department of Architecture, University of Zagreb, and is an aspirant member of the Croatian Designers Society, of which he is a permanent associate. He is also a member of the editorial board of *Zarez*, a well-known local journal for cultural and social issues, as an editor of illustrations and cover pages, and a regular journalist in the fields of visual communications and contemporary art. Additionally, he works as a freelance designer, illustrator and writer. For his design and writing work he has received several awards. Bojan enjoys punk rock music and shows, bicycle rides and thinking about stuff.

Zoltán János Tóth (born 1980) is an assistant lecturer for the Department of Visual Culture and Literary Theory at the University of Szeged. Tóth graduated from the University of Szeged with an M.A. in history and Hungarian literature. Currently he is writing his Ph.D. thesis on contemporary hardcore porn. His main academic areas of interest are film history, film genre, comics, mass media, biopolitics and visual culture.

Jörn Nuber — Born 1975, studied philosophy and comparative literature in Göttingen, Konstanz, Berlin and Paris. He worked in Poland and the Czech Republic for a while and published articles especially about Eastern Europe. From 2007 to 2012 he lectured as a DAAD fellow in Osijek, Croatia.

comiXconnection networks and backgrounds

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