ANIMATED STATES: THE POLITICS, AESTHETICS, AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOVIET AND GERMAN CEL ANIMATION, 1930-1940

by

Olga Blackledge

Specialist degree, Kharkiv National University, 1997

Candidate of Science degree, Kharkiv National University, 2001

Master of Arts, European Humanities University, 2003

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This dissertation was presented

by

Olga Blackledge

It was defended on

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and approved by

Nancy Condee, Professor, Slavic Languages and Literatures

Lucy Fischer, Distinguished Professor, English

Randall Halle, Klaus W. Jonas Professor, German

Brenton Malin, Associate Professor, Communication

Dissertation Advisor: Ronald J. Zboray, Professor, Communication

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This dissertation compares animation industries in the USSR and Germany during the 1930s and 1940s. The industrial turn in animation production that took place in both countries at the time was aesthetically and technologically inspired by American animators Walt Disney and the Fleischer brothers. Two studios, Soiuzmul'tfil'm and Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, founded in the USSR and Germany, respectively, adopted the conveyer method based on the celluloid ("cel") technique. While considering the historical context in both nations during these years, this project explores the politics and aesthetics of Soviet and German industrial animation through governmental and film company archives, as well as trade papers, and through a close analysis of four films: Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh atraktsionakh (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, 1942), Koniok-gorbunok (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, 1947), Der Störenfried (Bavaria Filmkunst, 1940), and Armer Hansi (DZF, 1943).

Although politically and aesthetically there were many similarities between the USSR during Stalin's rule and Nazi Germany—in particular, the rise of nationalism and the official endorsement of some form of realism—and although both animation industries followed in footsteps of American animation, the animated films created in both countries differ aesthetically and politically. After a brief period of pursuing production of entertaining animated film, Soviet animation returned to the politics of education and utilized traditional Russian and modernist art,

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while Nazi animation was predominantly concerned with entertainment, and leaned towards a more naturalistic (or hyper-realistic) Disneyan imagery.

Through analysis of how industrial cel animation of the period negotiated contingent and temporally-bound political and aesthetic discourses, how it adapted to them, and interpreted them, I also consider broader questions about relationships among media, technology, politics, and aesthetics, which advances an understanding of animation as a specific medium. After all, animation is a medium connected not to the physical reality, but to other art forms, which complicates its indexicality and, as such, makes it an intermedial medium, i.e., a site of preservation, connection, and transformation of other arts. Industrialized Soviet and Nazi animation serve to intermediate prior and current forms of dance, graphic arts, music, and print culture into new convergences that aligned with both countries' nationalistic aims.

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PREFACE

This project was made possible through a teaching fellowship from the Department of Communication, and an Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship and a Cultural Studies Fellowship from the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

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1.0   INTRODUCTION: THE BIRTH OF SOVIET AND GERMAN INDUSTRIAL ANIMATION

A fox gets a job building a farm to prey on the farm animals, a bird leaves his cage to explore the world, a hare starts a tailoring business in the forest—all these and many other stories were told in animated films produced in Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1930s-1940s.[1] These films have much in common. In terms of their content, they are narrative driven, their anthropomorphized characters represent highly conventional human types, and they have a clear-cut moral at the end. In terms of the technology of their production, they are produced on celluloid by means of conveyer-based industrial animation. In terms of their aesthetics, they gravitate towards a high level of realism or even naturalism as influenced by The Walt Disney Company's animated films. Even more common features can be found between the German and Soviet animated cinemas during this period if we consider the role of the government in their development—in both countries, the animation industries developed under government sponsorship and supervision, and thus participated in the governmental propaganda machines.

These similarities between German and Soviet non-commercial or art (*werbungfrei* or *künstlerisch*; *hudozhestvennaya*) cel animation[2] do not mean that the development of the German

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[1] The particular films I am referring to here are: *Lusa-Stroitel*, directed by Alexander Ivanov (1936, Moscow, Soiuzdetmultfil'm); Armer *Hansi*, directed by Frank Leberecht (1943, Berlin, Deutsche Zeichenfilm G. m. b. H.) and *Zayats-Portnoi*, directed by Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg (1937, Moscow, Soiuzmultfil'm).

[2] I am using two terms here because of their specificity in German and Soviet contexts. In Germany, the terms *künstlerische* (art) and *werbungfrei* (without advertisement) were used in the opposition to advertising animation

and Soviet animation industries was identical. The process of animation industrialization proceeded differently in both countries, and if the scholarly comparison of German and Soviet cinema of the time is considered to be a commonplace, not least because the development of cinematic production was parallel for many European countries, the situation with animation is more problematic and complex.[3] Yet, these similarities are important and sufficient to provide a premise for a comparative study.

This dissertation focuses on industrial production of non-commercial or art animation in Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s.[4] It considers the historical context of the industrial turn that took place in the 1930s-40s in German and Soviet animation production, and the animated films that were produced as a result of this turn within two discourses that were developing during the period: those of politics and aesthetics. Both discourses are interrelated with the turn in the technology of animation production, and the technology of animation

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(*Werbefilm*), which was the most developed area of animation in Germany starting from 1910s. In the Soviet Union, all animation that was not used for direct propaganda or education was classified as *khudozhestvennaya* (art) animation.

[3] There are numerous differences between German and Soviet animation development, among them:
- German and Soviet industrial celluloid animations come from different origins—if in Germany animation had been for a long time used for advertisement, in the Soviet Union it had been used for propagandistic purposes (for advertising purposes, it was used only during the period of the New Economy Policy [NEP] from 1921 to 1928; the object of was advertising was predominantly live-action films);
- German and Soviet industrial celluloid animations have a different relationship with abstract art. Abstract art was never a part of Soviet animation aesthetics. In Germany though, even after the official ban on 'degenerate art,' abstract animated films were still being made and even shown (as, for instance, Hans Fischinger's *Tanz der Farben*) which can partially be explained by the fact that the German economy was state-controlled rather than state-planned as it was in the Soviet Union, and thus there was a room for animated films unsolicited by the state in the form of production made by artisan means, even though these types of productions were illegal.
- The relationship of the state and the cultural elites was different – many famous German animators emigrated in the early 1930s and were not participating in the production of animation in Germany, whereas in the Soviet Union, the majority of the animators that were developing drawn animation before celluloid were continuing doing so in 1930s, after celluloid became the dominant technique.

[4] The cases of animation produced in non-industrial, artisan ways, up to the beginning of World War II by, for instance, Lotte Reiniger, Hans Fischerkoesen and Hans Fischinger, which I am not going to address in my dissertation, demonstrate a crucial difference between industrial and non-industrial modes of production: in the situation of non-industrial animation, the author and creator controls the whole process of production, and determines all of the aesthetic and technological aspects of the animated film. As in the case of Fischerkoesen, such animation, once produced, can be highly praised by the controlling authorities, and can be interpreted as a part of the authoritarian culture, yet, it is unlikely for such animation to be produced from within the authoritarian culture, and its production is only possible despite, but not because of the authoritarian regime.

production is considered as an integral part of these changes. Through the analysis of how the industrial cel animation of the period negotiated political and aesthetic discourses, how it adapted to them, and interpreted them, the dissertation also considers broader questions about relationships among media, technology, politics and aesthetics, and advances an understanding of animation as a specific medium. First, the dissertation demonstrates how politics and aesthetics influence and determine each other in the animated image—how the aesthetic choices are stipulated by the political situation, and also how the aesthetic considerations result in the specificity of politics of animated films. Second, the dissertation demonstrates the role technology plays in production of the animated image, and how the technological choices are also always political. Third, I also deal with the question of the specificity of animation as a medium that is not connected to the physical reality, but is connected to other art forms, and as such is an intermedial medium.

1.1   EMERGENCE OF INDUSTRIAL ANIMATION IN THE SOVIET UNION AND GERMANY: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The industrialization of animation based on the use of the cel technique completely changed the process of animation production. The cel technique was invented and patented in the US in 1914 by animator Earl Hurd. It was a revolutionary invention that, as Maureen Furniss asserts, "had the largest impact [of any technology] on the animation industry"[5] at the time, comparable only to the introduction of digital animation in the 1990s. The principles of celluloid (cel) animation

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[5] Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (London: John Libbey, 1998), 18.

were based on dissecting the image into a number of layers[6] and drawing them separately. The background could remain the same or could repeat in several shots, whereas the foreground, i.e., the moving parts of the image, could be completely or partially redrawn. The technique allowed for the reuse of parts of the image, which, on the one hand, encouraged the acceleration of animation production and, on the other, promoted the creation of more complex images.

Before celluloid,[7] animation was produced by small animation studios or *Ateliers* in an artisanal way—most of the animating was done by the same animators, advanced artists who controlled the entire process of production. The techniques used at that time employed cut-outs, flat marionettes, and drawing on paper, all of which required the involvement of a limited number of people and was close to artisanship in the sense that the whole product was produced from beginning to end by the same skilled artists. The transition to celluloid animation resulted in the fragmentation of the process of production and the introduction of conveyer-style animation production, which required narrow specialization within a crew of animation workers. In the Soviet Union, as Semion Ginsburg[8] points out, as a result of such a distribution of labor, animation directors had much less control over the process of production and ultimately over the image and the final product of the animated film than they had in the past—very often, there was no possibility for the director to see the parts of the animated film prior to its completion. In Germany, however, at least at Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, the only studio that specialized in non-commercial cel animation production, the situation regarding the control over image was

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[6] Initially, because of the quality of celluloid sheets that were rather thick and had a yellow tint, there were only three layers used for creating an animated image. With improvement of celluloid the number of layers increased to five.

[7] The introduction of celluloid did not eliminate other techniques of animation production, films that used other techniques were produced parallel to celluloid. However, it was celluloid that became a dominant and thus most widespread and most visible technique, and it was celluloid that became the most important technique for German and Soviet governments, the one into which they were ready to make investments.

[8] Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukolnyi film: Ocherki razvitiya sovetskoi multiplikatsionnoi kinematographii* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1956), 136.

rather different: the process of working on the animated film[9] was merged with the process of training animators, and thus animators were constantly going back to the same frames, redrawing and studying them.[10]

The process of industrialization of animation was not identical in Germany and the Soviet Union. In Germany, it is harder to define the exact moment when celluloid started being used—by the early 1930s it was already used by UFA[11] for the production of advertisements.[12] UFA had the most resources (both financial and material) and patents to be able to initiate such a costly transfer to industrialization. Only later, at the end of the 1930s, did the cel animation technique start being used for the production of non-commercial animation, first at already established studios that mainly produced live-action films, such as UFA, Bavaria, and Tobis, and later, beginning as early as 1941, at Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, the studio established to produce full-length feature animated films[13] exclusively using the cel technique.

In the Soviet Union, up to 1934, animation was produced by small animation shops working in an artisan way. The beginning of celluloid animation in the Soviet Union is connected with the name of Viktor Smirnov, Head of AMKINO[14] from 1932 to1933. In 1933 he

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[9] DZF produced only one film, *Armer Hansi* (dir. Frank Leberecht, 1943).

[10] For more on the process of animation production at DZF, see Chapter 5.

[11] Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft, a major German film studio, founded in 1917.

[12] The earliest advertising cartoon that uses cel technique that I have come across (*Das Sonne ins Haus*, by Fischerkoesen, made for UFA) is dated 1932. However, it is possible that cel animation was used in earlier advertising films, too. The presupposition that UFA was the first studio to use cel was also suggested by Rolf Giesen in his interview with me (Summer 2014). However, I have not been able to find any documentation supporting this claim.

[13] Director of DZF Neumann to Staatssekretür Gutterer from December 18, 1941, in Bundesarchiv Deutschland, Lichterfelde, Berlin, R/55/505.

[14] AMKINO was a New York based organization that, according to a press release written for the occasion of appointment of a new General Director of Amkino—Leon S. Zamkovoy (1926), "was founded for the purpose of purchasing motion picture equipment and also of acquainting the American public with the production of Russian studious." In AMKINO (Artkino Pictures, USSR), Container I. Correspondence, A. Correspondence and Papers of Film Production Companies, Agencies, Producers, Distributor, Executives, Directors, and Actors, 1910 - c1960s, National Board of Review of Motion Pictures Records, 1907-1971, New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library Manuscripts and Archives Division.

was commissioned by the Soviet government to study the production of celluloid animation at the Walt Disney Studios and Fleischer Studios. Upon returning to the Soviet Union in 1934, he became the head of an experimental studio, *Eksperemental'naya mul'tmasterskaya pri Nauchno-issledovatel'skom sektore GIKa* [Experimental Studio at Scientific-Research Center of State Institute of Cinematography] which produced the first Soviet celluloid animated films, of which he also was the director. These films were severely criticized for their "uncritical borrowing of American cartoon images." In 1936, a new production studio, Soiuzmul'tfil'm, was created. Soiuzmul'tfil'm became the largest studio to specialize only in production of drawn animated films using the cel technique.[15] Smirnov's studio was integrated into it, and consequently, Smirnov's activities in the field of animation were interrupted. Soiuzmul'tfil'm became the major Soviet studio that defined Soviet animation for many decades.

However, despite the differences, one of the crucial similarities of Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH and Soiuzmul'tfil'm was that they both claimed that they were modelled after the Walt Disney Studios, and both were striving to reproduce Disney's success in terms of quality and quantity of animated films, and adopted not only Disney's style of production, but also Disneyan aesthetics.[16] The interest in Disney was not unique to Germany or the Soviet Union: starting in the early 1930s, Europe became fascinated with Disney's animated films—they were the epitome of technological perfection in terms of image/sound synchronization and the use of

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[15] Up tp the 1950s, the only technique used at Soiuzmul'tfil'm was cel.

[16] I will address the question of aesthetics later in the introduction, however, here it is important to point out that "Disneyan image" was officially a model for German and Soviet animation (by "officially" I mean that it was declared a desirable image in press and was admired by the party leaders in Germany and the Soviet Union). However, in and of itself, Disneyan image is not homogeneous: from Mickey Mouse through *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and up to *Bambi* it went through crucial changes. Nevertheless, the image that eventually became the ideal for German and Soviet animation was that of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Bambi* – both realistic and naturalistic in their style. Additionally, farther in the Introduction as well as in Chapters 3 and 4, I will problematize the attribution of the influence on Soviet animation only to Disney: for instance, such films as *Krasnaya Shapochka* (1936, Zinaida and Valentina Brumberg, Soiuzmul'tfi'lm) and *Armer Hansi* (1943, Frank Leberecht, DZF) have rather prominent similarities with the Fleischers' imagery.

color, and they were creating animated worlds filled with anthropomorphized characters. Disney's shorts attracted extremely diverse audiences worldwide: they were hugely popular with both ordinary viewers and intellectuals.[17] In Germany and the Soviet Union, Disney films were also highly popular with the state leaders at the time: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Considering the fact that in both countries film and animation production were state-controlled, and given the amount of power the leaders of Germany and the Soviet Union exercised in their states, it seems logical that in both countries the founding of animation studios, that were supposed to rival Disney, was initiated top-down by their governments, rather than, as in the case of Disney, bottom-up from private entrepreneurs. Yet, the personal preferences of the two countries' leaders do not explain why it was Disney's aesthetic that was chosen as the model according to which German and Soviet industrial animation developed. It is necessary to examine a broader picture—political, cultural and technological—in order to understand not only what there was in Disney that attracted animation producers in both countries to his aesthetic, but also, how Disney was translated into the Soviet and Nazi contexts.

According to Soviet historians of animation, Soviet animation was "under Disney's hypnosis" for more than twenty years.[18] Together with the borrowing of the industrial mode of production (conveyer), Soviet animated image underwent dramatic changes—it became much

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[17] Disney's films inspired Sergei Eisenstein to write his notes on animation (Sergei Eisenstein, *On Disney,* [Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1986]). Walter Benjamin and later Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno critically analyzed Disney's films (Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008]; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectics of Enlightenment* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002]). About the popularity of Disney films with audiences in Germany and the Soviet Union, see Carsten Laqua, *Wie Micky unter die Nazis fiel: Walt Disney und Deutschland* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), and Semion Ginsburg *Risovannyi i kukolnyi film: Ocherki razvitiya sovetskoi multiplikatsionnoi kinematographii* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1956), respectively.

[18] The phrase was coined by Ivan Ivanov-Vano *(Kadr za Kadrom,* 1980), but the attitude to Soviet animation of the 1930-l940s as greatly influenced by Disney and secondary to it was shared among historians before and after Ivanov-Vano's book. See, for instance, Ginsburgh, *Risovanyi i kukolnyi film*, Sergei Asenin *Volshebniki ekrana* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1974), Anatolii Volkov "O Putiakh Razvitiia Sovetskoi Multiplikatsii 30-kh Godov," in *Na Perekrestkah Kino* (Moscow: VNII Kinoiskusstva, 1993), 21-33.

closer to the naturalistic (or hyper-realistic) aesthetics of Disney. However, the changes in the image were not received unambiguously and raised several-decades-long debates about the "uncritical borrowing" of Disney's imagery among Soviet animation critics and directors.

In Germany, there were many plans and several attempts to produce animated films that would rival those of Disney's. Starting from 1934, when UFA began their animated project based on German folk tales, which was supposed to be implemented by cartoonist Otto Waffenschmied and was never completed due to discontinuation of financing, German animators strove to "produce animations of 'German' fairy tales under German direction."[19] This goal received a new stimulus in 1941, when Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH (DZF) animation studio was founded by Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. The history of power relationships between animators who did not emigrate from Germany and were working there during the Nazi regime and the state power shows how much the Nazi Regime, and Goebbels personally, was interested in developing national animation.[20] Disney animation provided the model according to which the Nazi government was trying to shape its own project of launching an animation industry.

For animation, celluloid opened up endless possibilities to create a complex moving image and concomitantly decrease the amount of labor that was required to create such an image. Yet, in Germany and in the Soviet Union, it was used to create a realistic animated image in accordance with the general tendency towards realism. At the same time, an aesthetic call for realism in both Germany and the Soviet Union manifested itself differently in different media— in the Soviet Union, there was a return to the nineteenth-century novel in literature and the

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[19] Andre Eckardt, Ralf Foster, Nadja Rademacher, Mette Peters *Traum Schmelze: Der deutsche Zeichenanimationsfilm 1930-1950* (Drezden: Deutsches Institut für Animationsfilm e.V., 2013).
[20] See Rolf Giesen and J.P. Storm *Animation under Swastika: A History of Trickfilm in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2012).

adaptation of Hollywood's grand narrative in cinema. In animation, however, the turn to realism resulted in the employment of fables, fairy, and folk tales as the officially accepted type of narrative. In Germany—after modernism was denounced as degenerate art (*entartete Kunst*)—the only legitimate aesthetics could be realism which, in fact was a blend of Romanticism and Classicism, and which translated in animation into fables and short moralistic tales.

The influence of Disney's animation in Germany and the Soviet Union was a subject of much controversy. Rolf Giesen and J.P. Storm characterize the relationship between Disney and German animation as a love/hate relationship—German officials interpreted and evaluated Disney's influence on German animation differently at different times, depending on the political situation. In the Soviet Union, once the industrial mode of animation production was established, there was a wave of criticism of the "Disneyization" of Soviet animation and the development of an anti-Disneyan discourse among critics and animation directors. However, according to the same critics, Soviet animation remained under "Disney's hypnosis" up to the early 1960s.

Attribution of the major influence on Soviet and Nazi animation to Disney for decades has obscured the fact that not only Disney, i.e., his imagery and technology, made an imprint on the animation styles adopted in both countries. The Fleischer brothers' style also was an important influence on the animation produced by specialized studios—Soiuzmul'tfil'm and DZF. What is peculiar about this influence is that it is most obvious in the first films made by both studios. In the Soviet Union it was *Little Red Riding Hood* (1936, directors Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg), one of the first films produced by Soiuzmul'tfil'm that reproduced the Fleischer's aesthetics of animation, including the animation of people and the use of characters' singing to introduce more context into the narrative. The very figure of the main character of the cartoon, Little Red Riding Hood, is reminiscent of Betty Boop, only dressed in a cloak. Such an

appropriation of the Fleischers' imagery is not coincidental—at the cradle of conveyer-style production of animation in the Soviet Union was a former employee of the Fleischers' Studios, Lucille Cramer. She came to the USSR on the invitation of Victor Smirnov and worked with him and animator Iu. Popov on the first films produced by the Experimental Studio using the conveyer method. Cramer was the author of the first book on conveyer animation production published in the USSR.[21] In the introduction to the book, Soviet animator Nikolai Khodataiev wrote of Cramer that she worked as an animator in one of the departments of "Max and David Fletchers'[sic]" studio in New York. The Fleischers' last name is misspelled throughout the introduction, but this spelling was picked up by other Soviet authors who wrote on animation.[22] In her interview with the *New York Times*, Cramer explicitly says that the production system the Experimental Studio used was that of Max Fleischer. In the same *New York Times* article, Popov is quoted as saying that he likes Mickey Mouse "whom he considers laconic and full of expression."[23] Though Disney's films were exceptionally popular with Soviet animators, the Fleischers' films were considered among the best and were particularly carefully studied by animators. As a Soviet animator and animation director Fedor Khitruk writes about his work at Soiuzmul'tfil'm in the 1930s, "Not only Disney was our model. Max Fleischer's pieces demonstrated this technique [cel animation] even more vividly. Our animators screened the film *Ali Baba and His Forty Thieves* [1937] until its complete wear-out [*do dyr*]. For them, it was a

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[21] Lucille Cramer, *Proizvodstvo zvukovykh i risovannykh fil'm v amerikanskikh mul'tiplikatsionnykh masterskikh* [*Production of drown sound films in American animation studios*] (Moscow: Gizlegprom, 1934).
[22] See, for instance, Ivan Ivanov-Vano "Graficheskaia mul'tiplikatsia," *Multiplikatsionnyi film*, ed. Grigorii Roshal'. Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1936. Cramer herself was something of a legend, and information about her differs from source to source. For instance, Ivanov-Vano writes that she "worked […] in brothers McKay and David Fletcher studio in New York" (Ibid., 101) which is probably a further distortion of the Fleischers' names, whereas according to memoirs by Lana Asarkh, Cramer had worked at Disney studio, was a former emigrant from Russia, and brought with her to Russia "all the Disney technology." Lana Asarkh, "Multiplikatory", in *Iskusstvo Kino* 9 (2010), http://kinoart.ru/archive/2010/09/n9-article26.
[23] "A Russian Mickey," *The New York Times* (June 10, 1934).

bible of a sort."[24] However, whether it was because the two names of American animation directors were, as in Cramer and Popov's interview, initially used side by side, or because Disney was more popular with Soviet animators than the Fleischers, the name of the Fleischer brothers never became a part of the Soviet animation discourse, despite the fact that it was their technology that caused such dramatic changes in Soviet animation production, and despite the obvious influence on the early animation in terms of imagery.[25]

A similar situation took place in Germany, where the Fleischers' animated films were screened in theaters and were advertised in newspapers. However, as the 1930s progressed, there were fewer screenings of the Fleischers' films. By the end of the 1930s, the Fleischers' films were advertised without mentioning the names of the directors. At the same time, the Fleischers' aesthetic is seen in the first and only animated film completed by DZF, *Armer Hansi* (1943). The characters from *Armer Hansi* resemble those from several animated shorts of the series *Color Classic* that Fleischer Studios produced for Paramount Pictures from 1934 to 1941, in particular, in *The Song of the Birds* (1935), *Hawaiian Birds* (1936), and *Always Kickin'* (1939).[26]

Thus, due to the fact that animation in the Soviet Union and Germany was discursively connected with Disney and considered secondary to it, and also because of critics' reluctance to discuss the Nazi past in Germany, the two decades, the 1930s and the 1940s, remain a critically understudied and neglected period, despite its importance for animation development in Europe. In the Soviet Union, it laid the foundation for industrial animation production that even though it started as derivative of Disney's and the Fleischers' animation, developed into an original and

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[24] Fedor Khitruk, *Professia—Animator* [Profession—Animator], V. 1 (Moscow: Gaiatri, 2007), 48.
[25] For further discussion of the Fleischers' influence on the Soviet animation see Chapter 4.
[26] I analyze *Armer Hansi* in more detail in Chapter 5.

influential medium. In Germany, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH became a part of DEFA, a successful animation studio in East Germany.

1.2   STATE OF RESEARCH IN SOVIET AND GERMAN ANIMATION:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Soviet and German animation of the 1930-40s is a much overlooked area. Very few studies focus on this period, and even they leave too many historical gaps. There are several studies that address this period, but do not focus on it. They are not very numerous either. I will first briefly summarize these studies in terms of their relevance for my project, and then I will discuss a wider body of works on which my project relies.

As of today, the most important studies on German animation of the period are a volume by Rolf Giesen and J.P. Storm, *Animation under the Swastika: A History of Trickfilm in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945*[27] and a brochure composed of the materials exhibited in Deutsches Institut für Animationsfilm, *Traum Schmelze: Der deutsche Zeichenanimationsfilm 1930-1950,* edited by Andre Eckardt, Ralf Foster, Nadja Rademacher, and Mette Peters.[28] These two sources provide a historical overview of the main events connected with the development of German animation during the 1930-1940s. Though both of these historical accounts are somewhat fragmented, and do not always explain causes and effects of historical events or the connections between them, they are extremely useful for understanding the general historical picture of the animation of the

[27] Rolf Giesen and J.P. Storm, *Animation under the Swastika: A History of Trickfilm in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945 (*Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2012*).*
[28] Andre Eckardt, Ralf Foster, Nadja Rademacher and Mette Peters *Traum Schmelze: Der deutsche Zeichenanimationsfilm 1930-1950.* Drezden: Deutsches Institut für Animationsfilm e.V., 2013.

time. Two more historical sources, Carsten Laqua's volume *Wie Micky unter die Nazis fiel: Walt Disney und Deutschland* [29] and a brochure written by J.P. Storm and Mario Dreßler for an exhibition, "Walt Disney in Deutschland 1927-1945," that took place in Filmmuseum Potsdam in 1991 called *Im Reich der Micky Maus: Walt Disney in Deutschland 1927-1945,*[30] provide important overviews of the relationships between Disney and German animation.

No sources deal exclusively with the history of Soviet animation of the period. However, there are several volumes that address it to a larger or smaller extent. The most important is the volume by Semion Ginsburg *Risovannyi i kukol'nyj fil'm: Ocherki razvitiia sovetskoi mul'tiplikatsionnoi kinematografii,*[31] which provides a wealth of historical information about early Soviet animation, the transition to the industrial mode of production, and the history of Soiuzmul'tfil'm. Also, it deals with the Soviet animation during World War II: in particular, it provides an overview of the main events connected with evacuation of Soiuzmul'tfil'm from Moscow. Yet, the way information is presented there creates many questions about chronology and the causes of events. This volume also provides a critical perspective on the development of Soviet animation. However, this perspective should be considered in its historical context and the political situation of the year 1956, when the book was published—after Stalin's death but before the XX CPSU Congress, which signaled the beginning of changes in the political situation in the Soviet Union. Thus, the critical stance that the book employs can be viewed as representing the discourse on animation that developed by the end of the Stalin years. More historical information on Soviet animation of the period can be found in G.K. Elizarov's overview of the history of

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[29] Carsten Laqua, *Wie Micky unter die Nazis fiel: Walt Disney und Deutschland* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992).

[30] J.P. Storm and Mario Dreßler, *Im Reich der Micky Maus: Walt Disney in Deutschland 1927-1945* (Berlin, 1991).

[31] Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukolnyi film: Ocherki razvitiya sovetskoi multiplikatsionnoi kinematographii* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1956).

Soiuzmul'tfil'm studio, "Soiuzmul'tfil'm (Biografiia Tvorcheskogo Kollektiva),"[32] Laura Pontieri's *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children*,[33] Natalia Vezhner's *Soiuzmul'tfil'm*,[34] and Sergei Asenin's *Volshebniki ekrana*.[35] These are important sources that shed light on some of the history of Soviet animation of the 1930-1940s, but because they do not focus on this period, they do not address some of important historical questions. Also, they do not raise more theoretical questions as this dissertation does.

Additionally, this dissertation—for the first time—offers analysis of specific animated films: two Soviet ones—*Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh attractsionakh* [Cinema Circus: Animated Satire in Three Attaractions] (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, dir.-s Leonid Almarik and Olga Khodataeva, 1942) and *Koniok Gorbunok* (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, dir. Ivan Ivanov-Vano, 1947), and two German ones—*Der Störenfried* (Bavaria, dir. Hans Held, 1940), and *Armer Hansi* (DZF, dir. Frank Leberecht, 1943).

1.3   THEORETICAL-HISTORICAL GROUNDS FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In *Moscow Diary*, Walter Benjamin briefly describes his encounter with a Soviet journalist. He writes, "I made up something about wanting to do a book dealing with art under dictatorships: Italian art under the Fascist regime and Russian art under the dictatorship of the proletariat."[36] This brief statement suggests that the idea of comparing aesthetic phenomena developing in

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[32] G.K. Elizarov, "Soiuzmul'tfil'm (Biografiia Tvorcheskogo Kollektiva)," in *Soviet Animation: Handbook* (Moscow: Committee on Cinematography, Council of Ministers of the USSR, State Film Fund, 1966) 1-93.
[33] Laura Pontieri. *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children* (New Barnet: John Libbey Eurotext Limited, 2012).
[34] Natalia Vezhner. *Soiuzmul'tfil'm*. (Moscow: Soiuzinformino, 1981).
[35] Sergei Asenin, *Volshebniki ekrana* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1974).
[36] Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary, October* 35 (Winter 1985), 31.

similar political conditions is far from new—Benjamin thought about it already in 1926, and even then he saw the potential for interpreting different dictatorships along similar political lines. Later, Hannah Arendt unified the political regimes of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under the term "totalitarianism,"[37] which for several decades defined the scholarly approach to these countries and their position on the ideological world map in opposition to democratic countries. However, not all scholars shared Arendt's juxtaposition of totalitarianism to democracy. Adorno et al.,[38] for instance, in his work, through the notion of the authoritarian personality, argued that American democracy is not entirely different from totalitarianism. This opinion was supported, though from a different perspective, by Herbert Marcuse's analysis of American consumerism.[39]

The conceptualization of totalitarianism through opposing it to democracy becomes even more problematic in the sphere of such a popular art as cinema—in the 1930s and 1940s, the cinematography of both countries was dominated by the same model of grand narratives established in Hollywood. Thus, in terms of cultural production of the new popular art of cinema, in both Germany and the Soviet Union, studios produced films similar to those created in Hollywood.[40]

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[37] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (La Vergne: Benediction Classics, 2009), first published in in Britain in 1951 under the title *The Burden of Our Time*.

[38] Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950).

[39] Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).

[40] On American influence on film industry in Germany, as well as German influence in Hollywood, see, for instance, Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); on Soviet plans to create a Soviet Hollywood, see Maria Belodubrovskaya, "Soviet Hollywood: The Culture Industry That Wasn't," *Cinema Journal* 53.3 (Spring 2014): 102-122; Richard Taylor "Boris Shumyatsky and the Soviet Cinema in the 1930s: Ideology as Mass Entertainment," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 6.1 (1986): 46-64; Maiia Turovskaia, *Zybu Drakona: Moi 1930-e* (Moscow: Corpus, 2015).

Contemporary scholarship, represented in particular by the volume *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared,*[41] provides a comparative analysis of the two political regimes and focuses on the differences as well as the similarities between them. In the introduction, Geyer and Fitzpatrick point out that though the two political systems seem to have a lot in common—they were both ideology-driven, they employed similar strategies of oppression, etc.—a close step-by-step comparison reveals too many mismatches. Among the mismatches are different bases for foundational state discrimination (race in Nazi Germany, class and, later, by the end of the 1930s, ethnicity in the Soviet Union); variant longevity of the regimes; different economic conditions, etc. Thus the concept of totalitarianism does not seem to be one that is capable of becoming the foundation for this analysis. Yet some of its constituents, such as the politics of discrimination and aesthetics of idealism, are important for understanding the processes of industrial animation development.

Additionally, the period surrounding Stalin's Constitution (1936) was also marked by a higher degree of nationalization (or Sovietization), and changes in gender politics that reintroduced into Soviet society a patriarchal system with the role of the state leader being that of a state patriarch. Generally, these tendencies can be characterized as a move away from leftist politics to the establishment of a much more right-wing conservative type of government. This situation brought the politics of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union much closer than they had been before.

Another similarity between the two countries that is highly important for my project is that in both countries, the arts—film industries in particular—were controlled by the state. In both the Soviet Union and Germany, citizens engaged in cultural production had to be members

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[41] Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds. *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

of governmental organizations which selected only the people who were loyal to the state ideology and met the state criteria for citizens (such as, for instance, being of Aryan race and non-leftist in political views for Germany). As Crispin Sartwell describes the situation in Germany, "The Reich Chamber of Culture attempted fully to organize and control not only painters, sculptors, and architects but also interior decorators, landscape gardeners, crafters, graphic artists, and antique dealers. The organization grew to 42,000 members, and if one lacked membership, one was prohibited from practicing the art in question, even in the privacy of one's own home."[42]

Additionally, all of the cultural products in both countries were heavily censored by the state in accord with state-approved ideology and aesthetics. Starting from 1932, the officially accepted aesthetic in the Soviet Union became socialist realism. A similar movement towards realism was taking place in Nazi Germany. For instance, in the debates between Georg Lukacs and Ernst Bloch,[43] one of the points that Lukacs made against expressionism was that it promoted Nazism and that it corresponded to Nazi ideology. However, shortly after Lukacs's piece was written, the Exhibition of Degenerate Art (1937) organized by the Nazi government demonstrated that expressionism and other modernist trends were as foreign to Nazism as they were to the Soviet Union. To the contrary, a realistic style best corresponded with governmental politics in both ideological systems. However, in both countries, the concept of realism was reinvented along the lines of the countries' ideologies and was more idealistic than materialistic.

A closer examination of animation production in the USSR and Germany reveals that both were fraught with inconsistencies and discontinuities which complicate a homogenous story

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[42] Crispin Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 25-26
[43] Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, Georg Lukács, *Aesthetics and Politics (Radical Thinkers)* (London: Verso, 2007), 16-59.

of their foundation and work, and that both the aesthetics and politics of Soviet and German animation are characterized by considerable differences. However, the similarities between the political, economic, technological and artistic conditions of Soviet and German animation production provide substantial grounds for an analysis of these animation industries.

1.4   THE METHODOLOGY AND THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The general methodological approach of the project is both historiographical and theoretical: according to this approach, the archival findings must be viewed theoretically, and theory must be grounded in archival materials. This combination of historiographical and theoretical approaches is based on the idea that archival materials do not provide ready-made answers to research questions, and that a new level of understanding of the historical processes through historical materials and archival findings is only possible, on the one hand, if approached theoretically. On the other hand, the archive challenges generalities of theory, and complicates them, exposing discontinuities and controversies that are necessary to consider.

The project identifies the controversies and discontinuities connected with the process of industrialization of animation in Germany and the USSR by studying archival materials and periodicals of the 1930s and 1940s, and by analyzing four animated films of the period—two German and two Soviet. It is based on extensive archival and library research[44] that I have completed in Germany (Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde in Berlin; Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin, Animation archives of Deutsches Institut für Animationsfilm in Dresden, and Staatsbibliothek,

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[44] The archival and library research in Germany in Russia became possible due to the University of Pittsburgh Cultural Studies Fellowship (2014-2015).

Berlin), in Russia (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow, Scientific-Research Institute of Cinema in Moscow, and Russian State Library in Moscow), and in the US (New York Public Library Archives in New York, and Museum of Modern Art Archives in New York). The research materials I gathered in these archives include animation studio documents (orders, correspondence, reports, scripts of meetings, etc.) with the focus on such studios as Soiuzmul'tfil'm and Mezhrabpomfil'm in the Soviet Union, and Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, Bavaria Film AG, and Prag-Film AG in Nazi Germany, and documents regarding animated films and animation directors involved in production of these films. From the libraries, I gathered newspaper and magazine articles discussing specific animated films and studios, and also articles that show more general political, technological, and aesthetic tendencies. I focused on such periodicals as *Gazeta Kino*, *Iskusstvo Kino*, *V.O.K.S. Bulletin*, *Film-Kurier*, *Der Deutsche Film*, *Der Film*, *Deutsche Filmzeitung München*, *Filmtechnik*, *Kinematograph*, *Kinotechnik*, *Licht Bild Bühne*, and *Reichsfilmblatt*.

The project also relies on the historical work done by scholars in the fields of Soviet and German studies. Works by such authors as Katerina Clark, Sheila Fitzpatrick and Michael Geyer, Bill Kinser and Neil Kleinmann, Terry Martin, Richard Taylor, Eric Rentschler, Karsten Witte, Sabine Hake, and David Welch helped to historically, culturally, and politically contextualize Soviet and German animation industries of the period, and allowed for seeing their development as a part of broader political, cultural, and artistic tendencies.

The interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the project is formed through a range of critical paradigms and concepts that, on the one hand, allow for understanding the general cultural, political, and aesthetic trends of animation, but, on the other, are essential to reading of the animated films presented as case-studies. In Chapter Two, "The Politics of Soviet

Animation," I explore the concepts of caricature and grotesque through the works of E.H. Gombrich and Mikhail Bakhtin for understanding how the Soviet animated film *Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh attractsionakh* (1942) creates satirical anti-Nazi imagery. In Chapter Three, "The Politics of German Animation," I rely on Partick Merziger's work for exploration of the concept of Nazi humor, Jeffrey Herf's concept of reactionary modernism, and on Carl Schmitt's reading of the political in terms of friend/enemy relationship. In Chapter Four, "The Aesthetics of Soviet Animation," I rely on much historical and theoretical work by C. Vaughan James, W.T. Mitchell, Jacques Rancière, Boris Uspenskii, and Lev Zhegin that allows for a deeper understanding of the functioning of Soviet aesthetics, and of the visual sources appropriated by Soviet animation. Chapter Five, "Aesthetics of Nazi Animation," is theoretically based on the discussions of Disneyan image (Walter Benjamin, Mariam Hansen, and Esther Leslie), and the cinematic sources for *Armer Hansi* (1943), the film produced by Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, in particular, the *Heimatfilm* and "genius" film (Mathew Jefferies, Siegfried Kracauer, Alexandra Ludewig, Johannes Moltke, Gertraud Steiner, and Linda Schulte-Sasse).

The choice of conceptual framework for each chapter was stipulated, on the one hand, by the archival materials that called for specific set of questions and, on the other hand, by the analyzed animated films. However, there is a range of questions that is not discussed in the chapters, but that needs to be addressed since it is pertinent to the whole project. These questions relate to the radical shift to realism in the cultural politics in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. In order to understand what it means for animation to be "realistic," below I discuss the general questions related to the issues of realism and animation.

1.4.1   Animation and Realism: A Conundrum

One of the problems that immediately arises when one considers the aesthetic of animation is that animation itself is a highly amorphous phenomenon that is hard to define and limit. The great variety of methods and approaches in animation production creates constant confusion among animation and film scholars over the definition of animation and its scope as a field of study. This situation is particularly relevant when the work of avant-garde artists such as Hans Richter, Stan Brakhage, Norman McLaren, Ken Jacobs, and others are concerned. These artists use techniques of creating movement of objects and images that are intrinsically static or move differently than on the screen—in other words, they animate these objects and images, but their work does not adhere to the conventional types of animation. Film theory often claims them as film artists who push the boundaries of what film is, and yet their methods of working with imagery are those of animation rather than film, which photographically captures and reproduces objects' movement.

Animation scholar Maureen Furniss defines animation as "the art of creating movement."[45] Another famous definition of animation comes from the Canadian animation director Norman McLaren: "Animation is not the art of *drawings* that move, but the art of *movements that* are drawn [McLaren's italics]. What happens between each frame is more important than what exists in each frame. Animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible instances that lie between frames. The interstices are the bones, flesh and blood of the movie, what is on each frame is merely the clothing."[46] Though McLahren's definition

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[45] Maureen Furniss. *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (London: John Libbey, 1998), 76.
[46] Cited in Thomas W. Hoffer, ed., *Animation: A Reference Guide* (Westport, CT:: Greenwood Press, 1981), 5. [McLaren's italics]

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emphasizes the gaps between shots, which is not in the focus of Furniss's definition, both of them focus on movement, i.e., on animating non-moving drawings, as in McLaren's definition, which can be extrapolated to other non-moving objects. Creation of movement is at the heart of the cultural history of animation. From the cave paintings, arranged in a sequence to produce an effect of a moving image for the eyes of a moving spectator, and flip-books, to puppet theater—all these practices created the illusion of movement. The invention of the cinematographic apparatus became the ground for the production of animation by photographic means—by photographing drawings and objects, and projecting these photographs on the screen with a speed of 24 images per second. Though animation utilized the cinematic apparatus, the production of animated films differed from that of live-action film—animated movement was created from scratch, while live-action movement was captured on film and reproduced through projection.[47] Now, with the development of digital technology and digital creation of images, and a higher emphasis on image processing in the post-production of live-action films, the specificity of animation production has become increasingly difficult to establish not only in terms of its categorization by film specialists and scholars, but also by audiences at cinemas. That is why the old distinctions between photographic live-action film and animated film, and the discourses around them are not relevant for discussions of the contemporary state of film and animation, and yet they are important for understanding the friction between realism and animation.[48]

I will begin discussing the relationship between realism and animation by briefly considering the discourse about animation as not belonging to the field of cinema. I will focus on

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[47] Even though the movement of early films was different from the "real life" movement of objects, it was a result of the technological imperfections of the apparatus that were soon overcome, rather than an intended act.
[48] The problem of realism in film in general is too broad, and its discussion is outside of the goals of this dissertation. I will only briefly cover some of its aspects that are relevant to animation.

how this discourse was developed, how animation was detached from film by film critics and scholars, and how it ended up caught in narrow prescriptive frames that determined its function. In film theory, the notion of realism is not as a rule associated with animation because of the artificiality of the latter—in terms of production, animation is much closer to drawing or painting than to film with the latter's automatism of the image based on photographic reproduction. As Andre Bazin pointed out, "No matter how skillful the painter, his work was always in fee to an inescapable subjectivity. The fact that a human hand intervened cast a shadow of doubt over the image."[49] Such subjectivity, according to Bazin, is an obstacle to realism—realism is possible only when the image is objective, which can be achieved through automatization of its production. As Bazin puts it, "For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent. For the first time an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man."[50]

The difference between animation and photographic film is also pointed out by the Soviet semiotician Iuri Lotman, who considers animation to be an art completely different from cinema due to the difference in their artistic methods. He writes that the proximity of animation and cinema is determined exclusively by the technology of their distribution. He draws an analogy between animation and cinema, on the one hand, and opera and ballet, on the other—in both cases they share the same institutional structures; however, their artistic languages are completely different.[51]

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[49] Andre Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," *What is Cinema?* Vol. I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 12.

[50] Ibid., 13.

[51] Yuri Lotman, "O iazyke mul'tiplikatsionnykh fil'mov" [On the Language of Animated Films], *Sovetskie Hudizhniki Teatra i Kino* (Moscow: Sovetskii Khudozhnik, 1981), 224-228, esp. 224.

Moreover, the specificity of the animated moving image unrestricted by any (real world) physical conditions inspired critics to opine that it should only be concerned with the realm of the fantastical and should not follow the requirements of realistic imagery. For instance, Siegfried Kracauer criticizes Disneyian imagery for its attempts to imitate cinematic aesthetics that became, according to Kracauer, increasingly prominent in Disney's feature-length films. He writes, "Walt Disney's increasing attempts to express fantasy in realistic terms are aesthetically questionable precisely because they comply with the cinematic approach."[52] The aspects of such an approach about which Kracauer was particularly critical were Disney's use of cinematographic devices such as panning. For him, Disney's approach was an attempt to reproduce rather than create, which was not relevant to the tasks of animation.

In her article on the marginalization of cel animation in relation to cinema as an outcome of the ideology of the Hollywood film industry, Kristin Thompson analyzes the factors that led to the limitations imposed on the animated image and to the establishment of prescriptive rules defining what animation was supposed to do. The central point of her analysis is that in spite of cel animation's potentiality to produce an image not constrained by any boundaries, Hollywood ideology defined the role of animation, which genres it dealt with, and, ultimately, the type of imagery it produced. Thompson writes, "the cel technique quickly became defined within relatively narrow boundaries. These boundaries had as much to do with the developing Hollywood conception of the animated film as with the technical properties of the mode."[53]

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[52] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 89.

[53] Kristin Thompson, "Implications of the Cel Animation Technique," in *The Cinematic Apparatus,* ed. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (London: Macmillan, 1980), 106-120, qt. on 108.

According to Thomson, "cel technique has several unique features which would tend to promote formal play of a potentially disruptive kind."[54] However, as Thompson argues, this potentiality was either not realized to its fullest or "smoothed over" for several reasons. Being a part of the Hollywood system of distribution, animation had to "appeal to the same audiences['] viewing habits"[55] as life-action cinema. Concurrently, animation was "defined by its difference from life-action films,"[56] which reserved for it the special position of a medium that can produce an image that live-action film cannot, and thus it must produce only this image. In other words, the role of animation was to produce difference which was not supposed to be too radically different within the Hollywood system. Thompson succinctly sums up other reasons for the limited use of the potentiality of cel animation in the following paragraph: "In sum, the ideology of Hollywood cel animation for many years was that cartoons are secondary to live action, virtually always comic and/or fanciful, for children and trivial. Such films were valuable for Hollywood because they brought the mystery of movie technology to the fore, impressing people with the 'magic' of cinema. Animation made cinema a perpetual novelty."[57]

The three factors briefly outlined above: the artificiality of the animated image, the specificity of its artistic means, and its ability to perform functions other than those of the photographic cinema, as well as the use of those factors by the film industry that formed the expectations for animation, resulted in fixing the position of animation as cinema's "other," the type of moving image that deals with dreams, fantasy, and the fantastical, rather than the real world, which was the sphere of attention of cinema. And yet, from time to time various scholars

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[54] Ibid., 112.
[55] Ibid., 108.
[56] Ibid., 108.
[57] Ibid., 111.

address the question of realism in animation, which was in the first place promoted by Disney animation and its aesthetics.

One of the most detailed analyses of realism in animation that helps us to grapple with different approaches to and understandings of it was done by Stephen Rowley.[58] His analysis singles out and examines a variety of ways realism manifests itself in animation:

Visual Realism: The extent to which animated environments and characters are understood by the audience as looking like environments and characters from the actual physical world.

Aural Realism: The extent to which the sounds of animated environments and characters are understood as by the audience as resembling the sounds of environments and characters from the actual physical world.

Realism of Motion: The extent to which characters move in a fashion that is understood by the audience as resembling the way characters move in the actual physical world.

Narrative and Character Realism: The extent to which the events and characters of the animated film are constructed to make the audience believe they are viewing events and characters that actually exist.

Social Realism: The extent to which the animated film is constructed to make the audience believe that the world in which the events take place is as complex and varied as the real world.[59]

There are four aspects of this analysis that I find problematic[60] and discussion of which can be useful for my further analysis of German and Soviet animation. First, this analysis does

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[58] Stephen Rowley, "Life Reproduced in Drawings," *Animation Journal* 13 (2005): 65-85.
[59] Ibid., 70.

not take into account the historical and socio-cultural dimensions of realism. Despite being audience-oriented—and leaving it up to the audience to decide whether this animation is realistic or not—[61] the analysis does not take into consideration that audience members who watch animated films can have very different experiences, and their understandings of what is realistic imagery varies greatly, depending on their cultural situations.[62] The second aspect, connected with the first one, and which is only implicitly addressed in the article, is the way the audience's vision and perception of reality is constructed by the very media products they are consuming. Multiple examples can be summoned to show how media change our perceptions of reality and normalize them. For instance, "Realism of Motion," which is one of the keystones of Rowley's analysis, and which, according to him, is crucial for audiences to identify with animated characters,[63] has historically been subject to the technological specificity of cinema and cinematic projection. For instance, as Rudolf Arnheim points out, movement in early cinema was not particularly realistic due to the specificity of the projecting technology.[64] In terms of "Character Realism," a good example can be found in the observations made by John Hales and Roger Manvell about the difference in historical development of images of characters in Soviet and American animated films. They point out that "in cartoon history the size of the head in proportion to the rest of the body has been developed quite differently in America and Russia. As

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[60] I believe that these problematic aspects are a result of the breadth of the topic of realism in animation that Rowley is covering in one article, and its understudied state rather than oversimplification or oversight on his part.

[61] Rowley does address the issue of perception of the films by the audiences. He writes, "three of the definitions are deliberately made more tortuous through the insertion of the qualifier 'understood by the audience.' This is because realism of motion, for example, is not necessarily constructed so as to resemble the actual real world. Conventions exist in each type of realism that have become accepted as faithful animated depiction of the real, even when upon close examination, the resemblance to the real world is highly qualified" (ibid., 70). This is a very important remark that emphasizes conventionality of the realism represented in the animation. Yet, this remark does not take into account the cultural specificity of animation as well as it being influenced by other media.

[62] An example of

[63] Ibid. 82.

[64] Rudolf Arnheim, *Film as Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

the American cartoon gathered momentum, the convention of making the head larger and larger has tended to grow with it, and audiences who thirty years ago would have been shocked to see a head drawn as big or bigger than the rest of the body are prepared to accept it as a graphic convention quite correct within a wholly artificial medium. Russian cartoon, on the other hand, has kept to the lines of observing a more naturalistic graphic style in the presentation of the characters in folk stories, even though Ptushko's puppets in the *New Gulliver* (1934) had heads approximately a quarter the size of the bodies."[65] These observations demonstrate how animated images were changing historically in different socio-cultural contexts, and how audiences were adapting to these changes, perceiving them as specific to the medium of animation. They also raise the question of realism being a historically media-determined construct rather than a way of imitating reality.

Another example that is important to mention here is that of fairy-tales and fables, and their ambiguous position in terms of realism and fantasy. Fairy-tales create a fantastical space of unlimited potentiality, whereas fables, though they are usually set in more traditional spaces and adhere to social norms and standards, present a world of anthropomorphized animal characters. Concomitantly, both are deeply imbedded in cultural social processes and can be seen as their specific interpretation. Additionally, because of their ubiquity, fairy-tales and fables, especially traditional ones, become a transmitter of a particular ideology that participates in forming and maintaining social and cultural norms. Such a complex function of fairy-tales and fables allows for interpreting them as a part of cultural reality, which problematizes the notion of reality even more. Such an interpretation proves to be important, however, in the context of Soviet and German industrial animation since it was animated fairy-tales in the former and fables in the

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[65] John Hales and Roger Manvell, *The Technique of Film Animation* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1971), 63.

latter case that became the main genres of the films produced in the 1930-1940s in these countries.

The third aspect of Rowley's analysis that I find problematic is that it is highly inclusive, to the point that if we follow it closely, we would have to say that all animated films are realistic in one way or another: in every film it is possible to find elements of realism, be it visual or social realism, realism of movement or realism of the image. The exhaustive taxonomy that Rowley creates is the result of the question he asks: What is realism? Though the characteristics of realism that he creates in the process of answering this question are highly useful for understanding the variety of forms through which realism can manifest itself in animation, they become an end in itself—a taxonomy for the sake of a taxonomy. I believe that the next question that must be asked, and that would help to understand the functioning of realism in animation is: What does realism do, and to what purpose does it work in animation? This question has the potential of addressing the issues of realism, not as a means of creating realism, and not as an end in itself[66] but as a means towards achieving certain goals that exceed the domain of animation, be it industrial, political, or aesthetic ones.

Fourth, Rowley's analysis does not distinguish between naturalism and realism and as a result he confuses the difference between the natural and cultural traits employed by animation.[67] For instance, the creation of animated landscapes for the purpose of producing a naturalistic environment for unrealistic narratives is a move towards naturalization of the image, but not a

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[66] Rowley, "Life Reproduced in Drawings," 79.
[67] Absence of this distinction is particularly important for understanding of the debates among the Soviet animation directors and critics who highly criticized naturalism, i.e., copying from nature, but who praised realism interpreted as bringing out the general, typical, and representative of a particular category of images (See more about this debate in Chapter 3.2.)

case of realism.[68] Likewise, studying the movements of animals and reproducing them as close to natural as possible—a practice at Disney's studio—or using rotoscoping[69] for reproducing human movement would be more characteristic of naturalism rather than realism.

However, what happens when the movement of objects that are not supposed to move is concerned? Animation appears at the time of intensified industrialization and fascination with the development of technology. The world in which technological innovations were multiplying with a speed unseen and unexperienced before was becoming a strange place for humans. One of the means of coping with the changing world of the newly emerging technological Other was to establish control over it, and make it speak, act and look in ways familiar to the human. In this regard, anthropomorphization of objects, especially of technologically advanced ones, in animated films, becomes one of its primary characteristics. As Erwin Panofsky points out, anthropomorphization of the characters on the screen in the early years of animation was not entirely specific to it—in film there was a rather similar tendency. He writes, "No object in creation [in animation], whether it be a house, a piano, a tree, or an alarm clock, lacks the faculty of organic, in fact anthropomorphic, movement, facial expression, and phonetic articulation. Incidentally, even in normal, 'realistic' films the inanimate object, provided that it is dynamizable, can play the role of the main character as do the ancient railroad engines in Buster Keaton's *The General* and *Niagara Falls*."[70] In the course of time, anthropomorphisation in the

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[68] On landscapes in animation, see Chris Pallant, ed., *Animated Landscapes History, Form and Function* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); David Whitley, *The Idea of Nature in Disney Animation: from Snow White to WALL-E* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012).

[69] Rotoscoping as an animation technique that involves creation of an animated image as a result of tracing the contours of a live-action footage. For more on rotoscoping, see, for instance, Joanna Bouldin, "Cadaver of the Real: Animation, Rotoscoping and the Politics of the Body," *Animation Journal* 12 (2004): 7-31; *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7.1 (2012)—the whole issue is on rotoscoping and the work by Bob Sabiston.

[70] Erwin Panofsky, "Style in Medium and the Motion Picture," in *Three Essays on Style* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 108.

live-action cinema becomes a trope reserved for more specific genres, which is not the case of animation, where it flourished as one of the primary devices characteristic of the medium.

At the heart of anthropomorphization is the practice of mimesis. The specificity of animated mimesis is that in animation, the non-animate and non-human objects, while preserving their conventional appearances, become animated through movements characteristic of humans. It is not surprising that in the jargon of Soviet animators there was a term "to play the character," which referred to the process of animating a character, creating a character's movement.[71] As Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston point it out, "Basically, the animator is the actor in animated films. He is many other things as well; however, in his efforts to communicate his ideas, acting becomes the most important device."[72]

In particular, the concept of mimesis is important for understanding industrial animation. Industrial animation at this period of its formation and early development was as far from the visual style of avant-garde animation/film as classical cinema was. During a short period of time, from the 1920s to the 1930s, it went through considerable changes: if in the 1920s it adhered to variety-show aesthetics with gags as its core, occupying a marginal niche in the moving image industry, by the end of the 1930s, starting with Disney's first feature-length animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), it made a claim for primary cinema theater time with its grand visual narrative that was based on visual realism stimulated by technological innovations implemented by Disney (as, for instance, the multi-plane camera and color).[73] However, if we focus only on this considerable visual transformation of animation, we overlook that throughout this period, animation was (and still remains) a technological medium whose style and aesthetics

[71] On animation of characters see, for instance, Fedor Khitruk, "Kto Takoi Animator?" [Who is Animator?], in *Professia—animator* (Moscow: Gaiatri, 2007), 77-80.
[72] Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (New York: Disney Editions, 1981), 18.
[73] On Disney's use of technology that was crucial to the specificity of animation development, see Part 1.

are closely connected with, if not sometimes determined by, the requirements of the technological spectacle: in order to demonstrate the technological innovations, animation employs aesthetic features that allow for the most favorable demonstration of contemporary technological advances.[74] From the technological point of view, animation is a field of visual special effects that amuse the audience by their novelty. Thus inclusion of specific episodes into a larger narrative is not necessarily justified by the narrative or is not of a narrative-disruptive subversive character but has a utilitarian purpose—to demonstrate a specific technological innovation.

The move to realism that animation demonstrated by the end of the 1930s is also connected with the change of its format from shorts to full-feature length. Placed in the same time slot position as the full-length live film, full-feature animated films had to mimic full-length live films; they had to correspond to the anticipations of their audiences and fulfill their genre expectations. Thus, unlike animated shorts that were screened before the main feature—live-action film—the full-length animated film became the main feature of a show. A fairy-tale with a solid continuous narrative and characters who could be easily recognized and identified with ensured capturing audiences' attention throughout the film. Such films could not only entertain audiences by making them laugh, but by bringing melodrama into the animated film, they offered an aisthetic, sensuous experience—they were moving them emotionally. Such films attracted audiences to cinema theaters and generated profits that enabled further technological development of animation.

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[74] One of the recent examples of such a use of film/animation technology can be found in *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015, director George Miller) whose narrative structure is built around and driven by a variety of spectacles—from natural, such as spectacle of water and wind, to cultural, such as spectacles of war and theater.

Thus, the key characteristics of the aesthetics of industrial animation that remained unchanged throughout the early decades of animation were, and in fact still are: it is mimetic in terms of the figures and the figure's movement, and in it is created as a movement of figures. Thus, in order to understand how the animated image functioned, we need to understand what mimesis is.

1.4.2   Mimesis and Animation

We can start with a broad interpretation of mimesis and see how mimesis manifests itself in different aspects of animation production. In a general sense, mimesis can be referred to as copying, a (re)production of something already existing, as imitation or creation in the image of something, as translation and interpretation. Each of these adjacent concepts has been discussed individually or as a part of the discussion of the mimetic faculty,[75] and each of them expands the boundaries of how mimesis can be interpreted and understood. The point of departure for the conversation about mimesis can be located as far back as Plato's myth of the cave from *The Republic*, and the opposition between ideas and their mere appearances. The idea of reproduction and creation in someone's image is also foundational for the Judaic and Christian myths of creating man in the image of God [Imago Dei], which immediately raises questions about the use of images—the ban on images in the Judaic tradition and their proliferation in Christianity.[76] The complex questions of regulation of mimetic practices—who can reproduce what, how, and for

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[75] The term "mimetic faculty" was coined by Walter Benjamin in his eponymous essay "On the Mimetic Faculty," in his *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Peter Demetz, [New York: Schocken, 1986], 333-36. See a brief discussion of Benjamin's take on mimesis below.

[76] For a more in-depth analysis, see Anthony Julius, *Idolizing Pictures: Idolatry, Iconoclasm and Jewish Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

what purposes—have been at the heart not only of poetic or artistic practices from their inception, but also of social practices since mimesis is deeply imbedded in them.

Probably the most influential interpretation of mimesis, especially in literary studies, comes from Erich Auerbach. According Auerbach, mimesis is an interpretation of reality through representation or "imitation."[77] Though Auerbach's study of mimesis focused on the interpretation of reality through the medium of language, he acknowledged that other media, film in particular, have a great capacity to interpret reality by their medium-specific means.[78]

Auerbach's take on mimesis as imitation has an affinity with Walter Benjamin's take on mimesis as translation. For Benjamin, mimesis in its ontogenetic sense is a process of learning, i.e., learning is revealed through a game of mimesis. Benjamin writes about children's ability for mimesis when they imitate not only other people, but also objects—he gives an example of a windmill and a train, which can become the objects of imitation for children.[79] Through this game of imitation, children learn about these objects, and simultaneously with learning, they create a new image of the object. In this situation, the mediated image that appears as a result of

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[77] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), ProQuest Ebook Central,
http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pitt-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1275328): 529.

[78] Auerbach also maintains that media influence each other, and change each other's approaches to representation of reality. He writes, "[By] virtue of the film's existence, the novel has come to be more clearly aware than ever before of the limitations in space and time imposed upon it by its instrument, language. As a result the situation has been reversed: the dramatic technique of the film now has far greater possibilities in the direction of condensing time and space than has the novel itself" (ibid., 522).

[79] Benjamin's connection of children's activity of mimesis or imitation seems to be directly related to Aristotle's understanding of the natural origins of poetry. For Aristotle, the ability to imitate is one of the fundamental human abilities. As Aristotle points out, "the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures; and through imitation he learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated" (S.H. Butcher, ed., *The Poetics of Aristotle*, [London: Macmillan, 1902], 15).

mimesis, is not a copy of reality but rather a product of creation in an attempt to explore and scrutinize reality.[80]

Several aspects of Benjamin's rendering of mimesis can be useful for our consideration of mimesis in animation. First, it presupposes mediation: he writes about rendering the world through the media of language and physical gestures, which are simultaneously acts of mediated translation of objects and of their relationships. Through naming or calling (language), and through imitating the shape or the movement of an object (bodily movements), we learn to understand real world objects, and how they exist and function. Thus, the very fact that mimesis is an act of mediation or translation from one system of signs, or from one ontological situation, or from one medium into another is crucial since it is through this act of mediation or intermedia translation that understanding is approached. Such a position is important for our understanding of the function of animation—animation as art creates the moving image from scratch, and the animated image is completely artificial, but concomitantly, precisely because of its artificiality, it has connections to both the natural and artistic: to naturalistic, recognizable movement and to the artistic practice that has been creating and reproducing movement for millennia. Animation translates natural phenomena, as well historically remote artistic works, into the language of moving images.

The second point of Benjamin's discussion of mimesis that I find important for understanding how animation works is that for Benjamin mimesis is a creative process. By learning about the world through mimesis—not only about the material world, but also about

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[80] Such rendering of Benjamin's take on mimes is without doubt is rather limiting: for Benjamin, any practice that translates the world into another language, be it a verbal language or a language of images, is mimetic (See Walter Benjamin "Doctrine of the Similar," trans. Knut Tarnowski, *New German Review*, no. 17 [Spring 1979]: 65-69; idem, "On the Mimetic Faculty," in his *Reflections*: *Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Peter Demetz [New York: Schocken, 1986], 333-36.)

social relations and norms—humans do not only understand how they function, but also are engaged in a creative process of producing these social relations and norms. Humans create and recreate objects and relationships, and give them a new life or new meaning. This does not only happen in situations of artistic mimesis, when objects or people are being recreated, i.e. in situations that for Plato would probably fall into the category of imitation. The whole technological progress of what is loosely called Western civilization is predicated on mimesis: all technological innovations have been created as extensions of the human,[81] and humans have creatively modified and adopted them. Thus at this point, humanity engages in both natural mimesis and technological mimesis, which, considering Benjamin's take on technology as a second nature, is an important way of to think about mimesis. Technological mimesis, as well as natural human mimesis, is a way to understand the world, or, in Ancient Greek terms, *poesis*—bringing forth.

Animation as a medium and art emerges as a creative way to mimetically reproduce the movement of living objects.[82] In the processes of its development, it dramatically evolved and diversified in terms the images it produces, as well as the technology of their production. Production of animation teaches a great deal of knowledge about the natural and technological worlds and their functioning; it is both a creative and educational practice.

A reading of Benjamin suggested by Michal Taussig, who interprets mimesis through the specificity of the field of cultural anthropology, points out other important aspects of mimesis highly relevant to the discussion of animation, in particular Soviet and German animation of the

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[81] Famously, Marshall McLuhan interpreted technology as an extension of man. For him, any human invention was the extension of the human body. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964). He, however, described development of the human society and psyche as a result of technological development, thus technology in his interpretation becomes the moving force for the process of civilization.

[82] All of the visual toys that are considered to be predecessors of animation, such as phenakistoscope, zoetrope and praxinoscope, were attempting to reproduce the movement of objects that can be found in nature.

1930s-1940s. Taussig emphasizes the importance of mimesis for cultural control and education. Considering mimesis as a social phenomenon, He problematizes the very division between the real and the mimetically reproduced worlds, pointing to their porous and reversible nature. According to him, our conception of the world depends as much on the mimetic practices employed by a society as social mimetic practices depend on the way the real world functions. As he points out, "Illusions thus serve the cause of belief, if not truth, thanks to the magical series of transfers between theater and reality held in place by mimetic art and the public secret. Mimesis sutures the real to the really made up—and no society exists otherwise."[83] The potentiality of mimesis to blur boundaries does not only manifest in the confluence of natural and social mimetic realities, but also in the interpenetration and contamination of the self and the other. Coming in contact with "the other" changes the self, and transforms its content, as well as has a potentiality for changing the other. Such changes, according to Taussig, are not necessarily or not only caused by transformation as a result of mutual influence, but also by gaining control over the other through the means of mimesis. Such control is exercised through a two-fold practice. On the one hand, the self, through imitating "the other" (and here, indubitably, the self and "the other" are reciprocally relative concepts), obtains the ability to communicate to "the other," as a result of which the self, if it is in the power position, can communicate to the other and control them and their actions. On the other hand, "the other", through mimetic learning, reproduces the norms established by the self. As Taussig points out, "Control and education comes about by judicious blending of these two realities, moving one into the other and thereby creating new behaviors and understandings."[84] The latter quality of mimesis seems to be especially potent for understanding the ways the politics of animation functioned in Germany

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[83] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 86.
[84] Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity,* 77.

and the Soviet Union—by controlling the animated images through sponsorship and censorship, the both governments controlled the ideological message of the animated films produced in their countries. Chapters 3 and 5 that focus on German animation will discuss how the establishment of meaning through the animated imagery is consistent with the state ideologies. But Taussig's interpretation of mimesis is also important for understanding production of animated images and their aesthetic characteristics: Soviet and German animation, by imitating Disneyan animation production method, also imitated Disneyan aesthetics, but only at a particular time period, and to a particular degree. The period during which Disneyan aesthetics became the model for imitation was a period of understanding and learning the technology of production and gaining control over it. It was a period of establishing animation industries which, due to governmental sponsorship, and the specificity of governmental demands, had a grandiose and ambitious scale—the same scale any other industrial, scientific, or cultural enterprises and projects established and conceived in those countries at the time had.[85]

However, it would be erroneous to claim that the only type of mimesis used in industrial animation is cultural or technological mimesis. In its relationship to reality, animation exists as a tension and in an oscillation between various mimetic positions,[86] such as mimesis of the natural, and mimesis of the ideal; between realistic and fantastic; between classicism, and

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[85] Here I refer not only to construction of grand industrial s and power plants in the Soviet Union, but also to such architectural projects as Albert Speer's rebuilding of Berlin, or to scientific projects such as construction of the atomic bomb.

[86] An interesting approach to the aesthetic of cel animation can be found in Casey Riffle's article "Dissecting Bambi: Multiplanar Photography, the Cel Technique, and the Flowering of Full Animation," *Velvet Light Trap,* 69 (Spring 2012): 3-16. He considers cel animation as a system of gaps "between the foreground and the background, between photography and painting, between 'nature' and 'artifice'" which is realized through the problem of "the tenuous negotiation and erasure of these gaps by technological and aesthetic strategies" (3). And though I overall disagree with such an approach towards cel animation. I think it is much more productive to think of these oppositions as positions that animation, including Disneyan animation, is constantly negotiating in a dialectical way, and that animation never erases these gaps but rather works with these positions. I think the very articulation of these opposing positions of animation is important for understanding the specificity of cel animation functioning, and its aesthetic vectors.

allegory and grotesque. As a result of these tensions, most of the created imagery is, on the one hand, recognizable, but on the other hand, it constantly exceeds the horizons of the familiar and what is conventionally accepted as realistic. Moreover, the drawn animated image cannot exist any other way—because of its conventionality, and the specificity of the movement of a drawn character, it does not copy nature—it has to deal with generalizations, or, in other words, with ideas.[87] The extremes of these tensions create two tendencies that the animated image can be directed towards in terms of its relationship to the reality: the tendency towards realism, and the tendency towards abstraction. The former tendency is currently being realized by the digital animation for which the quality of the image is determined by its indistinguishability from a photographic or even (considering the possibilities of 3D) a live image. The latter is the tendency towards abstraction, which is best represented by creation of movement of colors or shapes.

1.4.3   Realism Disney Style

The history of Disney animation from the first Mickey Mouse films from the late 1920s and to the release of *Bambi* in 1942[88] shows a clear tendency towards realism. The turning point towards a more realistic style can be already seen in *Silly Symphonies* shorts, many of which were the site for experiments with technological innovations, which ended up being used in the first full-length animated feature *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In particular, one of the tasks of multiplane camera developed by the Walt Disney Studios was to create an illusion of a consistent and realistic environment when an object moves into the depth of the shot. However,

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[87] Even in the technique of rotoscoping that strived to reproduce the movement of living objects, the reproduced movement was always a technological and cultural translation of the movement existing in the reality.
[88] I consider only this period of Disney animation because due to the timing of establishing Soviet and German industrial animation productions it was most influential. For instance, for most Soviet animators, it was *Bambi* that became the most formative animated film that influenced their animation style.

there is more to Disneyan aesthetics, from Mickey Mouse, to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and then to *Bambi,* that has to be explicated in order to understand why it was so attractive that Soviet and German animation wanted to imitate it. Mickey Mouse was a truly international star of his time; Disney's shorts starring Mickey Mouse were an instant hit in many countries. The author of a 1935 article in *Stage*, Katharine Best, was not exaggerating when she was stating that Mickey Mouse "and his less articulate imitators have brought Japanese and Chinese, Abyssinian and Italian, Norse and Nazi together on what is perhaps their only common ground—laughter."[89] In late 1920s—early 1930s, Europe was fascinated with Disney's films. As Esther Leslie points out, in 1929, Mickey Mouse's shorts were shown in film programs together with Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin.*[90]

However, even if Katharine Best was right that it was laughter that united audiences of different countries in their love to Mickey Mouse, there seemed to be much more to the image of Mickey Mouse that made it so popular. Eisenstein, in his unfinished notes on Disney (published posthumously), develops a theory of animation considering Mickey Mouse as an epitome of the possibilities of the medium of animation. The key term that Eisenstein introduces in order to think about the animation's potential is plasmaticness, and for him it is the plasmatic potential of animation that Disney used when creating his character is what made Mickey Mouse popular with different audiences. Plasmaticness can be broadly defined as an ability of a figure to constantly transform, to be in a constant flux. Eisenstein explains the choice of this particular term in the following way: "here we have a being represented in drawing, a being of a definite form, a being which has attained a definite appearance, and which behaves like the primal protoplasm, not yet possessing a 'stable' form, but capable of assuming any form and which,

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[89] Katherina Best, "Maestro Mickey," *Stage* (April 1935), accessed at www.http:oldmagazinearticles.com.
[90] See Esther Leslie, *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 2002).

skipping along the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, attaches itself to any and all forms of animal existence."[91] For Eisenstein, plasmaticness is an overcoming of the image or form of a visual object that, on the one hand, is capable of capturing and rendering the state of exceeding oneself, the state of ecstasy, and on the other, is experienced by spectators leading them to the state of ecstasy. Thus, by watching an image transforming and changing in a way that exceeds its own limitations and boundaries, the spectators are also capable to exceed their limitations and boundaries, and transcend themselves. As Eisenstein writes about the experience of watching Disney's films, "Truly, all ages—from children to the elderly, all nationalities, all races and all types of social systems are intoxicated by him with the same delight, surrender with the same fervour to his charm, with the same ecstasy allow themselves to be carried away by Disney's living drawings (animated cartoons)."[92]

Such overcoming of the image or form does not result in formless,[93] but rather it results in creation of an image that draws on phenomena that have "poly-formic capabilities," such as fire, water, music, etc., i.e., such images have a potential for creating multiple forms. However, this potential displayed by the early version of the image of Mickey Mouse quickly fades away, giving way to well-shaped unambiguous figures of Disney's family of characters. Mickey starts impersonating qualities of a positive character leaving all the negative or potentially ambiguous characteristics to other characters, such as Donald Duck.[94]

Compared to images in Mickey Mouse shorts, the images in Disney full-length feature films are predicated upon increasingly realistic depiction of nature and humans, and an increased

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[91] Sergei Eisenstein, *On Disney* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1986), 5.

[92] Ibid., 6.

[93] Here I argue against Karen Beckmann's suggestion that plasmaticness as described by Eisenstein is the ground for the formless. See the introduction to *Animating Film Theory*, ed. Karen Beckman (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2014) 31.

[94] For more on transformation of the characters in Disney, see Leonard Maltin *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons* (New York: New American Library, 1987), in particular 37.

dramatic pathos that demonstrates an ambition to be more than a spectacle of entertainment and laughter but rather a dramatic form that affects audiences and creates catharsis. Thus, Disney's transition from animated shorts to feature-length films was not only connected with introduction of new characters—for instance, human characters appear in Disney's full-length feature films for the first time—but also dealing with new genres, such as fairy-tales, and moving to a new level of (melo)dramatization of animation.

Though both German and Soviet governments strived to achieve Disney's success in animation production and declared that they are aiming to adapt Disney's style, the actual situation was much more controversial and complex. Soviet animation industry was aiming at reproducing success of Disney animation, but was exploring the potential of Disneyan animation for creation of original imagery, whereas German animation was more interested in imitating Disney's aesthetics assuming that that in and of itself will make German animation successful.[95]

1.5   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

This project is significant for the fields of media studies, film studies, and cultural studies for a number of reasons. Firstly, it contributes to understanding relationships between politics and aesthetics of the animated image, and their connections with technology, which is one of the central questions in media and cultural studies. The theoretical apparatus that the junction of politics, aesthetics and technology creates, and that I developed in my project, will be potentially usable for studying other media phenomena. This junction is also important for cultural studies

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[95] More on the relationship between Soviet and German industrial animation see Chapters 4 and 5.

since its understanding reveals the work of ideology and propaganda, how media participate in it, and how they translate it in their products. Secondly, it contributes to the field of film and animation studies. Many scholars of animation point out that for many decades animation was neglected by academic scholarship for a variety of reasons. If live action film has been considered a way of learning and teaching about reality[96] and even, as Stanley Cavell and Gilles Deleuze[97] pointed out, a specific way of philosophical thinking, animation has been left out of these considerations.[98] This can be partly explained by the differences in cultural significance of animation and live action film, and their presence in the cultural sphere—if the photographic film is widely recognized as a mainstream type of a cultural phenomenon, the animated film has been marginalized through various means: production, distribution, and, not least in importance, attention to it from scholars. However, in the 1930s, celluloid animation was an avant-garde of cinematic technology and, studying celluloid animation and its development on the path to becoming a dominant industrial technology can contribute to understanding the development of film culture in general, and also the development of film culture in particular, such as the political and economic conditions that existed in Germany and the Soviet Union. With animation's increasing current-day and often unacknowledged presence in supposed "live-action" films, this excavation of animation's early industrial history will become in the foreseeable future ever more significant as a prehistory of contemporary practices.

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[96] Cinema started as a means for investigating nature (e.g. Maybridge's, Murray's experiments). With the advance of feature films, cinema became a means for representing and exploring human psychology, human relationships, and bigger scale social phenomena.

[97] For more on that, for instance, see Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), and D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

[98] Very few works, such as Sergei Eisenstein's notes on Disney (Sergei Eisenstein, *On Disney* [Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1986]), and Walter Benjamin's notes on Mickey Mouse ("Mickey Mouse," in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008]: 338-339) are an exception.

Thirdly, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of the history and cultures of national animations in Germany and the Soviet Union and will help to fill in factual gaps of the understudied period of animation of 1930-1940, which is important for understanding the cultural legacy of the period. Additionally, by considering the animation industries of Germany and Soviet Union, and their connections with American animation, I establish the international connections between animated cinemas as they developed.

Since the area of my research remains considerably understudied, this project, for the first time, undertakes a comparative analysis of German and Soviet animation in 1930-40s; focuses on industrial animation in Germany and the Soviet Union of the period; and analyzes specific German and Soviet non-commercial cel animated films of the period.[99]

1.6   CHAPTER REVIEW

The dissertation chapters unfold through two comparative dyads: Soviet and German politics and Soviet and German aesthetics, with the chapters on politics setting the groundwork for the analysis of aesthetics. Within each dyad, the chapters follow the chronology by which the animation industries in the Soviet Union and Germany were established—first Soviet and then German.

Chapters Two and Three analyze the general political context in which the countries' animation industries started to develop, as well as how the political situation characteristic of the

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[99] The only other analysis of the German animated films has been done by William Moritz, "Resistance and Subversion in Animated Films of the Nazi era: The Case of Hans Fischerkoesen." [In *A Reader in Animation Studies*, Edited by Jayne Pilling. (Sydney: J. Libbey, 1997]: 228-240), however his focus was on Fischerkoesen who produced his non-commercial films outside of industrial system.

time of the film production manifested itself in the imagery of particular films. Chapter Two focuses on Soviet animation. It traces the political historical trajectory of animation development from animation aimed at agitation to animation's engagement in propaganda. It also demonstrates the shift from animation oriented towards entertainment that was characteristic of the 1930s and animation production that was dominated by the ideas of education specific to Soviet animation starting from the late 1930s-early 1940s. This chapter closely analyses the animated film *Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh attractsionakh* [Cinema Circus: Animated Satire in Three Attaractions] (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, dir.-s Leonid Almarik and Olga Khodataeva, 1942), an anti-Nazi animated satire, and raises questions about satire, the grotesque, and caricature in Soviet animation. The analyzed film is also considered from the perspective of its intermediality—it incorporates the tropes of both circus and early cinema to create a vaudeville-style animated performance. Chapter Three examines the politics of German animation of the Nazi period. It deals with such political issues that informed development of German animation as the merger of romanticism and technology characteristic of the Nazi cultural stance, the emphasis on the Volk and Gemeinschaft, the construction of the Lebensraum, and the political theory based on the friend/enemy relationship. I use this conceptual framework for understanding the political basis of the film under analysis, *Der Störenfried* [The Troublemaker] (Bavaria, dir. Hans Held, 1940).

Chapters Four and Five focus on the aesthetic aspects of the animated films produced in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany in the 1930s-1940s and on how the choice of the imagery, characters and genre in the animated films was indicative of the processes taking place in the cultural spheres in both countries with their official anti-modernist and pro-realist regulations. Chapter Four focuses on the beginnings of Soviet industrial animation and examines the

transition from the artisanal mode of animation production, with its multiplicity of animation styles, to the foundation of the animation studio Soizmul'tfil'm (founded in 1936), where the cel becomes the sole technique used in animation production. The chapter reconstructs the discourse on animation that was burgeoning at the time and explores how animation artists developed various aesthetic strategies to correspond to the requirements of the artistic method of socialist realism. The case-study of the chapter, the first feature-length animated film produced in the Soviet Union, *Konyok Gorbunok* [The Humpbacked Horse] (Soiuzmul'tfil'm, dir. Ivan Ivanov-Vano, 1947) is approached as an intermedial visual text that, in order to create an original animated imagery, utilized multiple visual resources, including those of traditional and modernist Russian art, as well as the avant-garde elements of Disney animation. Chapter Five focuses on the aesthetics of Nazi animation. It presents a history of Deusche Zeichenfilm GmbH (founded in 1941), the animation studio generously sponsored by the Nazi government, which aspired to become the major producer and distributor of animation in Europe. The studio attempted to utilize Disneyan aesthetics, and *Armer Hansi* [Poor Hansi] (DZF, dir. Frank Leberecht, 1943), the only film completed by the studio, is analyzed in the chapter as an adaptation of Disneyan aesthetics to the Nazi aesthetics system based on the category of purity. The analysis also reveals the connections between *Armer Hansi* and the German cinematic tradition, in particular the genres of Heimatfilm and "genius" film, which the animated film utilizes and reinterprets.

2.0 THE POLITICS OF SOVIET ANIMATION FROM AGITATION, THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT, TO NATIONALISM

Addressed to the millions of people, Soviet Art is, both in its form and its social implications, a most important means of education, one of the ways raising the cultural level of the masses of the population.[1]

"Of all arts, the most important one for us is cinema."[2]

Art has an ability not only to orient but also to form. It is not only about an artist showing to his whole class what the world is now, but also about helping to figure out the reality, and helping to cultivate a new person. That is why he [artist] wants to speed up development of reality, and he can artistically create such an ideological center that would be above this reality, that would bring the reality up, that would allow for looking into the future, and by doing this, he would increase the speed [of reality development].[3]

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[1] "Soviet Culture in a New Five Year Plan," in *VOKS Bulletin* 5/6 (1946): 11.

[2] This famous line comes from Grigorii Bolotnianskii's account of Lenin's conversation on cinema with Anatoliy Lunacharskiy, People's Commissar for Education, that was published in his 1925 book *Lenin and Cinema* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925: 16-19). On a variety of interpretations of this citation see, for instance, *Kremlevskii kinoteat: 1928-1953: Dokumenty*, ed. K.M. Anderson and L.V. Maksimenkov (Moscow: ROSSPAN, 2005), 15-17.

[3] Anatoli Lunacharskii, "Sotsialisticheskii Realizm (Doklad)," speech delivered at the Second Meeting of the Organizing Committee of the Union of Writers of the USSR, February 12, 1933. The internet publication is a reprint

Starting from its inception and up to the end of the 1940s, the political orientation of Soviet animation saw dramatic shifts that went along with the general changes in Soviet cultural politics. If at the time when it emerged in the first half of the 1920s, Soviet animation was overtly political and agitational, by the end of the 1940s, with the establishment of the major animation studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm, and with settling into the aesthetics of socialist realism, and focusing on children audiences, it became more propagandistic and moralizing. However, as with other arts, and maybe even more so due to the novelty of the medium of animation, the political situation with animation was changing very rapidly and non-linearly—and, at times, different and contradictory tendencies were simultaneously motivating animation production. This chapter deals with these political tendencies and describes the processes that early Soviet animation went through before the establishment of the style of grand narratives in animation in the 1950s. The topics central to the chapter are 1) the engagement of animation in agitation and propaganda, 2) its changing relationship with entertainment, 3) the response of animation to the development of the national idea in the Soviet Union, and 4) the establishment of animation as a children's medium.

2.1 SOVIET ANIMATION AS A POLITICAL ART: ANIMATED CONTEXTS AND CONTENTS

2.1.1 Soviet Animation: From Agitation to Propaganda

Drawn animation initially developed in the Soviet Union as a supplementary medium for cinema—it was supposed to deal with images that could not be created by photographic means. Most often, animation at the initial state of its development was used for intertitles in live-action films, sequences in cultural films [*kul'urfil'mas*][4] and newsreels that featured statistical graphs or processes impossible to film,[5] and commercials, among others. As formulated by a contributor to *Kino-Gazeta* identified as G.D., "Animation [mul'tiplikatornaia s'emka] is used by cultural cinema as the most persuasive method of expressing the thought on the screen. It is used, for instance, for transmitting statistical data through animation of a dry number with lively expressive figures that open up the dry material."[6] Thus from its inception, animation acquired the status of a servant to live cinema—it aided cinema in illustrating, explaining, and demonstrating things and ideas that were otherwise difficult to represent. This function of

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[4] I write about cultural films (kul'turfil'mas) in more detail elsewhere (article "Rise and Fall of Soviet Kul'turfil'ma: A Brief History of the Term and Idea," accepted at *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*). Also, for another historical account of cultural films, see Oksana Sarkisova, *Screening Soviet Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017); and "The Adventures of the Kulturfilm in Soviet Russia," in *A Companion to Russian Cinema*, ed. Birgit Beumers (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 92-116.
[5] Among multiple examples of drawn representations of phenomena and processes that do not yield photographing are, for instance, graphic animated inserts used by Dziga Vertov's *Kino-Nedelia*, the earliest of which was an animated map showing the development of events in the Eastern Front (*Kino-Nedelia* 20 [1918]), or animated representation of the work of the nervous system in *Mechanics of the Brain* (1926, director Vsevolod Pudovkin).
[6] G.D. "Technika Mul'tiplikatsii I Mikros'emki," *Kino* 13.93 (16 June 1925).

demonstration and explanation was later[7] transferred to the new goals of animation—propaganda, edification, and entertainment.

Animation for live-action films was produced by small animation departments, which were integral parts of film studios. Similarly to animated inserts and intertitles, the first complete animated films were also produced as a part of bigger live-cinema projects and newsreels, but contrary to the above examples of animation, they were complete cinematic pieces, and could be screened independently. The first studio that included animated films in its nomenclature as a subgenre was the studio *Kul'tkino*, which specialized in production of *kul'turfil'mas*. This studio was organized as a part of the Central State Film Enterprise Goskino in 1924 and remained under its auspices until 1926, when it merged with *Sovkino*, a larger film production and distribution association. According to the Soviet historian of cinema Nikolai Lebedev, among the sub-genres that *Kul'tkino* claimed as its specialties was the "satirical animated short" [mul'tiplikatsionnye sharzhi],[8] several of which were produced by pioneers of Soviet animation Dziga Vertov and Alexandr Bushkin.

Vertov was one of the first film directors to use animated sequences in his newsreels *Kino-Nedelia* and *Kino-Pravda* for the purpose of representing phenomena unrepresentable by photographic means, and the first director to produce, together with Alexandr Bushkin as animator, the first animated sequences that could be singled out and screened independently as

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[7] It is important to point out that the events discussed in this chapter were happening very rapidly. If the first moving drawings in live-action fictional and educational films supposedly appeared in 1923, by 1925, when *The Interplanetary Revolution* (*Mezhplanetnaia revoliutsiia*, 1924, directors Z. Komisarenko, Iu. Merkulov, N. Khodataev) was released, the point of view on animation already started shifting towards seeing it as a medium capable of producing complete films.

[8] Nikolai Lebedev, "Kulturfilma na zapade i u nas. Glavy iz neizdannoi knigi" [Kulturfilm in the West and in our Country: Chapter from an Unpublished Book] *Kinovedcheskie Zapiski* 58 (2002), 393.

complete animated films.[9] Bushkin, who went on to produce his own animated shorts, continued Vertov's trend in animation: film-posters that dealt with particular political issues and were engaged in ideological agitation. For Vertov, production of political agitational shorts was a practical implementation of his theoretical approach to art—he did not differentiate art from other human activities connected with production. In 1924, the same year his first animated shorts were released, Vertov very clearly articulated his attitude to the term 'art' in his "Answer to five questions." He wrote, "The term 'art' is in its essence counterrevolutionary as it backs up the whole cast of privileged people who imagine themselves to be not people but magicians of this very 'art.' 'Inspiration' or, more precisely, enthusiasm for work is intrinsic not only to these 'magi,' but also to any worker at a construction site, any locomotive driver, any turner at a machine-tool. By eliminating once and forever the term 'art' we cannot, of course, present it in a different form, let's say as 'artistic labor.' We should finally determine that there is no border **between artistic and non-artistic labor.**"[10] Vertov's position on art as an activity that does not have an aesthetic function but rather is one of many existing means of production—which in his case was production of a political message—to a large extent determined his style in animation: his animated films are straightforward political statements with very clear political messages.

Of all the films produced by Vertov and Bushkin, and Bushkin independently as a director, only one, *Soviet Toys*[11] (1924) has survived in its entirety. However, descriptions of

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[9] For more on Vertov's contribution to animation, see Alexandr Deriabin, "Vertov I animatsia: Roman kotorogo ne bylo" [Vertov and Animation: An Affair that Was Not], *Kinovedcheskie Zapiski* 52 (2001): 132-44; Lora Wheeler Mjolsness, "Dziga Vertov's Soviet Toys: Commerce, Commercialization and Cartoons," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 2.3 (2008): 247-67; and Mihaela Mikailova and John Mackay,"Frame Shot: Vertov's Ideologies of Animation," in *Animating Film Theory*, ed. Karen Beckman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 145-166.
[10] Vertov, Dziga, *Iz naslediya. V.2 Stat'i i vystupleniya* (Moscow: Eisenstein-Zentr, 2008), 60-61, Vertov's emphasis.
[11] A curious fact about the film is that the article from *Kino Gazeta* that describes the process of film production does not mention either Vertov or Bushkin but instead talks solely about "artist Ivanov," i.e. Alexander Ivanov who

other films are available. *Soviet Toys* is an anti-bourgeoisie satire which symbolically represents the fight of Soviet peasants and workers, supported by the Red Army, against Russian bourgeoisie. *Humoresques* (directed by Vertov, 1924) consisted of three parts—*Grimasy Parizha* [Paris' Grimaces], *Chervonets*, and *Poincaré*—and was an animated political caricature. *Istoria odnogo razocharovania (Boris Savinkov)* [History of one disappointment (Boris Savinkov)] (directed by Bushkin, 1924), was a political satire about men'shevik Boris Savinkov. *Germanskie dela I delishki* [German Big and Small Deeds] (directed by Bushkin, 1924) was a film-poster about the election in the German Reichstag and the attack on the Soviet trade agency.[12] These descriptions of the contents of the films clearly speak about their agitational nature: each of them deals with one political issue and aims at forming a particular political stance towards it. Agitation was a general trend of early Soviet animation. However, animated agitation had its own specificity—it was satirical in nature and aimed at persuasion through creating negative images of the enemy. As [Alexandr] Filimonov[13] points out, "From the very beginning, in the world of animation, all the directors without exception were striving for one-act scenarios on political jokes."[14] Very soon, however, it changed to more complex forms that operated along the lines of propaganda.

Many scholars do not differentiate between agitation and propaganda in early Soviet media products, especially when it comes to moving images. As Richard Taylor points out, "The distinction between agitation and propaganda is not normally made in English.... The reader should, however, be aware of its existence in the Russian language and in Soviet theory. In

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also participated in the production, and like Bushkin, later went on to direct his own animated films up to his death in 1959 (Novitskii, "Zhivye risunki," *Kino Gazeta* 12.28 [18 March 1924]).

[12] The descriptions of the films that did not survive are translated from the official website for Russian animation, animator.ru.

[13] Alexandr Filimonov was a Soviet script writer who worked on live-action, scientific-popular and animated films.

[14] 2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god [Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning on 1934], 25 December 1933, RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 83, 2.

practice the distinction is difficult to maintain, and not particularly useful when it can be maintained. It was clearly agitation rather than propaganda, to use their own terminology, that the Bolsheviks required in the aftermath of the October Revolution and in the early years of Soviet power. The *agitki* (short agitational films) of the Civil War were clearly agitational rather than propagandistic but, as the 1920s wore on and the Soviet cinema began to be organized on a more permanent basis, the distinction becomes less clear."[15] However, the distinction between agitation and propaganda is helpful for understanding the genealogy of Soviet animation as an independent medium: its development went from agitational shorts to more complex narratives that in the frames of this categorization correspond to propaganda.

The distinction between agitation and propaganda was introduced by Georgii Plekhanov and developed by Lenin in *What is to be done?* According to this division, agitation is the presentation of one or a few ideas, whereas propaganda is the presentation of many ideas on a subject. As Lenin explained this theses in *What is to be done?*, "The propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the cause of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present 'many ideas, so many, indeed, that they will be widely understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and widely known to his audience, say, the death of an unemployed worker's family from starvation, the growth of impoverishment, etc., and, utilising this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting a single idea to the 'masses', e.g. the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty; he will strive to rouse discontent and indignation

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[15] Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, 2nd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 29.

among the masses against this crying injustice, leaving a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist."[16] Thus, according to this distinction, propaganda creates a complex narrative about a phenomenon or an issue, whereas agitation aims at achieving persuasion through focusing on one aspect of a phenomenon or an issue, and presenting this aspect in such a way that would evoke an affective response. The first animated shorts were moving caricatures giving audiences grotesque depictions of the bourgeoisie that presented it in a ludicrous way, arousing laughter, and thus bringing the point across. The shorts conveyed one idea and provided substantial examples of it; in this sense they were purely agitational.

Soon, however, animation started engaging with other topics and exploring other approaches that considerably widened its repertoire, which resulted in the necessity to view animation's tasks in a more complex way. A group of animators that started its work at GTK [State Vocation School of Cinematography] in 1923 provides a good illustration of such an expansion of animation tasks.

This group initially consisted of Nikolai Khodataiev, Olga Khodataieva, Zenon Komissarenko, and Iurii Merkulov, but in 1924 was joined by Ivan Ivanov-Vano and Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg.[17] All of the members of the group were former students of VKhuTeMas (Higher Art and Technical Studios) where they studied under different famous Russian Soviet artists including Leontii Benua, Konstantin Korovin, and others.[18] The group's first project was production of animated inserts into the live-action adaptation of Alexei Tolstoi's novel *Aelita* directed by Iakov Protazanov (1924). The group responded to a call for set designers and created sketches that they thought could be used in the film. However, Protazanov did not express much

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[16] Cited in Taylor, *Film Propaganda*, 28-9.
[17] Web-site of VGIK, http://www.vgik.info/teaching/animation/; Script to the documentary film *Mir Animatsii* [World of Animation] #11, RGALI, fund 3192, inventory 6, item 1959.
[18] Script to the documentary film *Mir Animatsii* [World of Animation] #11, 3192/6/1959.

interest in animation, and the group decided to create an alternative adaptation of *Aelita*, fully animated.[19] The film was called *Mezhplanetnaia Revoliutsia* [The Interplanetary Revolution] and was completed in 1924. It featured a variety of styles and techniques—caricature, landscape, portrait, poster—a result of different artists, with different stylistic specialties, working on it production, but the dominant aesthetic was that of caricature. The film was financed with the money prize that Khodataiev had won at a sculpture contest.[20] The next projects of the group were animated film-posters *1905-1925* (1925) and *Kitai v Ogne* [China in Flames] (1925). All the first three films can be categorized as agitational films film-posters. In fact, one of very few articles about early Soviet animation "Zadachi mul'tiplikatsii v kino" by O. Kuz'ma praised these them, as well as other film-posters produced by the group, such as *Mopr* [International Red Aid][21] and *Kak Avdot'ia stala gramotnoi* [How Avdotia became literate] (1925), as model agitational film-posters, production of which, according to the author, had to be increased for the purposes of enlightenment of the population of rural areas. Pointing out the films' success with workers and Komsomol members' audiences, Kuz'ma writes, "In the area of rural cinema, drawn *kino-agitki* are capable of speeding up and implementing a whole range of crucial agitational campaigns, most important of which are liquidation of illiteracy, anti-religious, agricultural, medical sanitary propaganda, and the struggle for a new way of life, for strengthening and implementation of the sprouts of new cultural forms of the emerging way of living [*byt*]."[22]

After completing several films, the group stopped functioning as a permanent production collective, and its members went on to work at different film studios and started different

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[19] Sergei Asenin, *Mudrost' vymysla* [Wisdom of Make-Believe], 192-193.

[20] Documentary film *Mir Animatsii* [World of Animation], #12, Script, RGALI, fund 3192, inventory 6, item 1960, 14. This story is also mentioned by Irina Grashchenkova, *Kinoantropologia XX/20* (Moscow: Chelovek, 2014).

[21] No additional information about this film has been found.

[22] O. Kuz'ma "Zadachi mul'tiplikatsii v kino" [The Tasks of Animation in Cinema], *Sovetskoie kino: Ezhemesiachnyi organ khudozhestvennogo soveta po delam kino* 2-3 (May-June 1925), qt. 58, 56-60.

projects on which they worked separately or with other animators. These later projects demonstrate that topics in animation started varying considerably. If Khodataiev, who worked at *Soiuzkino*,[23] continued the agitational trend with his films *Kak Murzilka Nauchilsia Pravil'no Pisat' Adresa* [How Murzilka Learned to Write Correct Addresses] (1926), *Budem zorki* [Let Us Be Vigilant] (1927), *Groznyi Vavila i tetka Arina* [Terrible Vavila and Aunt Arina] (1928), such members of the group as the Brumberg sisters and Ivan Ivanov-Vano, who worked at Mezhrabpom, started engaging less overtly political topics. In the late 1920s, they tried their hand at different genres, such as a comic animated short based on gags—*Katok* [Skating Rink] (1928, director Youry Zheliabuzhsky; Ivanov-Vano was one of the artists who created the imagery of the film); poem adaptation—*Black and White* (1932, directors Ivan Ivanov-Vano and Leonid Amal'rik); *Tsar Durandai* (1934, directors Ivan Ivanov-Vano, Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg); *Strekoza i murovei* [The Dragonfly and the Ant] (1935, directors Ivan Ivanov-Vano, Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg), and others. Diversification of genres showed a new tendency in Soviet animation to produce films with different thematics, including the ones that were aimed less at concrete political issues, but were more concerned with general political enlightenment, i.e. popularization of Soviet ideology, and had a social function of edification. These films were a means of indirect propaganda; production of such films strengthened position of animation in the Soviet Union as an art that had a social value.

Appearance of seemingly non-political topics was a general trend in Soviet animation at the end of the 1920s, which was indicative of several developments discussed in this chapter, one of which was a change in the politics of agitation and propaganda. Animation, as well as other

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[23] See detailed lists of animators working at different studios in G.K. Elizarov, "'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' (Biografiia Tvorcheskogo Kollektiva)." *In Soviet Animation: Handbook* (Moscow: Committee on Cinematography, Council of Ministers of the USSR, State Film Fund, 1966), 2-3.

popular arts, was moving away from being a political art in Benjaminian sense, i.e. an art of a direct political statement, towards more classical narratives and imagery. According to this new tendency, direct agitation was criticized as ineffective. As Viktor Smirnov[24] formulated it in his speech at a meeting, "We only know how to agitate bluntly. We cannot agitate artistically, we should learn how to do it from the artist Disney who has in his animated films a particular social message. But he presents this social message in such a way that one draws it from the animated film, without noticing it, and leaving [the theater] one agrees and solidarizes with the artist Disney. As for us, we agitate so that if something is not the way we want it to be—we will punch you."[25]

Blunt agitation was also criticized later by Semen Ginsburg but for reasons other than those given by Smirnov. In his book, Ginsburg, paradoxically, connected agitational films with entertainment for the purposes of entertainment. Ginsburg contends,

The theory of agitational-propagandistic film [agitpropfil'm][26] that in its essence liquidated art and reduced it to a superficial illustration of the current political slogans, was more harmful for animation than live-action cinema. In 1930-1933, very few drawn feature films were produced, whereas the majority of animated films had very narrow agitational tasks that could be, as a rule, solved outside of artistic means. The means of animation were used in order to agitate for building roads and development of automobiles (*Avtodorets*), for liquidation of problems with railway transport (*Parovoz,*

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[24] Viktor Smirnov was the head of the Soviet experimental animation studio that started production of animated films using celluloid and conveyer method, which eventually became the foundation for the major Soviet animation studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm. More on Smirnov and his studio see in Chapter 4.

[25] 2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god [Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning on 1934], 25 December 1933, RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 83, 81.

[26] The term "agitprop" comes from the name of a Department of Propaganda and Agitation at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR (the name itself changed several times over the years) and refers to any artistic and cultural work that had an overt ideological and political message. During the Stalin period, the term started being used with a derogatory meaning, as an opposition to the works of art and media that had artistic value.

leti vpered [Steamer, Fly Ahead]), to prove advantages of tractors over horses (*Skaz pro konia khudogo i konia stal'nogo* [*Tale about a Skinny Horse and a Steel Horse*]), explain the current international situation and to call for engaging in shooting sport (*Nash otvet papam rimskim* [*Our Response to Popes*]), and so on and so forth. All these and many other equally important topics were reflected in films purely superficially, the material for the films did not go through artistic mediation, and the audiences were offered badly drawn caricatures and illustrations to the current newspaper information. The animators tried to alternate the dull didactics of the straightforwardly interpreted agitational task with animated tricks that had nothing to do with the topic and the only purpose of which was to entertain the audience.[27]

Apart from the fact that Ginsburg's evaluation of agitational animation is consistent with the general discourse of criticism of formalism, as well as Vertov's anti-artistic stance, this passage has an interesting insight into the functioning of agitational animated films. Ginsburg's description of such films as a combination of a political message with tricks is analogous to how agitational theater performances of the late 1910s-early 1920s could be described: they consisted of short attractions (acts), with a clear political message, and they captured audiences' attention through a kind of a physical act, for instance, creating a human pyramid. Ginsburg's attack on agitational animation is a part of a general attack on a direct political statement presented by the means of animation, and a tendency to create more artistic or aesthetically pleasing cultural products. Everything had to become art.

However, the new tendency towards indirect propaganda presupposed a different format of animated films: they required more complex topics and narratives that needed more screen

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[27] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 123.

time for their development. This conflicted with a wide-spread notion that animated films had to be short, and that longer animated films would be too tiresome to watch.[28] The difficulty of balancing an indirect political message with a short format was presented by Smirnov in a form of an anecdote that he included into his speech at a 1933 All-Union meeting on thematic planning in animation.

> Regarding the political load [politnagruzka]. Those of the comrades who worked in cinema in 1930-1931 remember the fundamental argument about one technical film. I am not making a direct analogy, but I have to remind you this story. Moscow studio, according to the order of Narkomzem [People's Commissariat of Earth], had to prepare a film *Planting Seedlings from Greenhouses into the Field*. The length of the film had to be 600 meters,[29] including the opening and final credits, and intertitles. The direction of the studio commissioned an agrarian to write the script since they considered that an agrarian would know better how to plant a turnip—leaves up or down. He finally wrote how to plant turnips, carrots, etc. The film's intentional audience was a school of peasant youth. We came to the former Soiuzkino. One of the consultants declared the following, "Where do you have class struggle around this affair?" We replied that it was impossible, that we only have 600 meters. The agrarian and the director hardly managed to go through all of the vegetables. "No, you cannot do without it [class struggle]." They introduced the political load. The author came in and changed everything with the help of the consultant. We brought the script to Narkomzem. Narkomzem said, "You have only class struggle here."[30]

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[28] For discussion of this problem, see, for instance, Smirnov's speech, in "2-e Vsesoiuznoie," 86.
[29] 600 meters of film is about 22 minutes.
[30] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie," 11.

The anecdote told by Smirnov, though Smirnov disclaimed a possibility of an analogy with the situation in animation, is exactly such an analogy. Considering that animation at the time was reserved to the format of shorts, and at the same time it was moving away from direct propaganda, the question of how to introduce the "political load" became especially problematic. As Smirnov implicitly stated, it is impossible to have both—a developed narrative and a "political load" in an animated short—either of them would suffer. It is in the late 1920s—early 1930s that the length of animated shorts started increasing, precisely because the new requirements of indirect propaganda had to be met—animated films increasingly employed more complex narratives and weaved ideology into the fabric of the story rather than made direct statements about it. Search for more complex stories was taking place along the lines of development of the idea of entertainment.

2.1.2   Entertainment[31]

The turn towards entertainment in Soviet animation in the late 1920s-early 1930s was connected with the general shift in Soviet cinema politics away from accepting and promoting avant-garde cinema, usually criticized for its formalism, towards production of cinema that would be appealing to broader audiences, especially workers and peasants. In 1934, Nikolai Khodataiev wrote in his article on the history of animation, "The present moment is a turning point in the life of animation. Two factors can explain that. On the one hand, the Soviet spectator demands entertainment from our art of cinema, and on the other hand, animators have accumulated

[31] For more on the 1930s politics of entertainment in Soviet cinema, see, for instance, Jamie Miller, *Soviet Cinema: Politics and Persuasion under Stalin* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010); Ian Christie and Richard Taylor, eds., *Soviet Cinema: Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1991); Andrew Horton, *Inside Soviet Film Satire: Laughter with a Lash* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

extended production experience; in addition, we have large and rather well-equipped [animation] departments such as the ones at Mezhrabpom and Moscow studio."[32] Thus, according to Khodataev, the demands of Soviet spectators—that have to be understood as a part of the discourse of justification and implementation of the shift to the politics of entertainment—were the primary political vehicle that steered animation in the direction away from film-posters to less overtly politicized genres of animation.

In this shift, Boris Shumiatskii, Head of the Chief Administration of Cinema and Photo Industry, *Soiuzkino*, from the beginning of 1930 until the end of 1937, was the most noticeable and active figure.[33] It was Shumiatskii who called for a serious attitude towards animation pointing out that with such an attitude, it "can become an entertaining and useful spectacle for the Soviet audience."[34] However, Shumiatskii, was not the first Soviet official who considered animation to be a vehicle for reaching the masses through entertainment. In fact, he continued Lunacharskii's policy of cinema and animation as a means of propaganda that can wrap up political ideas in an entertaining form.

Though Lunacharskii acknowledged the importance of developing thematically different types of cinema for different audiences (workers, peasants, petite bourgeoisie, etc.),[35] and in his writings, actively articulated and rearticulated Lenin's tripartite formula of an ideal film screening consisting of a newsreel, a scientific (cultural) film, and a fiction film, it is the latter that he valued the most as a means of propaganda. For instance, in 1928, Lunacharskii wrote in his article for *Zhizn' iskusstva* [Life of Art]: "Many of our people do not understand that our film

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[32] Nikolai Khodataiev, "Khudozhniki v mul'tipliktsii," *Sovetskoe kino* 10 (1934): 30.
[33] Shumiatski's activities in this position are discussed at length in *Inside the Film Factory*, Ian Christie and Richard Taylor, eds. *Soviet Cinema.*
[34] Cited in Viktor Smirnov's speech, "2-e Vsesoiuznoie," 73.
[35] See, for instance, Anatolii Lunacharskii, *Kino na zapade i u nas* (Moscow: Teakinopechat', 1928), 64-65.

production must whet the public's appetite, that, if the public is not interested in a picture that we produce, it will become boring agitation and we will become boring agitators. But it is well known that boring agitation is counter-agitation. We must choose and find a line that ensures that the film is both artistic and ideologically consistent and contains romantic experience of an intimate and psychological character."[36] This passage points towards the tendency that fully developed in the 1930s—instead of having an open ideological message, Soviet cinema of the 1930s incorporated the ideological message into romantic narratives that were not dramatically different from those of bourgeois cinema.

Support for entertaining cinema was also coming from less influential critics. Thus, already in 1924, film director and critic Nikolai Shpikovskii published an article "Fil'ma—smekho-vozbulitel'na" [Film as an agent of laughter][37] in which he outlined three types of "agents of laughter": comedy (plot-based), satire and caricature, and a "comical" film—a trick-based film that causes "purely mechanical, refreshing" laughter. Pointing out that the common desire for laugher was connected with the end of the "difficulties and deprivations of the revolutionary years," Shpikovskii called for more comedies and for inclusion of comical elements into "films of general content." This article was also the first to suggest production of "Kino-Krokodil"—a cinematic analogue of the satirical journal *Krokodil*, which was first published in 1922, and was an important organ of Soviet satire. Considering the tight connections between Krokodil and Soviet animation, it is possible to assume that the cinematic version of *Krokodil* would also include animation.[38]

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[36] Cited in Christie, Taylor, *Soviet Cinema*, 198.

[37] Shpikovskii, Nikolai, "Fil'ma—smekho-vozbuditel'na," *Kino-Gazeta* 26.42 (24 June, 1924).

[38] Though later Shumiatskii stated that "we have not managed to engage our wonderful masters of caricature working in humorous journals into production of animated cinema," (Boris Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia millionov* [Cinema of the Millions] (Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1935), 336-337)," several caricaturists who worked for *Krokodil*

Following the suit, in 1927, in *Kino-Gazeta*, an All-Union trade paper, an author with the initials D.F. contended, "Kul'turfil'mas are tiresome. They are more exhausting than any feature film. The cinematic eye of the audience is already spoiled and is not used for accumulation of knowledge in such a way. We need to produce a reaction. We need laughter at the end of the screening." [39]

Production of comedies was also a part of the Soviet film studios' agenda. For instance, according to the minutes of a meeting at the screenplay department at Goskino dated 8 February 1927, the topic of the meeting was comedy, and the speaker, cinema critic Ippolit Sokolov, delivered a lecture on theories (including those of Spenser and Bergson) and functions of comedy, and cinematographic comic devices.[40] A month later, Sokolov published a large article in *Kino-Front* on the theory of Soviet comedy.[41]

However, even though before 1930, the ideas about Soviet comedies were discussed in different forms in press and during studio meetings, they were still peripheral to the mainstream politics of Soviet cinema. With Shumiatskii becoming Head of *Soiuzkino*, the idea that cinema should provide audiences with entertainment and provoke laughter became central to the program for the reorganization of Soviet cinema and the creation of the so-called "Soviet Hollywood"—a studio system which was supposed to produce films in a manner similar to the Dream Factory. In 1930, Shumiatskii wrote about the creative tasks that film directors were

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participated in production of animated films. For instance, the famous caricaturist Boris Efimov worked on such animated films as *Mister Wolk* (1949, director Viktor Gromov), *Skazka o pope i rabotnike ego Balde* (1956, director Anatolii Karanovich), and *Proroki i uroki* (1967, director Viatcheslav Kotenochkin). Additionally, Efimov was a member of the artistic board of Soiuzmul'tfil'm. Evgenii Migunov, also a famous caricaturist at *Krokodil*, started his career at Soiuzmul'tfil'm where he worked not only as animator but also as a director, having created such films as *Karandash and Kliaksa—veselye okhotniki* (1954), *Chro za ptitsa* (1955), *Znakomye kartinki* (1957), *Shestomu vsemirnomu* (1957), *Poema o more* (1958), and *Rovno v* 3:15 (1959).

[39] D.F. "O kul'turnom kino," *Kino-Gazeta* 25.197 (21 June 1927), 4.

[40] Protokol #9 zasedania stsenarnoi masterskoi ot 8 fevralia 1927 goda, RGALI, fund 2496, inventory1, item 4, accessed at Soviet Cinema Online. Archival Documents from RGALI, 1923-1935.

[41] Ippolot Sokolov, "Kak sozdat' Sovetskuiu komediu," *Kino-Front* 4.1 (March 1927): 13-18.

supposed to fulfill in order to reach the mass audience: "A film and its success is directly linked to the degree of entertainment in the plot, and in the appropriately constructed and realistic motivations for its development."[42] Shumiatsky's ideas were actively supported by the Party, and even after he was purged at the end of 1937, Soviet films, at least those that were shown to the audience and were not banned, corresponded to the criteria of "entertainment quality… proximity to the worker and peasant audience and a form that corresponds to the requirements of the broad mass audience."[43]

For Shumiatskii, arousal of audiences' laughter had a twofold function. On the one hand, he viewed the ability of cinema to generate laughter as a celebration of the achievements of the Soviet state. Thus, in his book *Cinema of the Millions*, he wrote, "In the country of a developing [stroiyashchiisia] socialism, where there is no private property and exploitation, where the classes hostile to proletariat have been liquidated, where workers are connected by a conscious construction of the socialist society, and where the Party performs a huge task of liquidation of the remnants of the capitalist past in the minds of people—in this country comedy has a different, more important task—to create a vivid joyful spectacle …. The class that has won wants to laugh joyfully. It is its right, and Soviet cinema should give audiences this joyful Soviet laughter."[44] Such a position was consonant with the Party discours in general, and personally, with that of Stalin, who promoted the improvements in the Soviet Union and called for their celebration. Stalin's famous statement "Life has become better, life has become more joyful"[45] was a manifestation of the Party politics directed at creating grounds for further social

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[42] Cited in Christie, Taylor, *Soviet Cinema*, 204.
[43] Ol'khovoi 1929, 429-44; cited in Christie, Taylor, *Soviet Cinema*, 196.
[44] Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia Millionov*, 247, 249.
[45] The famous version of Stalin's phrase coined in his speech at the First All-Union Meeting of Stakhanovite workers (17 November 1935).

achievements. Thus, cinematographic laughter and entertainment became factors of creating joyous atmosphere that would stimulate workers to be more productive and more passionate about their work.

The other function of laughter, laughter for satirical purposes, as criticism of social vices, was also considered by the Party and Shumiatskii, as the cinematographic executive figure, as an important part of entertainment. Citing Stalin's commentary on changes in Boris Iurtsev's comedy *Liubov Aleny* [Alena's Love] (1934), Shumiatskii points out the importance of satirical laughter for the purposes of social improvement and the necessity to engage in it as a critical gesture. For instance, according to Shumiatskii's account of Stalin's views on satire, refusal to satirize social shortcomings (specifically, the lack of culture that they discussed), was "a way of making peace with them,"[46] which for Stalin was unacceptable.[47]

Animation was an excellent fit for the new politics of entertainment—it had a reputation of a medium that was especially appropriate for the purposes of arousing audience's laughter or, in Shpikovskii's terms, being an agent of laughter. As the abovementioned author for *Kino Gaseta*, D.F., asserted, "Animated comedies are the strongest catalyst of laughter. Purely comical animation, or even animation used for advertising, reach their target without fail. Laughter alleviates fatigue."[48] In the early 1930s, this position was shared by many animation workers. Many of them believed that the sphere of the comical and funny is the primary domain of animation, the area in which animation is most effective, and took the issue of entertainment

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[46] Boris Shumiatrskii, "Stalin i kino," in K.M. Anderson and L.V. Maksimenkov, eds., *Kremlevskii kinoteatr: 1928-1953*, dokumenty (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2005), 89.

[47] Already in 1935, in his book *Cinema of the Millions* (*Kinematografiia millionov* (Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1935)) Shumiatskii criticized satirical laughter, however, with Soviet Union approaching the war by the end of the 1930s, satirical laughter makes a big, even though not particularly long, come back in Soviet animation, and becomes one of the most important forms of the comical until the end of World War II (see the discussion of satire later in the chapter).

[48] D.F. "O kul'turnom kino."

seriously. One of these animators was Alexandr Ptushko, who even later, when he briefly became Head of *Soiuzml'tfil'm*, wrote in his report from 1944, "To entertain is a serious matter, especially in animation."[49]

Development of animation along the lines of comedy was at the heart of the process of animation industrialization. According to the Decree issued by the Central Administrative Board of Cinematography in 1934, which was foundational for the first Soviet studio that specialized exclusively in animation—the Experimental animation studio at GUFK—the studio was founded to "develop comedy and comic genre [komediino-komicheskii zhanr] of drawn animation and to master Western-European and American technology, and also in order to study the technological process of such films' production."[50] Viktor Smirnov, the director of the studio, was an ardent proponent of comical shorts, and shared Shumiatskii's views on animation.[51] So did Khrisanf Khersonskii, the art director at the studio. Calling for studying Disney's shorts as exemplary for Soviet animation, he pointed out, "Those who rightly demand from drawn animation entertainment above all, very often do not know or forget that to entertain cleverly is, by the way, always harder than to sympathize or edify. I even think that when we speak about entertainment, we often mean art. In any case, entertainment is one of the main features of art, and one does not exist without the other. Entertainment is impossible without art just as art is impossible without entertainment. And Disney's short, funny, and entertaining jokes are created in such a way that they display an affinity with the best examples of art—dramaturgy, dance, drawing, and music—

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[49] Doklad direktora studii "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" (Ptushko) po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR o sostoianii i perspektivakh kinostudii "Soiuzmul'tfil'm," August 1944, RGALI, fund 2469 inventory 1, item 4, 31.

[50] Decree # 13/001 of 1/14/1934, cited in Elizarov, 19.

[51] See Smirnov's speeches as well as remarks at 2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god [Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning on 1934], 25 December 1933, RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 83.

and sometimes use the same techniques as them."[52] However, the task of delivering acute political messages in an entertaining form of animated shorts turned out to be too complex in practice. Smirnov's shorts were heavily criticized by Shumiatskii in his *Cinema for the Millions*. Focusing on two Smirnov's shorts, *U sinia moria*[53] [By the blue sea] and *Rel'sy bormochut* [Rails are mumbling], Shumiatskii criticized them for being overloaded with unclear actions and characters, which created confusion and prevented from getting the message across.[54]

By the end of the 1930s, however, which coincided with Shumiatskii's dismissal from the position of the Head of the Chief Administration of Cinema and Photo Industry in 1937, and his subsequent purge, the discourse on animation increasingly leaned towards more serious topics than just joyous laughter. Even with such voices as, for instance, [Alexandr] Pudalov's,[55] who, at one of the animation workers' meetings, pointed out that though "the area of the comical is not the only area in which animation can work, everybody here knows that the area of the comical is precisely the area in which animation achieved the highest results,"[56] or Beletskii's, who stated that the inquiry of animation should take place in the spheres of "humor, satire, irony, and caricature,"[57] the nature of laughter gradually changed—there appeared a strong tendency to connect animation either with more critical laughter aroused by satire and fables, or with more serious and didactic genres such as fairy-tales. For instance, in his lecture at Soiuzmul'tfil'm, Lev Kuleshov criticized the films produced at the studio for lack of attention to the current

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[52] Khrisanf Khersonski "Priem Povtory v Prikliucheniiakh Miki Maus," [The device of repetition in Mikey Mouse's adventures] (*Sovetskoe Kino*, 8-9 [1934]: 70).

[53] Shimiatskii mistakenly calls the animated film *U samogo sinego moria*, apparently mixing it up with a live-action film with this title.

[54] Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia,* 335-36.

[55] Apparently, Alexandr Pudalov, Chief Editor of the Sixth Creative Union at studio *Mosfilm*.

[56] Meeting on the Issue of Thematic of Animation of the Creative Workers Engaged in Animation [Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii], 20 May 1938, RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 2, item 32, 48-49.

[57] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 31.

political situation. He stated, "I watched two very talented, very witty, and very skillfully made animated films [*Tri mushketera* (1938, director Ivan Ivanov-Vano) and *Pochemu u nosoroga shkura v skladkakh* (1938, Vladimir Suteev)], and both of them leave me cold because of how they are cut off from those big burning issues that we all, our whole Union, are currently facing. The fact that both of the films are cut off is their main drawback. They are not harmful. They are interesting and talented, but they are not about what is important. They do not touch you, they do not make you improve and become more active, they do not make me laugh in anger at our enemy, and, good-humoredly, at the people who need to be reformed. This element of satire, this political element, is absent from these films."[58] This passage from Kuleshov's lecture points to a general political atmosphere of militarization and preparation for war, which became especially topical during the civil war in Spain. The spirit of cinema and animation seemed to be changing. And though there were still calls for comedies in general, and specifically animated comedies, they were much less numerous.

These political changes greatly influenced the development of animation genres.[59] On 23 September 1939, the Main Administration for Feature Films Production and Committee for Film Affairs[60] issued a decree "On the work of feature animation" [O rabote khudozhestvennoi mul'tiplikatsii][61] that "characterized the Soviet animated films released over the last years, pointed out the drawbacks of these films, and defined the measures to improve the work of Soiuzmul'tfil'm and animation departments at other studios."[62] Among the measures that the decree required, there were clear regulations as to the genres that animation should engage

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[58] Lev Kuleshov, Lektsii po kinorezhessure dlia studii "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" ##1,2, Stenogrammy, 19, 25 oktiabria 1938 [Lectures on Film Direction for Studio "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" ##1,2, typed records, October 19, 25, 1938] RGALI, Fund 2679, inventory 1, item 381, 4-5.

[59] More on the development of genres in Soviet animation of the 1930s-1940s see Chapter 4.

[60] The Committee was organized in March 1938.

[61] V. I. Fomin (chief ed.), *Letopis' rossiiskogo kino: 1930-1945* (Moscow: Materik, 2007), 632.

[62] "O khudozhestvennoi mul'tiplikatsii," *Kino-Gazeta*, 45.939 (29 September 1939).

with—"fairy-tales (first of all, contemporary Soviet ones), Russian epos, political and everyday satire, political caricature, fantastic novellas, and film-posters."[63] The new decree was quickly taken into consideration—already in the report on the activities of the studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm in 1940, it was reflected in the plan of film production according to the thematic genres. As the report stated:

The thematic plan of 1940 comprises the following genres:

A. Classical and Soviet fairy-tale:

- *Skazka o Tsare Saltane* [*The Tale of Tsar Saltan*]

- *Skazka o pope I rabotnike ego Balde* [*The Tale of Priest and His Worker Balda*]

- *Ivas'*

- *Bei, kolotushka!* [*Hit, Rattle!*]

- *Barmalei*

B. Russian epos:

- *Ilia Muromets*

C. Satire

- *Kak muzhik dvukh generalov prokormil* [*How the Man Fed Two Generals*]

D. Political Caricature

- *Zhurnal #2* [*Journal #2*]

E. Fable:

- *Slon i muravei* [*The Elephant and the Dog*]

- *Osel i solovei* [*The Donkey and the Nightingale*].[64]

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[63] Ibid.
[64] "Doklad o deiatel'nisti kino-studii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' za 1940 god," RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 4, item 156, 1.

This thematic plan for 1940 demonstrates a shift in the politics of animation from a combination of edification and entertainment to a distinct emphasis on edification. The rise of interest in fables can be partially explained by the necessity of dealing with the anthropomorphic animal characters that Soviet animators had been creating ever since Smirnov's experimental studio that was working with American technology and aesthetics was established—anthropomorphic animal characters were easier to produce than human characters; animating human characters was a more complex task that required more time. As the report stated, human characters are "most difficult for the art of animation, especially when creating a positive character."[65] Yet, the technological process of production of animated character is only a part of the reason—Soiuzmul'tfil'm did not limit its repertoire to production of fables and tales with animal characters. Multiple tales (fairy tales, contemporary tales, folk tales, etc.) that were released by Soizmul'tfil'm during the 1940s, especially at the end of the decade and the beginning of the 1950s, were populated with human characters. Thus, it is the genre itself, and its social and cultural meaning became more important than the technology of its production. An outline of this new genre politics can be found in Beletskii's emphatic speech at a 1938 meeting, "Why do not we take our folklore, our wonderful fairy-tales of which we have a significant number? When we say what kind of script politics we should emphasize, we cannot underestimate a significant detail—work on the Soviet fairy-tale. We should be searching here. In the images of animals, we can make wonderful Soviet content, the content of our days, of today.… It is impossible to do without fables.… We have objects for the most acute satire, and fables give us this

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[65] Ibid.

opportunity."[66] As the 1940 thematic plan demonstrates, these calls were taken into consideration.

The thematic plan of the studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm for 1941 included the following topics: "defense" topics (films *Teplichnye strelki* [Green-house Shooters], *Pokhod* [Campaign], *Krasnoarmeiskii zhurnal* [Red Army Journal], *Krepi oboronu strany* [Strengthen the Defense of the Country], *Ne teriai formu* [Stay in Shape]); school-educational topics [shkol'no-obrazovatel'nye temy] (with such films as *Petrushka-lentiai* [Lazy Petrushka], *Dom pereekhal* [The House Has Moved], *Aibolit na severe* [Aibolit in the North], *Volshebnik izumrudnogo goroda* [Wizard Of Emerald City], *Kem byt'* [What Should I Be], *Dva medvedia* [Two Bears], *Shivorot-navyvorot* [Inside-Out], *Mukha-tsokotukha* [Little Fly So Sprightly], *Lisa, zaiats i petukh* [The Fox, the Hare, and the Rooster], *Moroz Ivanovich* , *Puteshestvie v skazku* [Trip To Fairy-tale], *Zhelanie* [Wish], *Poezd otpravliaetsia* [Train Departs], *Kradenoie solntse* [Stolen Sun]); everyday [bytovye] topics (*Luchshaia schema* [The Best Draft], *Snab-tsyp-tsyp kuritsa* [Here Chicky Chicky Chicken], *Mul'ti-dzhaz* [Multi-jazz], *Sekret krasoty* [Secret of Beauty], *Ia pomniu chudnoie mgnovenie* [I Still Recall the Wondrous Moment], *Domovoi meniaet kvartiru* [House-Spirit is Changing Apartments], *Tramvai* [Street Car]); kolkhoz topics (films *Khetcho-lentiai* [Lazy Khetcho], *Pro repku* [About Turnip]); the topic of subaltern ethnicities in the USSR (*Mister Tvister*, *Skazka o solntse* [Tale About the Sun], *Kak muzhik v rai khodil* [How a Man Went to Heaven], *Sotvorenie mira* [Creation Of the World], *Noev kovcheg* [Noah's Ark]); adaptation of Russian classical writers (*Tsar Saltan*, *Propavshaia gramota* [The Lost Letter], *Levsha* [Lefty]); and epos (*Ilia Muromets i Solovei Razboinik* [Ilia Muromets and Nightingale the

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Robber], *Chudesa Gruzii* [Wonders of Georgia].[67] The animation thematics that the plan prioritized—defense, school education, everyday, kolkhoz, subaltern ethnicities in the USSR, and epos—demonstrate how animation became more connected with the policies of consolidation of the USSR, with the country's general politics of strengthening its position through militarization and nationalization, with a discursive inclusion of the ethnical minorities living on the territory of the USSR, and, most importantly, with creating epos that could provide an important cultural historical ground for the concept of the national that by the end of the 1930s was under an active construction. As Katerina Clark points out, "With the virtual demise of the Popular Front in France and the souring of the international effort in Spain, the Soviet leadership were less concerned with internationalist ideological expansionism, and the country tilted perceptibly in the direction of nationalism."[68] Contrary to the ideas of an international proletarian revolution that dominated the ideology of the 1920s, by the end of the 1930s, the Soviet politics were focusing more on the internal affairs, of which purges were an integral part.

This plan also demonstrates that comedy as a genre was gradually eliminated from animation. Thus, though it might seem that this plan, according to the genre categorization, had a considerable number of comedies (11 out of the total of 38 films), two of them were categorized as satirical comedies, and according to film descriptions, four of them, the ones intended for adult audiences, were also satires.

The beginning of World War II on Soviet soil marked major changes in animation production and distribution at Soiuzmul'tfil'm. First, the volume of produced animation reduced

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[67] "Tematicheskii plan kinostudii "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" na 1941 god," RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 63.
[68] Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 277.

drastically. Comparing to 10-12 parts[69] of animated films that the studio produced in pre-war

1939 and 1940; in 1942, the production reduced to 6, and in 1943—to 3 parts of new films, and a

color version of a previously released film.[70] Second, the distribution of films suffered

considerably due to an insufficient amount of produced copies—3-5 vs. 150 at the end of the

1930s.[71] Third, drastic changes also took place in the thematics of Soviet animation. The films

that were approved and whose production started before Nazi invasion in June 1941, either were

cancelled (*Mister Tvister*) or their production was suspended (*Moroz Ivanovich*, *Novogodn'aia

elka*, *Kak myshi kota khoronili*, *Toptygin i lisa*, *Veselyi dvor*, and others) due to the fact that

"some of the directors and other creative workers joined the Red Army, and partially because

neutral fairy-tale plots relevant to peacetime do not satisfy creative demands of the film directors

who are attempting to reflect in their creations the current topical moments of the Great Patriotic

War." [72] To reflect these changes, the thematic plan for the third quarter of 1941 included 22

titles of shorts (from 50 to 130 meters) that were anti-Nazi caricatures and film-posters, instead

of six or seven suspended films of the yearly plan.[73] However, the studio was able to operate in

Moscow only until September 1941, when most of it was evacuated to Samarkand,[74] where

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[69] A part of an animated film was a conventional unit for measuring the length of the film, approximately equal to
seven-nine minutes. Since different animated films had different length, the calculations of the bulk of the animated
material by studio was done in parts.

[70] "Dokladnaia zapiska o proizvodstve mul'tikatsionnykh fil'mov dlia ddetii i iunoshestva," za podpis'iu brigady
TsK VLKSM, Pisarevskii, Kuprianov, Krylov, Sokolov, Vereshchagin, Babichanko, Ganf, Vano [Report of the team
of Central Committee of Komsomol, signed by Pisarevskii, Kuprianov, Krylov, Sokolov, Vereshchagin,
Babichanko, Ganf and Vano, on the production of animated films for children and youth] RGALI, fund 2469,
inventory 1, item 3, 1.

[71] Ibid., 2.

[72] "Ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska k otchetu za 1941 god po Moskovskoi kinostudii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm,'" RGALI, fund
2450, inventory 4, item 184, 1.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Not all the directors went to Samarkand—in the fall of 1941, Ivan Ivanov-Vano, together with VGIK (All-Union
State Institute of Cinematography), went to Alma-Aty, and returned to Moscow in the fall of 1943. "VGIK na
beregu Alma-Atinki," *Moskovskii komsomolets* (MK.RU), 26 March 2014,
http://vgik.info/today/creativelife/detail.php?ID=4062. Some of the animators stayed in Moscow because of
different reasons (see more on the animators who stayed in Moscow in the analysis of *Kino-Tsirk*).

production of fourteen of those twenty-two shorts was also cancelled by the Head of the studio at the time, Nikolai Kiva. On the list of the films sent for approval, he recorded his veto, "the plots and interpretations of these political satires and film-posters are such that they were supposed to be released during the first months of the war. Now, it is not expedient to talk about continuation of these films."[75] Other five film-posters, as well as four fiction shorts, though they were completed, were also later suggested to be written off because of their low quality.[76] According to Russian historian of animation Georgii Borodin, one of the reasons why these films were either banned or never distributed broadly was that they predominantly used a class rhetoric—Nazis in them were either enslaving Soviet workers or were engaged in sabotage and prevented the Soviet society from efficient functioning. Borodin contends that this was pre-war rhetoric, and with the beginning of the war on the Soviet soil, the rhetoric changed, and the participation of the Soviet Union in the war became a cause of national liberation.[77] Animators' failure to see this change and incorporate it into production of the films resulted in their rhetorical backwardness.

Though most of the planned satirical shorts and film-posters were not released during World War II, the production of animated films, especially during the first two years of the war, thematically returned to the genres characteristic of early Soviet animation—film-posters and caricatures. Due to the impossibility of working with color because of lack of film stock and

[75] The resolution is hand-written, signed "Kiva" and dated 18 May, on the letter addressed to N.M. Kiva, typed up on a Soiuzmul'tfil'm letterhead, dated 20 January 1942, and signed by "acting director of studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm Alexandrov." RGALI, fund 2450, item 4, inventory 84. Also see Kiva's May 1942 letter to acting Head of the Administration of Feature Films Production [Upravlenie po proizvodstvu khudozhestvennykh fil'mov] Grinkrug (RGALI, fund 2450, item 4, inventory 184, 55) in which he repeats the same explanation for cancellation of films, as well as Ginkrug's report dated June 3, 1942 (RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 4, item 184, 1).
[76] "Doklad Ginkruga zamestiteliu Predsedatelia Komiteta po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR, M.I. Hripunovu" podpis'iu Kivy" [Report to M.I. Hripunovu, Assistant Head of the State Committee for Cinematography from Ginkrug] (3 June 1942) RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 4, item 184, 1-2.
[77] Georgii Borodin, interview, summer 2012.

color printers,[78] the black-and-white aesthetics of animated films of the 1920s also made a return.

During the first quarter of 1942, the part of Soiuzmul'tfil'm that was left behind in Moscow was engaged in production of educational films connected with military activities— *Cherepno-mozgovye ranenia* [Craniocerebral Wounds], *Voenno-polevaia khirurgia* [Military Field Surgery], *Fizioterapia travm voennogo vremeni* [Physiotherapy of Wartime Injuries], *Sistema meditsinskogo obsluzhivania v voennoe vremia* [Wartime Medical Care System], and *Sanitaria* [Sanitation]—with one exception—a satirical political caricature *Kino-Tsirk.*[79] The films on which the studio worked in Samarkand, including the completed *Elka*, and the ones completed after the return to Moscow, in 1943 and 1944,—*Von Grabbe*, *Repka*, [80] *Orel i krot*, *Sindbad*, *Sinitsa*, *Telefon*, and *Skazka o tsare Slatane*,[81] followed the pre-war thematics: contemporary and traditional fairy-tales, fables, and political satire.

After the return of the studio to Moscow in 1943, an increasing emphasis in thematic planning and production was placed on fairy-tales. The move to fairy-tales already started at the end of the 1930s, especially after a huge success of Disney's first animated feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). In the Soviet Union, *Snow White* was praised for its groundbreaking technical perfection, especially sound synchronization and color, as well as its realism. As O. Anokhina pointed out in her review, "Illusion reaches at times such depth that the spectator forgets that he is watching a drawn animated film and perceives *Snow White* as a live-

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[78] For a history of color in Soviet animation, see Nikolai Mayorov, "Soviet Colours," in *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 6.2 (2012): 241-255.

[79] "Vedomost' vypolnenia plana za 1 kvartal 1942 goda," RGALI, fund 2455, inventory 1, item 45.

[80] Von Grabe and Repka were never released. Though the report does not mention the reason for this, it was probably due to poor quality of animation.

[81] "Ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska po otchetu o deiatel'nosti kinostudii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' za 1943." RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 4, item 226.

action film filled with live actors."[82] World War II precluded Soviet animation from production of feature-length fairy-tales, and now, when it was over, it was possible to return to the pre-war thematics. Moreover, the after-war trajectory of the animation thematics was directly connected with "development of national art of animation,"[83] the epitome of which in the late 1940s became *Koniok-Gorbunok* [*Humpback Horse*, director Ivan Ivanov-Vano, 1947].

The first chronicler of Soviet animation, Semen Ginsburg, writing from the discursive position on animation that was characteristic of the mid-1950s, when the genre of animated fairy-tales reached its peak, formulated this change in the following way, "Pre-war animation often lacked consciousness of its own ideological-edifying tasks [ideino-vospitatel'nykh zadach]. Creative workers and critics still perceived animation as only a funny entertainment, as an art whose very nature makes it incapable of serious artistic generalizations. This point of view was eliminated in the years after the war. Our animation, in its best exemplars, started successfully solving important ideological-edifying tasks."[84] By the end of the 1940s, even satire disappeared from animation, though at the regular meetings of animators on thematic planning, comedy and satire remained the topics that were discussed as necessary for Soviet animation, and that needed to be included into the plans.[85] However, while the necessity of satire was acknowledged discursively, Soviet animation was dominated by "serious" genres, such as fairy-tales. Thus, by the end of 1940s, Soviet animation employed more serious didactic topics and abandoned the idea of entertainment.

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[82] O. Anokhina, "'Belosnezhka' Walta Disneya," in *Iskussvo kino* 7 (1938): 62.

[83] N. I. Akimov, "Doklad o sostoianii raboty kinostudii Soiuzmul'tfil'm na zasedanii Kollegii Ministerstva kinematografii SSSR" (4 April 1947), RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 13, 3.

[84] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 164.

[85] See, for instance, "Protokol zasedaia khudsoveta studii ot 20 July 1947." During the discussion of the thematic plan for 1948 and 1949, the necessity of inclusion of satire into the thematic plan is pointed out by animation directors Ivanov-Vano, Efremov, Gromov, and Head of Souizmul'tfil'm at the time, Akimov. RGALI, fund 24, inventory 1, item 1071, 30-33.

2.1.3 Animation as a Children's Medium

Right after the October Revolution, Soviet cinema became a part of the institution of education, when, as Natalia Riabchikova contends, "the first Soviet film organization was formed under the auspices of Nadezhda Krupskaia at the Department of Extracurricular Activities of the State Commission on People's Education [Vneshkol'nyi otdel gosudarstvennoi komissii po narodnomu prosveshcheniiu],"[86] and two years later, in August 1919, its supervision was assigned to the government's Commissariat of Enlightenment with Anatolii Lunacharskii as its Head. The project of creating the new Soviet man put the issue of education in general and children's education in particular into the center of Soviet politics of cinema. Understanding the scope of influence that cinema had on children, the Soviet government from very early on was extremely attentive to this medium. As Lunacharskii pointed out in his 1928 volume *Kino na zapade i u nas* [Cinema in the West and in Our Country], "The impact of cinema on children is extremely important.… From the point of view of the true cultivating cinema work of the state [gosudarstvennoi vospitatel'noi kino-raboty], the question of children's cinema should have occupied one of the leading places."[87] As a resolution on the measures for improvement in production of films for children and adolescence summed it up, "Cinema should occupy a particularly large place in formation of communist consciousness of the growing generation, upbringing of children and adolescence in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, love to socialist motherland, and international solidarity of workers. Cinema can also play a significant role in formation of a child's character, developing his volitional qualities and skills of labor discipline.

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[86] Natalia Riabchikova, "Children's Cinema in the Soviet Union before 1936," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3.2 (2009): 232.
[87] Anatolii Lunacharskii, *Kino na zapade i u nas* (Moscow: Teakinopechat', 1928), 64.

Finally, the visibility and concreteness of cinema screening open up possibilities of introduction of the young audiences to the multiplicity of knowledge in different spheres of science, technology and art."[88]

However, even though importance of cinema for children was officially acknowledged, it took several years of public discussions, as well as planning and organization before production of cinema with children's audiences in mind could start.[89] In the Soviet Union, broad public discussions on production of films for children started several years after the Revolution. For instance, in 1922, *Kino-Fot*, in its first issue, wrote about importance of cinema for school education.[90] In *Kino-Gazeta*, founded in the fall of 1923, the discussions about the necessity of

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[88] Postnovlenie Komoteta po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR i TsK VLKSM o merakhk uluchsheniu proizvodstva kinokartin dlia detei i iunoshestva (Proekt), June 1939. RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 25.

[89] One of the central questions in writing about children's cinema is the question of definition—what to consider children's cinema. The definitions can include: 1) films produced specifically for children, with considerations of their cognitive and psychological development; 2) films produced for the general public but appropriate for children according to their cognitive and psychological development; 3) screenings organized for children that involve such dimensions as time (matinees) and tickets at a reduced price; 4) institutions (such as film studios) that specialize in production of films for children; 5) particular genres of films that are most appropriate for children (for instance, educational school films, fairy-tales, etc.). The choice of a definition would result in a different history of children's cinema. For instance, Igor Fishkin dates his history of children's cinema in Russia back to 1898, the year of the first screening for children, and 1912, when Ladislav Starevich made his first films, which, according to Fishkin, were made for children (cited in Alexandr Prokhorov "Arrested Development: A Brief History of Soviet Cinema for Children and Adolescents, in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova [New York, London: Routledge, 2008], 149). Natalia Riabchikova starts her discussion of the history of children's cinema also from the pre-revolutionary period, but her historical point of reference is discursive—she considers publications in periodicals about a possibility of films "shot specifically for the education of children" (Natalia Riabchikova, "Children's cinema," 231.) She also dates Soviet production of films for children from 1918, when "one feature film (of a total of six) was made for children by state film organizations" (Ibid.). My approach here is closer to that of Riabchikova—because the idea of production of films for children ended up being definitive in development of animation as a medium, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to understand how in the Soviet Union the idea of children's cinema developed discursively, and what was the range of issues to which children's cinema was connected.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that the criteria according to which films could be included into the repertoire of children's screenings, was also problematic for participants of the discussions on children's cinema. See, for instance, the famous poet Samuil Marshak's problematization of the "borders of children's cinema" and of inclusion and exclusion of particular films in the nomenclature of children's cinema at the meeting on the issues of children's cinema ("Kratkaia stenogramma soveschania po voprosu o detskoi kinematografii ot 25/VI-1939 g. v komitete po delam kinematografii," RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 13).

[90] Zhorzh Sh. "V serdtse Afriki," *Kino-Fot* 1 (August 1922): 4. It is important to mention that the article does not specify the age of the students, which in the context of the situation with education in the early 1920s in the Soviet Union could mean students of different ages, including adults.

children's cinema started in early 1924. In his short front page article, the famous filmmaker and film critic Vladimir Erofeev, wrote:

About a year ago, in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* there was a short, but very indicative article.

In one of the houses for juvenile delinquents there was a children's poll. From several dozens of children who participated in the poll, something about 30% (I do not remember the exact numbers), answered that they were pushed to the crimes that they committed by the moving pictures they had seen in cinema.

The great instrument of enlightenment—cinema—in our case, still corrupts and demoralizes the souls of its little fans.

In order to eliminate, to get rid of this corruptive influence of cinema on children, it is not enough to fight this tendency to screening detective films. We should not only fight the appearance of different "*Secrets of New York*"[91] on the Soviet screens, but also raise a question of creating cinema for children.

First of all, we should start producing special films for children.

In Europe, there are several film companies that produce specialized films for children. This proves that under particular circumstances (primarily, with a well-organized film distribution) such production can be profitable.

We are considerably behind Europe in this respect, but it is quite possible even now to include into the production plans of film organizations production of several films for children. Until now, only "Rus" that is now producing film *Morozko* remembered about films for children.[92]

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[91] Apparently, Erofeev refers to the American film *The Streets of New York* (Director: Burton L. King, 1922).
[92] V. Erofeev, "O Detskom Kino," *Kino-Gazeta*, 11.27 (11 March 1924).

This short article sets a broad range of themes that were reiterated and contested afterwards: the influence of cinema upon children; children modeling their behavior after the images on the screen; a link between cinema and children's criminal activity; the necessity to produce films for children as a special audience, and so on. The major implication of the article, however, is that cinema is an instrument of enlightenment that must be used properly, and thus it is necessary to produce domestic films for children rather than rely on foreign ones.

If this first article criticized the current situation regarding children's films and urged their production, the second one, published less than a month later, was already concerned with the age of children for which films should be made (from 11 to 15), and the potential content of children's films. The "initiative group," which was indicated as the collective author of the article, suggested that "Ideologically, the children's cinema should be constructed in such a way that it would bring up proletarian children in the spirit of class consciousness and communism, and show exciting actions against the backdrop of revolutionary romantics. That is why such films as the fairy-tale *Morozko* that is been shot now does not answer the demands of proletarian children. Contemporary children's cinema should reflect life and everyday activities (byt) of the proletariat children who should be the main characters of the films."[93]

Also, at the end of 1924, two important events that promoted development of children's cinema took place: first matinee screenings for children were organized in cinema theater The Ural, with tickets distributed through schools at the lowest possible price;[94] the first organizational meeting of the children-school division of ARK that raised the issue of creating a chain of specialized cinema theaters for children, special repertoire of films for children, and

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[93] Initiative Group, "Esche raz o Detskom Kino" [Once again about Children's cinema], *Kino-Gazeta* 11.27 (8 April 1924).
[94] "Detskie kino-utrenniki," *Kino-Gazeta* 51.67 (16 December 1924).

organization of school and pioneer groups for promotion of cinema.[95] Though the screenings in

The Ural were not the first ones organized specifically for children in the Soviet Union,[96] what

was apparently innovative about them, was the way the tickets were distributed through schools,

which promoted attendance of large groups of schoolers. During the following years, *Kino-Gazeta* continued regular publication of short articles on the children-school division of ARK

and on different issues that the division faced.[97]

Book publications on the topic started appearing in the middle of 1920s. In 1925, in the

book series *V zashchitu detstva* [In Defense of Childhood], Prof. Pavel Liublinskii published his

volume *Kinematograph i deti* [*Cinema and Children*], a rigorous critique of both physical and

cognitive influences of cinema on children, that was based on European studies and literature.

Liublinskii discussed in detail legal measures that had been undertaken in different European

countries to regulate children's access to cinema, as well as possibilities of cinema to work for

pedagogical purposes. The volume also summarized the situation with children's cinema in the

Soviet Union (censorship, creation of children's cinema organizations, etc.), and proposed

further measures that would regulate the relationships between children and cinema.[98]

Liublinskii's volume was the first one written after the revolution—the only volume published

on the topic before was a 1919 reprint of E. Samuilenko's book *Kinematograph i ego

prosvetitel'naia rol'* [Cinema and its Role in Enlightenment] initially published in 1912.[99]

Another volume, penned by Asia Lacis and L. Keilina, *Deti i kino* [Children and Cinema], raises

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[95] "Organizatsia detskoi shkol'noi sektsii," *Kino-Gazeta* 58.62 (24 December 1924).

[96] For instance, in 1922, journal *Kino-Fot* advertised screenings for children in cinema-theater Union (*Kino-Fot* 3 (1922), front advertisements).

[97] N.K., Rabkor, "Kino v shkole: Detskaia-shkol'naia sekysia pri ARK'e", *Kino-Gazeta* 6. 86 (28 April 1925).

[98] P.I. Liublinskii, *Kinematograph i deti* (Moscow: Pravo I Zhizn', 1925).

[99] N.T., "Kinematograph i deti," *Kino-Gazeta* 58.62 (24 December 1924); Irina Chelysheva, Anton Chekhov, "Comparative Analysis of Russian and British Media Education Based on the Cinema in the First Half of the XX century," *Media Education* 14 (2015): 14-24, qt. 15.

similar questions focusing more on the situation in the Soviet Union. It also suggested lists of films from the repertoire initially intended for adults that could be appropriate for children, as well as discussed the use of cinema for educational purposes at school and for after-school activities.[100] What is particularly interesting in Lacis and Keilina's book is their emphasis on making cinema a part of education. They suggested not only to use educational films as a visual aid to science classes, but also to use feature films supplemented with discussions and lectures, to which end they described the necessary steps in preparation of cinema-pedagogues—teachers who would be specially trained in use of cinema for educational purposed.[101]

Thus, the early publications on cinema for children construct children as a special audience that, together with the officially singled out audiences based on class (workers, peasants, and bourgeoisie), appears in the discourse as having its specific characteristics and needs, which called for a special type of cinema.[102] However, it was not the only point of view that was discussed at the time. For instance, Sergei Tret'akov expressed a different opinion— drawing a parallel between cinema and literature, he contended that like in literature, where best children's books were the ones initially intended for adults (by such authors as James Fenimore Cooper, Thomas Mayne Reid, Jules Verne, and others), there was no need in a special films for children. Rather, he asserted, cinema had to improve its overall quality for all audiences. In his 1926 article "Deti i kino," Tret'akov writes, "[…] should we create "children's cinema" [detkino]? I am afraid that such an incubation would result in one more boringly didactic organization that nobody would need. Because if it were interesting, its products would be, no

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100 A. Lacis, L. Keilina, *Deti i kino* (Moscow: TeaKinoPechat', 1928).
101 Ibid., 82-85.
102 The comparison of the children's audience and peasant audience drawn by A. Simonenko points to recognition of children as a special "class." (A. Simonenko, "Vspomnim o detiakh" [Let us remember about children], *Kino-Gazeta* 36.116 (24 November 1925): 2).

doubt, distributed in general cinema-theaters. But if it is not interesting, nobody will need it."[103]

Thus for Tret'akov, the quality of cinema is closely connected with its popularity, with the latter not being specific to an age.

Starting from January 1927, after a meeting about children's films that took place in the Commissariat of Enlightenment on 24 January and was chaired by Nadezhda Krupskaia, the amount of publications on children's cinema and calls for a necessity of more attention to children's cinema slowly increased,[104] and by the beginning of 1928, there was a substantial presence of the discourse on children's cinema in Soviet periodicals. Another important influence on development of children's cinema came from community [obshchestvennye] organizations such as the Society of Friends of Soviet Cinema (ODSK) that had a children's section responsible for promoting production of children's cinema as well as organization of special screenings for children.[105]

In the process of the formation of the concept of children's cinema, attention to it went through surges and declines. Though the topic of cinema for children was constantly addressed in print media, there was a considerable difference in publications from one year to another,

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[103] Sergei Tretiakov, "Deti i kino" [Children and Cinema] *Kino-Gazeta* 19.139 (11 May 1926): 3.

[104] The article that announced the meeting ("Soveshchanie o detskikh fil'makh," *Kino-Gazeta* 5.177 [29 January 1927]: 1) was preceded by an article from worker's correspondent [rabkor] Kulikov, "O detskikh fil'makh" [On Children's Films] *Kino-Gazeta* 4.176 (22 January 1927): 4, in which he called for children's cinema. Curiously, the two publications are very similar in its content, both discuss the issue of the lack of children's cinema in very similar words. The publication about the meeting was immediately followed by an article in the next issue by Aller "O detskikh film'makh," *Kino-Gazeta* 6.178 (5 February1927): 2, which once again restated the reasons for the necessity of children's cinema, the main of which were ideological (bringing up the new Soviet people) and health considerations (lengthy films are harmful to children's health, hence the necessity of production of shorts for children's audiences). In a May 1927 publication, the author Katsigras reported about a new law project that would regulate children's attendance of cinema theaters (prohibit children younger than nine from attending cinema theaters, as well as older children staying in cinemas later than 10 p.m.), "Kino i deti" [Children and Cinema] *Kino-Gazeta* 20.192 (17 May 1927), 5. Other periodicals also reported about the meeting and started campaigns for children's cinema. See, for instance, "Soveshchanie po detskoi fil'me," *Kino-Front* 2 (1 February 1927): 30; Iulia Menzhinskaia, "O deteskom kino: Ocherednye zadachi" [On Children's Cinema: The Next Tasks] *Kino-Front* 2 (1 February 1927): 3-5, etc.

[105] See, for instance a report of the section in *Biulleten Sekritariata tsentral'nogo soveta obshchestva druzei sovetrskoi kinemtografii* 2, (September 1927): 5-9.

with, for instance, sixteen publications in *Kino-Gazeta* in 1928, and a considerable decrease of publications on the topic over the following years—two to four publications on the topic per year—that lasted until 1933, when, again, the number of publications spiked to over a dozen. Such fluctuations can be connected with the technological struggles that Soviet cinema experienced during its transfer to the new technology of sound—cinema was too busy with advancing the new technology to deal with the content for children.

Another factor that influenced the speed of development of children's cinema was absence of analogues industries that created films with exclusively children's audiences in mind. As Shumiatskii contended already in 1934, "Soviet cinema is the first in the history of world cinema to engage into organization of production of films for children.… if in other spheres of Soviet cinema we can rely on experience of film industries of Western Europe and the USA, we are creating cinema for children literally from scratch."[106] In his 1934 report on children's cinema, Shumiatskii pointed out that the year that signaled a turning point in children's cinema production was 1934—out of 50 films produced in the country, 10 were children's films, and according to his numbers, there was a growth of children's cinema production in 1935, with a subsequent projected increase in 1936.[107] However, despite's Shumiatskii's optimism about the development of children's cinema, an article published in the May issue of *Iskusstvo Kino* in

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[106] "Dokladnaia zapiska B.Z. Shumiatskogo v TsK VKP(b) o rabote GUFK v oblasti detskogo kino," (14 September 1935), in *Kul'tura i vlast' ot Stalina do Gorbacheva: Kremlevskii kinoteatr, 1928-1953, Dokumenty* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2005), 281. Also see a translated version in Birgit Beumers, Nikolai Izvolov, Natalia Miloserdova, Natalia Riabchikova, and Jamie Miller "Margarita Barskaia and the Emergence of Soviet Children's Cinema," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3.2 (2009): 251.

[107] "Dokladnaia zapiska." Though in the document published in the same volume—Dokladnaia zapiska zam. zav. Otdelom kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty TsK VKP(b) A.I. Angarova L.M. Kaganovichu, A.A. Andrevu i A.A. Zhdanovu o razvitii detskoi kinematografii, of 2 November 1935—its author, Angarov, problematizes the numbers provided by Shumatskii pointing out that Shumiatskii's calculations that demonstrate an increase in children's films production are wrong because they do not take into account the length of films, and count shorts at the same rate as full-length feature films, I find it important that Shumiatskii presents children's cinema as an exponentially growing industry because it demonstrates if not the real situation with children's cinema, than the desire of Soviet administrators for children's cinema.

1936, only a month before Soiuzdetfil'm and Soiuzmul'tfil'm—film and animation studios that specialized in production of films for children—were founded, once again summarized the usual problems with children's cinema: lack of resources, both technological and human, due to a secondary status of children's cinema.[108]

Publications about children's cinema focused on three types of films that could be produced for children's audiences: school films that were supposed to aid the curriculum in specific topics such as sciences, *kul'turfil'mas* that had a more general educational and cultural focus,[109] and feature films. Animation was not included in the early discussions of cinema for children. For the first time, animation was mentioned in conjunction with children's cinema in an article about animated film *Sen'ka Afrikanets* (*Krokodil Krokodilovich*),[110] but such publications were rare up to 1928, when contributors to periodicals and officials started paying attention to animation as a potentially important medium for children. For instance, in his report on the pedagogical convention of 1928, Efr. Lemb described a screening organized for the convention delegates, which showed "children's films created by director Zheliabuzhskii and the Head of the museum of children's toys, Bertram."[111] Both films mentioned in the publication—*Katok* [*Skating Rink*] and *Prikliuchenia Bolvashki* [*Bolvashka's Adventures*]—were animated. What is particularly interesting in Lemb's account of the screening is his criticism of the aesthetics of the films. He pointed out their perceptual complexity—according to Lemb, the first one was too schematic, and the second contained actions that were not very obvious for the audience—

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[108] "Fil'my dlia detei," *Iskusstvo Kino* (May 1936): 29-32.

[109] For a discussion of distinctions between school educational films and *kul'turfil'mas,* see, for instance, A. Lacis, L. Keilina, *Deti i kino* (Moscow: TeaKinoPechat', 1928), 52-53.

[110] A.D-skii, "Besprizornyi zhanr" [Stray Genre], *Kino-Gazeta* 30.202 (26 July 1927): 5). On the list of films produced by Mezhrabpomfil'm, the film *Sen'ka Afrikanets* is dated 1928 (see "Spisok kartin proizvodstva Mezhrabpom-Film 1924-1935" [List of Motion Pictures Produced at Mezhrabpom-Film from 1924 to 1935] RGALI, fund 962, inventory 3, item 58, 2.)

[111] Efr. Lemb, "Aktual'neishaia problema: Voprosy kino na pedagogicheskom s'ezde," *Sovetskoie kino* 1 (1928): 15.

coming to a conclusion that if they were unclear to the delegates of the convention, children would not be interested in them.[112]

In his short article "O detskom revoliutsionnom prazdnike" [About the Children's Revolutionary Celebrations] published later the same year, Anatoliy Lunacharskii, summarized importance of cinema and animation for children as a staple of children's celebrations. According to Lunacharskii, children's celebrations were supposed to be simultaneously entertaining and educational, and an important role in achieving this double goal was placed on the spectacle. Lunacharskii pointed out that cinema had to occupy a first place in the potential hierarchy of spectacles, providing the following reasons: "It is cinema that can unite high artistic merits with accessibility. The script approved by our headquarters of art and pedagogy and first-class actors—all these can be in any city or village where there is a white wall [for screening]… a masterpiece created by the best minds can be given to everybody like a book, like an article. In this sense, cinema can be equated with print."[113] Thus, for Lunacharskii, cinema has three merits that other types of spectacle can potentially lack—cinema is artistic, accessible, and what is the most important, controllable. Being mechanically reproduced like print, cinema is not a subject to unpredictability, in contrast to different types of live performances that are unique in their spatial and temporal characteristics.

"However,"—Lunacharskii continued—"if we take animation, that gives us the fantastical, the grotesque, and caricature, and will excite everybody's admiration. [In animation]

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[112] Ibid.
[113] The article was first published in the magazine *Iskusstvo v shkole* [Art in School] 10 (1928): 2-3. It was part of a general discussion under the headline "Conversations on Revolutionary Celebrations" together with citations from Nadezhda Krupskaia and other authors. http://lunacharsky.newgod.su/lib/o-massovyh-prazdnestvah/o-detskom-revolucionnom-prazdnike

we have the potentiality that we should use, and the effect of which can be immense."[114] Thus, according to Lunacharskii, animation is the best medium for children that surpasses even cinema in its potentiality for expressiveness, hence it can have the biggest effect on children.

Simultaneously with the turn towards industrialization that was made possible by the introduction of celluloid, and foundation of Soiuzmul'tfil'm, Soviet animation became a children's medium. It seems no coincidence that the same year Soiuzmul'tfil'm (initially— Soiuzdetmul'tfil'm[115]) was founded (1936), a live film studio that specialized in the production of films exclusively for the children's audience, Soiuzdetfil'm, was established. The year 1936 marked the official beginning of children's cinema and animation in the Soviet Union.

Toward the end of the 1930s, there was an attempt to consolidate production of visual content for children. An ad hoc committee that was created for this purpose explored the possibility of uniting the resources of different studios that were engaged in production of children's films under single management. At the meeting on the issues of children's cinema that took place at the Committee for Film Affairs on 25 June 1939, Sagalovich, a representative of the Central Committee of VLKSM, framed this project in the following way,

> The issues of children's cinema are addressed by Soiuzdetfil'm and Soiuzmul'tfil'm; Soiuzkinokhronika[116] produces some children's technical shorts, as well as Techfil'm produces educational films for schools. All these [institutions] are disjointed. The Committee for Film Affairs should pay a special attention to the issues of children's cinema and children's studios. During the two years of its existence, Soiuzdetfil'm has

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[114] Ibid.

[115] The part "det" in the name of the animation studio that means "children's" was omitted only a year later, yet it is indicative of the initial purpose of the studio to produce films primarily for children.

[116] A studio founded in 1932 that specialized on newsreels.

not managed to produce anything of value except for the Gorkii's trilogy.[117]… The comrades on the ad hoc committee came up with an idea to create a powerful association that would produce children's films. It will be based at the studio Soiuzdetfil'm, with an outlet in Yalta, as well as studio [Soiuz]mul'tfil'm, magazine *Pioner*, and Mostechfil'm, with an artistic board [khodsovet] that would consist of representatives of writers', pedagogical, afterschool and Komsomol organizations. They will be united by a central highly qualified editorial board.[118]

The central editorial board that was supposed to supervise the thematic planning for all the institutions focused on production of content for children was the foundation of the project. According to the preliminary discussions, Soiuzmul'tfil'm was to focus on the elementary and middle school ages,[119] with fairy-tales being the dominant genre for the age because of their comprehensiveness. However, the corrections [zamechania] that followed the meeting with its project of a resolution prevented Soiuzmul'tfil'm from joining the association. The reasons indicated in the corrections demonstrated that animation was considered to be not only a didactic vehicle for educating children about political ideas, but also a medium whose specificity was valued enough to let the studio that specialized in it develop on its own. Since such an acknowledgement of animation as an independent medium is important for my overall argument, below, I will cite the whole document:

A merger of Soiuzdetfil'm with Soiuzmul'tfil'm is inexpedient because of the following considerations:

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[117] Adaptations of Gorkii's three autobiographical novels *Detstvo* [Childhood], *V liudiakh* [[In the world], and *Moi Universitety* [My Universities] that were directed by Mark Donskoi and released as a film trilogy: *The Childhood of Maxim Gorky* (1938), *On His Own* (1939), and *My Universities* (1940).

[118] Kratkaia stenogramma soveschania po voprosu o detskoi kinematografii ot 25/VI-1939 g. v komitete po delam kinematografii, RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 1.

[119] "Proekt reshenia komiteta," RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 3.

1. Drawn animation is an independent sector of cinema with a special technological process, which is different from the technological process of live-action films. Production of drawn animated film requires special script material and particular creative and production decisions in adaptations of literary material, all of which are distinct for this type of art. This art circumscribes a whole range of genres (political caricature, political and everyday satire, musical comedy, grotesque, epos, lubok, film-poster, etc.), whose audience is not only children but also adults.

2. Qualifications of the main cadres of drawn animation—directors, assistant directors, and cameramen—are absolutely different from those of the cadres in live-action feature cinema. Directors and assistant directors must be artists. The pre-production period and the work at an animated film are indissolubly connected with drawing, graphics and movement. Animation cameramen, who shoot frame-by-frame, cannot be engaged in location or studio shooting. That is why it would be impossible to use the creative and production cadres of one type of production in the other.

3. The Merger of Soiuzmul'tfil'm with Soiuzdetmul'tfilm will, no doubt, have a negative impact on the working conditions at Soiuzmul'tfilm, since the interests of live-action cinema will always be privileged over the interests of animation (Lenfil'm, Tbilissi studio, etc.). Before Soiuzmul'tfil'm, there were departments of drawn animation at Mosfil'm and former Mezhrabpom, where they produced two-three low-quality animated films per year. Only after foundation of the Union Studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm, did this sector of art start developing. The studio started producing sixteen films of good quality [per year].

4. Studio Soiuzdetfil'm is currently experiencing difficulty in creative production conditions as well as in financial ones, and we cannot complicate the Studio's tasks.

5. As for the department of puppet animation at Mosfil'm, which is currently extremely neglected, it is expedient to include it into Soiuzdetfil'm. The plans for puppet animation have to be resolved depending on the outcomes of 1940.[120]

The document demonstrated recognition of Soiuzmul'tfil'm not only as a studio capable of producing films for children, but also as the one that worked within a unique medium framework, which needed to be treated in its own right. Through emphasizing the specificity of animators' work and the technological process of animation production, the document addressed many differences between animation and live-action cinema. However, though animation was recognized as an independent medium, the following project of resolution on children's and adolescents' cinema dated June 1939 officially fixed the function of animation as a children's medium.[121] The same project of a resolution also limited the reorganizational innovations to foundation of "a special department" in the frames of the Main Administration for Feature Films Production and Committee for Film Affairs that were supposed to manage production of films for children and adolescents.

However, though the discourse of official directives and reports indicated that the main task of Soiuzmul'tfil'm was to create animation for children, multiple archival documents demonstrate that the role of animation was seen in a more complex way by multiple participants in the discourse on animation—animation film directors, script writers, critics and others. They

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[120] "Zamechania k p.Z-a proekta Postanovlenia Komiteta i TsK VLKSM o merakh k uluchsheniu proizvodstva kinokartin dlia detei i iunoshestva," RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 23-24.
[121] "Postnovlenie Komoteta po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR i TsK VLKSM o merakhk uluchsheniu proizvodstva kinokartin dlia detei i iunoshestva (Proekt)," (June 1939), RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 456, 29. "… to use drawn and puppet animation production primarily for films on children's and adolescents' topics."

viewed animation as a medium that was capable of creating films for both children's and adult audiences. As Beletskii formulated it in his speech at a May 1938 meeting of animation workers, "There is no doubt that our animation should mainly work for the children's audience. However, it does not mean, I repeat, does not mean at all that we should completely eliminate adult audience. Each and every one of us watches good animation with pleasure. Any adult viewer watches it with great pleasure."[122]

What complicated the matter in terms of understanding the potential audiences of animation was that the audience politics themselves were not stable, and oscillated between children's and adult's audiences with different degrees of inclusion of either of them, which created uncertainty and frustration among animation workers. As Zats[123] pointed out at the same meeting, "Until we have a firm and definitive directive as to for whom animation is working, and what exactly we are supposed to create, nothing will come out of it."[124]

However, despite this uncertainty among those involved into animation production, from the 1930s onwards, the focus on children's films dominanted the discourse on animation. Semen Ginsburg even asserted that it was only when animation started "serving" children that it found itself as a special type of art. Similarly to Kristin Thompson's observation on how Hollywood reserved animation for what it could do better than photographic cinema—tricks and gags—and thus was supposed to do only them,[125] Ginsburg claimed that Soviet animation was reserved for creating the type of imagery that was most comprehensible for children simply because it could do that. As Ginsburg explains further, "This happened not because animation is only a children's

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[122] "Stenogramma soveschania po voprosu tematiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikov mul'tiplikatsii," (20 May 1938), RGALI, Fund 2450, inventory 2, item 32.
[123] Apparently, Moiseii Zats, a Soviet scriptwriter.
[124] "Stenogramma soveschania," 6-7.
[125] Thompson, Kristin. "Implications of the Cel Animation Technique." *The Cinematic Apparatus*. Ed. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath. London: Macmillan, 1980. 106-120.

art—of course it can meet the demands of adult spectators. No, the matter is that the genres that are the closest to the artistic nature of animation—the tale and fable—are currently mostly developed by children's literature. Creating children's films, our animation for the first time turned to fairy-tale and fable imagery and situations. The material of fairy-tales and fables in and of itself put artists of drawn cinema on the right track of creative searches and called for mastering the experience accumulated by children's literature and illustrations. Such experience, if it is creatively perceived and processed in correspondence with the specificities of animation, allows for finding the correct answers to most difficult creative issues of drawn and puppet cinema."[126] What Ginsburg's account demonstrates, is that once the "true nature" of animation and its "natural" proximity to children's literature was asserted, it was logical to align it with topics for children, and, as a next logical step, claim that animation is, essentially, a children's medium. Thus, during the process of development of animation as an industry, through a set of rhetorical measures, the definition of animation in terms of audiences shifted from non-defined adult to age-specific children's audiences, and, as a result of the latter shift, animation as a medium became infantilized.

2.1.4   Animation and the Rise of Nationalism

The issues of nations and nationalism became important after the October Revolution of 1917. Dealing with the legacy of the national politics in the Russian Empire, which at the legal level discriminated against non-Russian ethnicities through education, use of language, as well as the establishment of geographical limitations on movement, the new Revolutionary government

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[126] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 96.

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chose to support national movements in the parts of the former empire where the majority of population was non-Russian. To a large extent such a decision was determined by the fact that pro-national minority population often supported the Revolutionary changes. Starting from 1923, and until the end of the 1920s, the politics of "*korenizatsia*" [taking roots] were directed at reestablishment of the national languages on the territories of the Soviet Republics and promotion of administration with local national ties. Such governmental policies resulted in national revivals and blending the communist and socialist ideas.

With Stalin's coming to power, the national politics started shifting towards more emphasis on the socialist, while gradually moving away from the national. In 1925, Stalin introduces his famous cultural formula about Soviet culture being "proletarian in its content, national in its form"[127] that became a template for Soviet cultural products for many years onwards. This formula already signaled a beginning of changes in national politics from "*korenizatsia*" to "the socialist offensive"—emphasis on the domination of the social over the national, which was implemented through the politics of collectivization and industrialization.

"The social offensive" coincided with what Clark characterizes as a period of cosmopolitanism in the Soviet culture, which she locates in the first half of the 1930s. She writes that despite the fact that the 1930s were the period when Soviet society increasingly became closed, there were designated intermediaries who "were allowed out as emissaries to negotiate with the apostate world… forging ahead in the jungles of capitalist culture."[128] Among these intermediaries were Sergei Eisenstein who saw Disney's animation during his trip to the USA and Mexico (1928-1932), and above-mentioned Viktor Smirnov. According to Clark,

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[127] Iosif Stalin, "O politicheskikh zadachakh universiteta narodov Vostoka. The speech at the meeting of students of KUTV," 18 May 1925, in I. V. Stalin I.V. *Sochinenia* (Moscow: Gosidarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1952), 7:138. See more at: http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/1124#sthash.eaob3CKo.dpuf
[128] Clark, *Moscow,* 32.

cosmopolitan tendencies subsided in the second half of the 1930s, especially by 1937, which is consistent with animation's movement away from an acute interest in American animation and the plans to reproduce it with the Soviet content to a more complicated and controversial relationship towards it, which finally led to a complete negation of American influence on Soviet animation in 1949, when the official "struggle with cosmopolitism" started.

The period of cosmopolitanism preceded the political shift from internationalism towards nationalism with Russian becoming the hegemonic culture synonymous to the Soviet. As Clark puts it, by 1937 "… the Soviet leadership was less concerned with internationalist ideological expansionism, and the country tilted perceptibility in the direction of nationalism. Things Russian—Russia's culture, its language and even its people—were increasingly depicted as a primus inter pares, the pares being the other ethnic groups within the Soviet Union and their cultures."[129] Terry Martin contends that "[t]his new status of the Russian culture was announced in a February 1, 1936 lead editorial in Pravda, entitled 'The RSFSR,' which contained an unambiguous declaration of Russian priority: 'All the peoples [of the USSR], participants in the great socialist construction, can take pride in the results of their work. All of them from the smallest to the largest are equal Soviet patriots. But the first among equals is the Russian people, the Russian workers, the Russian toilers, whose role in the entire Great Proletarian Revolution, from the first victory to today's brilliant periods of its development, has been exclusively great.'"[130] This publication clearly marked the beginning of the campaign in which Russia was announced a leading Soviet nation with its culture acquiring a special status of a default Soviet culture. As Martin points out, by 1938, "the Soviet government was propagating an

[129] Clark, *Moscow,* 308.
[130] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 452.

extraordinarily crude essentialist Russian nationalism,"[131] with Russian cultural priority not only being connected with "an affinity with socialism and the dominant role of the Russian proletariat in the October Revolution,"[132] but being officially "extended back a millennium in time."[133]

The processes in animation, though they were directly connected with the Party political decisions, also had their internal cultural and artistic logic. For instance, even at the level of discussions about animation, from the point of view of those who participated in its production, animation deviated from Stalin's formula for arts—national in form, proletarian in spirit. Thus, at the Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning for 1934 that took place in the department of animation, the head of the meeting, Viktor Smirnov, paraphrased Stalin's formula in a rather peculiar way. Asserting that Mickey Mouse is an American national character, Smirnov contended "it is absolutely natural that our country should have its own character type. This type should be national in its spirit [*po dukhu*] and proletarian in its content. It is going to be our Mickey Mouse, our animated character, but the character [created] in the Russian Federation Republic can be different from the character [created] in Georgia, and the character [created] in Georgia can be different from the character [created] in Ukraine."[134] Such a phrasing could have been considered a coincidence or a slip of tongue if a similar paraphrase did not come up in Evgenii Migunov's memoir, in which, writing about the process of creating the images for the Brumberg sisters' film *Propavshaia Gramota* [*The Lost Letter*, 1945], he casually mentions a difficulty in creating characters that would be "national in spirit."[135]

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[131] Ibid., 453.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god" [Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning on 1934], 25 December 1933. RGALI, fund 2456, inventory 1, item 83, 90.
[135] Evgenii Migunov, "Iz vospominanii," *Kinograf* 8 (2000): 152-168, qt. on 156.

The national in spirit, as it is clear from Smirnov's speech, did not presuppose only Russian. Yet, considering that it was in Russia that the largest, the most important, and the only studio that specialized in animation, Soiuzmul'tfil'm, was founded the same year as when the turn towards treating Russian culture as a priority was taken, it meant that most animated films produced in the Soviet Union would be oriented towards Russian national art and cultural traditions. Additionally, treating Soiuzmul'tfil'm as a republican animation studio would be controversial since the very name Soizmul'tfil'm [*Soiuz* meaning union] signals that it is an all-Union studio, a studio that is founded to produce animated films for the whole Soviet Union, and that has resources superior to any "national" studio.

The national question in animation was also interpreted along the lines of originality of the animation imagery. In the directive of the State Committee for Cinematography of November 30, 1944, signed by Ivan Bol'shakov, the part that referred to the thematic planning of the studio, ordered giving priority to the films that were "capable of creating an original style in the art of Soviet animation."[136] The originality of animation was first and foremost seen as a formal emphasis on the traditional Russian art, and it is especially after the World War II, when characterization of an animated film as "national" becomes a highly positive one.[137]

In his 1956 volume, Ginsburg, retrospectively, emphasizes the national foundation of animation as the only possible route for its development, and criticizes early animation for lack of its national consciousness. He writes, "[the end of 1920s- early 1930s] was the beginning of the search for the ways of further development of art animation. Initially, this search was a blind

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[136] Ivan Bol'shakov, Prikaz #512 po Komitetu po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR, Moscow, 30 November, 1944. RGALI, fund 2469, inventory, 1, item 1, 1.

[137] See, for instance, Medvedkin's commentary about the Brumberg's sisters' film Fedia Zaitsev, in which he praises the film as a national one. ("Soveshchanie stsenarnogo otdela," [1 April 1948]. RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 513, 91).

one. The artists did not yet understand that the specific possibilities of animation should and must be developed on the basis of the national artistic traditions. This mistake, that stemmed from the proletkul't-nihilistic attitude towards the cultural heritage, influenced the search of serial characters to which animation artists paid so much attention at the end of 1920s- early 1930s."[138] By referring to the searches for a serial animated character as "a mistake," and by calling to facilitation of "national traditions" in animation, Ginsburg emphasizes that Soviet animation should develop differently from that of American, and rely on the national imagery rather than try to reproduce American animation in terms of its serial structure as well as imagery.

In the discourse on animation, the impetus to use the national artistic traditions soon became merged with the explorations of the aesthetics of socialist realism that animation was ardently trying to invent on the wave against formalism. This tendency became especially noticeable after World War II, when Soviet animation narrowed the scope of genres to those that were most advantageous for introduction of the national imagery—fairy-tales and fables. As Ginsburg, articulating the discourse about the national component of socialist realism, contends, the "Struggle of the Party for ideology [ideinost'] and peopleness [narodnost'] of the Soviet art made an enormous influence on the ideological and artistic growth of Soviet animation during these years. Pointing out the necessity of tight connections of artists with the people, emphasizing a huge educational meaning of their creative work, and drawing their attention to mastering the national realistic traditions of the art of the people of the USSR, the Party criticism helped them to overcome the formalist influences and occasional uncritical attitude towards

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[138] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 94.

decadent artistic tendencies that were spread in the arts of the capitalist West."[139] This quotation points to several aspects of how the national artistic traditions colonized socialist realist method initiated by the Party—searching for adequate forms of expression that would correspond to the demands of socialist realism, artistic workers in different media, animation included, resorted to the use of a safe and tested "national realistic tradition" that corresponded to the new nationalistic policies of the Soviet Union that called for the national consolidation. At the end of the 1940s, the tendency towards nationalization of arts and culture considerably increased.

After the end of World War II, nationalism received a new moral ground in the fact that it was the Soviet Union, and thus the Soviet ideological and political system that won against Nazism. However, it was not generally the Soviet people but specifically the Russian people who were praised for this victory by Stalin himself.[140] In conjunction with this, a citation from the speech by Lamis Bredis, an animation director famous for the emphasis on political and ideological aspects of animation that he made in his speeches, is of a particular interest. At a meeting in 1946, Bredis stated, "I would like to focus on a range of issues that are issues of ideology and of our internal ideological state. What is ideology? It is, first of all, the victory and construction of the socialist society in our country. How does it manifest itself? In the fact that the Soviet Union turned out to be the strongest, most robust, and viable. Where does the strength of our Soviet people come from? It is a high moral strength that enables us to finish building a socialist society and start building a communist society. In this light, our task, the task of the workers or arts, should be particularly honorable. The workers of arts should raise the same basic political questions that inform the life of our country. Some comrades are saying that we make

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[139] Ibid., 163.
[140] See, for instance, the toast delivered by Stalin on 24 May 1945 that received the name "Za russkii narod" [To the Russian People]. See translation of the text of the toast in, for instance, Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: from World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2006), 266.

films about some far-away fairy-tale-like world. We should not leave the fairy-tale world because we live in a fairy-tale world, but we should make other fairy-tales, fairy-tales about our country."[141] This apparently convoluted speech in actuality follows the post-war logic that informed genre and aesthetic choices in animation—the impossible, fairy-tale-like victory of the Soviet (or, *pars pro toto*, Russian) people and creation of a utopian society by this people called for animation of fairy-tale-inspired imagery and animated adaptation of the fairy-tales that would reinforce the sense of utopia in which the country was already living. This utopia, however, was not an inclusive utopia without borders, but one that had a very specific geography and national identity—the Soviet/Russian one.

The wave of anti-cosmopolitanism that was orchestrated in 1949, was probably the final blow to everything that could be considered foreign in Soviet animation, and the final attack on the non-national imagery. The campaign, the actual purpose of which was an anti-Semitic purging, resulted in animation in general, and at Soiuzmul'tfil'm in particular, in attacks on Disney—Disney's animation was chosen as a scape-goat of the cosmopolitanism. It is interesting that the same Lamis Bredis mentioned above played an active part in this anti-Disney campaign. On the one hand, this allowed the workers at the studio to avoid personal accusations in cosmopolitanism, and thus escape purging, on the other—all of Disney products were deemed inappropriate for the Soviet audiences and were not screened after that for decades.[142]

Additionally, the anti-Disney ban resulted in a change in the use of animalistic images—their numbers considerably decreased in the 1950s, while there was an increase in production of fairy-tales dominated by human characters, and there were very few films that used animalistic

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[141] "Protokol sobrania tvorcheskoi sektsii," 3 October 1946, RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 10, 4.
[142] See the discussion of the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign in Soiuzmul'tfil'm in the memoir by Kiril Maliantovich, "Kak borolis' s 'kosmopolitami' na 'Soiuzmul'tfil'me' (rasskaz-vospominanie)," *Kinovedcheskie zapiski*, 52 (2001), http://www.kinozapiski.ru/ru/article/sendvalues/822/

characters as primary ones. The Russian historian of animation, Georgii Borodin, goes as far as to maintain that animal characters in Soviet animation of the 1950s were visually much more zoomorphic than those of Disney's'—with animalistic movement and appearance (for instance, no clothes).[143] It is hard to agree with such an assessment because of several reasons: first, Disney's animal characters themselves had a different degree of animality, and their anthropomorphism considerably varied in different films; second, the very shift of animation to adaptation of Russian fairy-tales already presupposed emphasis on human character.[144] However, because Soviet animators shared the opinion that Disney's most successful characters were the ones that were highly anthropomorphized animalistic characters, there was a period of fascination with them in Soviet animation. And because they were easier to produce, the movement away from anthropomorphized animal characters was a considerable change for animators.

Soviet nationalism and the political tendency to prioritize Russian culture over other Soviet cultures were especially prominent in the 1950s, during the decade famous for production of animation that had clear traditional Russian references, both in feature-length adaptations of fairytales, and in fairy-tale and fable shorts, such as *Skazka o rybake i rybke* [A Tale about Fisherman and Fish] (1950, director Mikhail Tsekhanovskii, an adaptation of the eponymous fairy-tale by Alexandr Pushkin), *Tchudo-melnitsa* [The Magic Mill] (1950, director Olga Khodataieva, based on Russian folk tale "Zhernoviki"), *Kogda zazhigaiuts'a elki* [When New Year's Trees' Turn on Their Lights] (1950, director Vladimir Suteev), *Skazka o mertvoi tsarevne*

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[143] Interview with Georgii Borodin, June 2012. Interview is available as an audio recording.
[144] There are no Russian fairy-tales with animal characters playing main roles—even in the fairy tales where there are animals among main characters (for instance, the *Queen-Swan* or *Queen-Frog*), they turn out to be enchanted humans.

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i semi bogatyriakh [Tale of a Dead Princess and Seven Bogatyrs] (1951, director Ivan Ivanov-Vano, adaptation of the eponymous fairy-tale by Alexandr Pushkin), and many others.[145]

In sum, development of Soviet animation in the 1930s-1940s was directly connected with the political tendencies of the period, and to a large extent was a result of those tendencies. However, the political influences did not unambiguously result in a specific type of animation. Rather, animation as a medium was making adjustments to the changes in the political climate, simultaneously trying to find its own place in the system of Soviet arts that would give it means for further development. It was also trying to develop its own specific aesthetics that would be consonant with the political requirements of the time. The fact that animated films produced during different political periods in the Soviet Union display considerable and consistent differences, points to an interdependence of the political and aesthetic processes, and, at the same time, reveals an internal logic of animation as a medium that, in Alois Riegl's terms, can be named *Kunstwollen*—an internal tendency of a specific art to develop in a particular way.[146] This tendency manifests itself in the aesthetic return of Soviet animation to its early forms in the period during World War II—the time of crisis that demanded from animation an adequate aesthetic and rhetorical stance. Analysis of the political satirical film *Kino-Tsirk*, a most prominent animated film produced during the time of Nazi occupation of a part of the Soviet Union, reveals the aesthetic logic of Soviet animation as a political message, something that Soviet animation was engaged with before the tendencies of infantilization.

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[145] More on genre of Soviet animation see Chapter 4.

[146] Riegl develops the notion of Kunstwollen in his 1893 volume *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*. See Alois Riegl *Problems Of Style: Foundations For a History of Ornament* (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University, 1992).

2.2   CASE-STUDY: *KINO-TSIRK* (1942)

As James Sherry points out following Ronald Paulson, satire "has really two components—a representational component and a rhetorical component. As representation, satire is a mimetic art like portraiture. It presents or represents an individual (or a group of individuals), a scene, a satiric object. But satire is also a rhetorical art. It tries to make us adopt a certain attitude towards the objects presented to us, to persuade us to see them in a certain way."[147] It is this combination of representational and rhetorical that made satire particularly important in the Soviet culture as a means of ideological warfare. Its value and *modus operandi* were summarized by Lunacharskii in the following way,

> Satire is an ideological victory in the situation of an absence of a material victory. Hence, we can easily conclude that satire is at its highest when a new forming class or a social group that have created an ideology that considerably exceeds the dominant ideology of the dominant class has not developed to the extent that it is capable of defeating the enemy materially. Hence there is a simultaneity of its gigantic triumph and its disdain of the enemy, and its hidden fear of the enemy, hence its virulence, hence its huge energy of hatred, hence—very often—mourning that frames in black satire's image shining with joy. In this, there is contradiction of satire, in this, there is its dialectic.[148]

Early Soviet animation was essentially satirical because of its political function—agitation—, and its aesthetics: it was based on early Soviet caricature, including that of print and displays, such as *Okna ROSTA*. However, such an aesthetic connection of animation with caricature was

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[147] James Sherry, "Four Modes of Caricature: Reflections upon a Genre," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 87.1 (1987): 29-62.
[148] Lunacharskii Anatolii, "Smekh ubivaet," from the article "Jonathan Swift i ego 'Skazka o bochke," in A.V., Lunacharskii *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 6 (1963). 37-40. Accessed at http://ruslit.traumlibrary.net/book/lunacharskiy-o-prazdnestvah/lunacharskiy-o-prazdnestvah.html#work003002

not unique for the Soviet Union, and in this it was essentially similar to American animation, even though there seems to be a general consensus that there is a principal genealogical difference between Soviet and American animation. Laura Pontieri articulates this position in the following way, "While American animation had its roots in comic strips and vaudeville acts, most of the early Soviet animated films came out of political manifestos and satirical vignettes; they were primarily caricatures and propaganda works addressed to an adult audience."[149] Nevertheless, in light of the genealogical affinity of caricature and comic strip, it is possible to trace the origin of graphic animation to one primary source: caricature. For instance, calling Mickey Mouse "one peaceful conqueror of the world," E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris write about animation, "while the position of serious art becomes more problematic every day— caricature has given birth to a new form of art, bristling with undreamed-of potentialities."[150]

By the beginning of the 1940s, however, due to a change in the political style from agitation to propaganda, as well as the changes in politics of entertainment, audience and nationalism, Soviet animation was increasingly resorting to the genre of fairy-tales and fables. Yet, during World War II, many animators retuned not only to the topics of political satire, but also to the aesthetic style of early animation inspired by caricature. A number of animated films that were produced over the war years were anti-Nazi film-posters and satirical films.

One of the most original among them is the film *Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh attractsionakh* [Cinema Circus: Animated Satire in Three Attractions],[151] directed by Leonid Amal'rik and Olga Khodataeva, was released in the Soviet Union in Moscow in 1942. The story

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[149] Laura Pontieri, *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children* (New Barnet, U.K.: John Libbey, 2012), 6.

[150] E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris, *Caricature* (Harmondsworth, England: King Penguin Books, 1940), 24.

[151] In 2007, *Kino-Tsirk,* together with other anti-Nazi film-posters, was released by Jove Film in a DVD collection of Soviet animated films called *Animated Soviet Propaganda*. *Cinema Circus*, the film I will be discussing here, appeared in volume two of the collection called *Fascist Barbarians*.

behind its creation is as follows: according to Borodin, during evacuation of Soiuzmul'tfil'm to Samarkand in the fall of 1941, Amal'rik was left behind. His documents had been burned in his house during a bombing raid, and since without them he could not obtain ration cards, his survival was highly problematic. While walking the streets of Moscow, he ran into film director Konstantin Gavriushin whose situation was similar to that of Amal'rik's. They both went to see Mikhail Khripunov, assistant director of Ivan Bol'shakov, Head of State Committee for Cinematography, who also stayed in Moscow, and offered their service in creation of an anti-Nazi animated political satirical film. Khripunov immediately sanctioned production of the film, and after gathering a production group that consisted of animators and cinematographers who were available in Moscow, including Nikolai and Olga Khodataeva,[152] they started working on the film that was completed by March 1942.[153]

Kino-Tsirk is a black-and-white film, with the style of imagery similar to other anti-Nazi film-posters produced at the time: its imagery is based on caricatures and use grotesque and hyperbole. However, it is unique in its content and the use of satire. Most of the World War II animated film-posters are considerably shorter (under two minutes). Many of them (for instance, *Sterviatniki* [Vultures] (1941, director Panteleimon Sazonov), *Chego Hitler khochet i chto on poluchit* [What Hitler Wants and What He Will Get] (1941, directors Ivan Ivanov-Vano, Alexandr Ivanov, Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg, and Olga Khodataeva) represent Hitler, the Nazis, and fascism in general as dangerous and revolting animals, such as vultures, warthogs, and so forth. The main message of these film-posters was that the enemy would not advance on the territory of the Soviet Union, and that it would be defeated by the Soviet army.

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[152] Names of Gavriushin and Nikolai Khodataev do not appear in the film credits.
[153] Interview with Georgii Borodin, June 2012. Interview is available as an audio recording.

Kino-Tsirk is a considerably longer than the film-posters produced at the time—it is more than 3:30 minutes—animated short that does not have a straightforwardly articulated adversarial political message. Neither does it animalize Hitler, nor does it represent Hitler and Nazism as dangerous. Here Hitler is represented as an unattractive grotesque human who has a disproportional body and a hyperbolical appetite for power; according to the film, he does not even have the ability to realize the consequences of what he is doing, and that is why all his initiatives fail, revealing his impotence.

The film is structured similarly to a film-concert or a variety performance consisting of three parts that in the film correspond to two circus acts that take place on a theater stage: "Adolf the Dog Trainer and his Pooches" and "Adolf the Juggler of Powder Kegs," and a screening of a short film "Hitler Visits Napoleon." At the beginning of each part, the MC opens the stage curtain, and draws it back at the end. The circus acts start with the assumption that the MC and the performance take place in the same theatrical space—when the curtain is open, we see the set stage, and the curtain is drawn while the action is still taking place, whereas the second part, "Hitler Visits Napoleon," starts and finishes with a dark stage, which produces an illusion of a beginning and end of a film screening. The combination of the types of performances—circus and film—and the space in which these performances take place—theater—blur the dividing lines between theater, circus, and cinema, and create a synthetic type of space reminiscent of early cinema, when films, both live and animated, were integrated into vaudeville performances. The image of the MC who announces the three numbers also adds to this confluence.[154] It is based on the Soviet comedian/clown Mikhail Nikolayevich Rumyantsev who became famous under the scene name Karandash (Russian for "pencil"). Rumiantsev started his career of a

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[154] *Kino-Tsirk*, the announcer of the show. https://youtu.be/YY9mM56-Lzo?t=18

comedian/clown parodying Charlie Chaplin's film character the Tramp. He was not the only Soviet comedian who imitated Chaplin—as John H. Jowsen contends, "Chaplin's character and appearance were duplicated by many [Soviet] clowns. His politics were left-wing, and his little tramp was a sympathetic, downtrodden character, but eventually even he became suspect because he was considered (at least on the basis of his early films) too much the victim and not enough a fighter."[155] Rumiantsev was the first to abandon Chaplin's image and create the one of his own, Karandash, but when he did it in the early 1930s, he still used a lot from Chaplin's character. Karandash had a similar to Tramp's baggy suit, moustache and stick. Rumiantsev changed the hat—it became much taller, and added a dog—Scottish terrier Kliaksa (Russian for "blop"). Probably because Rumiantsev managed to create such a memorable image, his Karandash became one of the most popular comedians/clowns in the history of the Soviet circus.

Similarly to cinema, circus was endorsed by the Soviet government soon after the Revolution as "an ideologically instructive entertainment."[156] However, during the Stalin's years, circus, as well as other performance arts in the Soviet Union, was going through a period of stagnation. As Jowsen points out, this was connected with two processes taking place in the Soviet Union: first, the change in the artistic method to socialist realism, which made problematic any kind of eccentric performances, and second—an official belief that the Soviet society did not have substantial grounds, and thus needs, for criticism by clowns. As Jowsen puts it, "According to the official Soviet view, such comic business had meaning only before the revolution, for then it may have represented an exaggerated satire on the 'vulgarity of the philistines.' Since that time, it was claimed, the target of the clowns' jokes ('small merchants,

[155] John H. Jowsen, *Clowns* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976), 328.
[156] On the history of Soviet circus, see Miriam Neirick, *When Pigs Could Fly and Bears Could Dance: A History of the Soviet Circus* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

idlers, dandies') had been routed."[157] However, with the beginning of World War II, circus acquired an ultimate object of satire and ridicule—the Nazi army and their leaders. Karandash himself created several sketches that satirized the Nazis. As Jowsen writes, "These sketches were performed not only in the circus, but on makeshift stages at the front lines as well. He [Karandash] would, for example, make an entrance riding a "fascist tank" that was nothing more than a barrel on wheels, with a swastika and a skull and crossbones painted on the sides. Wearing a tin pot as a helmet and holding an axe and club in his hands, Karandash would scream 'Nach Maskau!' ('To Moscow'!) as the tank collapsed to the ground. He would then hastily make a getaway on crutches."[158] Though in *Kino-Tsirk* Karandash does not impersonate Nazis, and remains only a presenter and witness to the performances by Hitler, the satirical approach to ridiculing Nazis that he used in his sketches is close to the ones used in the animated film. Additionally, considering Chaplin's satirical critique of Nazism and personally Hitler in his film *The Great Dictator* (1940), the image of MC also puts *Kino-Tsirk* in a broader cultural anti-Nazi satirical context.

The second part of the film is the only narrative one, presented as a short film. It is a cinematic visualization of a joke about Hitler trying to become a new Napoleon.[159] Hitler comes to Napoleon's tomb and asks him for advice about conquering the world. As a response, Napoleon suggests that Hitler should lie down with him in the tomb. Hitler is trying to run away, but the arm of Napoleon's skeleton grabs him and prevents him from escaping. Though in this part Hitler is presented in a satirical way, by framing this part in cinematic conventions, the film achieves several goals. First, it puts Hitler and Nazism into a historical perspective and connects

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[157] Jowsen, *Clowns*, 326.
[158] Ibid., 330.
[159] *Kino-Tsirk*, Part 2, Hitler at Napoleon's tomb. https://youtu.be/YY9mM56-Lzo?t=104

it with Napoleon, implicitly referencing Napoleon's failure to conquer the Russian Empire—something that would be impossible in the context of a circus that is essentially atemporal, and always oriented towards an ahistorical present. Second, the invocation of the medium of cinema introduced into the performance a dimension of seriousness and realism, which would be impossible in the setting of the circus where nothing is real, nothing is what it seems. Siegfried Kracauer uses the example of the circus to discuss the trope of a distorted mirror that he especially connects with the figure of the clown. He writes, "While the real actors suspend the conditions of the life assigned to us, [the clowns] with their off-key seriousness in turn suspend the unreality of those actors. This should lead one to expect that they restore normal reality but, on the contrary, they are only a caricature of caricature; it feels like being in a hall of mirrors, and from the successively arranged mirrors the beholder's own countenance radiates in ever more distorted form."[160] *Kino-Tsirk* manages to avoid creating a representation of a distorted mirror of the circus by referencing the cultural context of the medium of cinema, which brings in the associated with it system of cultural coding—realism and historicism.

The first and the third parts of the film are non-narrative: the former features a circus number demonstrating Hitler taming three dogs named Mussolini, Horthy and Antonescu (the leaders of Italy, Hungary and Romania who during World War II were Hitler's allies)[161]; the latter features Hitler juggling torches, shaped as bombs, on a pile of barrels, each of which has a name of a European country occupied by the Nazis written on it.[162] Hitler drops several torches, the barrels start burning and explode, as a result of which Hitler finds himself comically trapped in one of them. These parts of the animated film do not tell a story, but rather display a circus

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[160] Cited in Mariam Bratu Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 8.

[161] *Kino-Tsirk*, Part 1, Hitler at restaurant New Europe. https://youtu.be/YY9mM56-Lzo?t=50

[162] *Kino-Tsirk*, Part 3, Hitler is juggling torches. https://youtu.be/YY9mM56-Lzo?t=180

act—Hitler performing an action and creating a spectacle, which brings the animated film close to early animation based on gags and tricks. For instance, such early animated shorts by Winsor McCay as *Little Nemo* (1911) and *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) follow a similar logic of presentation and spectacle, which display of the abilities of the apparatus of animation: Gertie's obeying her master demonstrates animation's ability to create an image of an extinct animal that looks and acts alive, and that is fully submissive to the will of the human who created it; in *Nemo*, we witness the distortions of the image which is transported into the fantastic realm of animation that is not constrained by the laws of nature. Yet, overcoming of nature and reality in *Kino-Tsirk* has a different purpose than mere demonstration of what animated characters can do. Both parts use linguistic tropes of metaphorization—in the first part, the Nazi's allies are animalized, i.e., represented as dogs, which emphasizes their eagerness to serve Hitler, and in the third, Hitler's juggling fire torches is a visualization of the metaphor "to play with fire." By adding linguistic and rhetorical dimensions to the imagery, animation of *Kino-Tsirk* no longer presents only the potentiality of the apparatus, but also represents a message, and an overtly political one. The film satirizes Hitler and his intentions to become a conqueror of Europe, stating in three different ways the vanity of his project.

Writing about the sources for satire, Leonard Feinberg (1968) points out that "Great villains have always been hard to ridicule. Men like Attila and Hitler are antisocial, immoral, monstrous, yet they do not lend themselves to satire until they become hypocritical. The villain who openly admits both his villainy and his motivation may be horrible, but he is not entertaining."[163] Feinberg's stance can be supported by the fact that among the Soviet animated films that deal with Nazism, there are very few satirical ones. Yet, the very fact that such films

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[163] Leonard Feinberg, *Introduction to Satire* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1967), 30.

exist raises the question about the specificity of a visual satire used in animation. In order to address these questions, I will look more closely at the concept of satire, consider its interpretations, and analyze the satirical imagery in *Kino-Tsirk*.

As Jeff Todd wittily remarks, "[M]ost of us probably have the same understanding of satire as the Supreme Court has of pornography: we know it when we see it."[164] Satire is studied within various disciplines that to some extent determine the way categories are used to interpret it; however, interpretations within the same discipline also vary dramatically. For instance, in communications, some scholars, Kenneth Burke among them, consider satire as a purely verbal phenomenon; [165] others, like Frederic V. Bogel, point out that satire can be constructed via visual means.[166] In terms of satirical influence on the audience, there are also polar opinions—one end would be that satire does not require any action from the audience,[167] and the opposite would be the one articulated by Todd, that "the feature of satire that makes it distinct from other forms of literature and entertainment is its attempt to identify with an audience, to make it aware of problems and to move it to action."[168]

It is also possible to find different satirical approaches to the Other. Bogel points out that one of the most important specificities of satire is that it simultaneously signifies that there are boundaries between the satirist and the object of satire and that these boundaries are in danger. He writes, "The 'first' satiric gesture, then, is not to expose the satiric object in all its alien difference but to define it as different, as other: to make a difference by setting up a textual machine or mechanism for producing difference. The mechanism does more than that but we can

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[164] Jeff Todd, "A Burkean Rhetoric for Satire," *Thalia: Studies in Literary Humor* 21:.1/2 (2004): 39-50, 39.
[165] See the overview of Kenneth Burke's writings on satire in Todd (2004).
[166] See, for instance, Fredric V. Bogel, *The Difference Satire Makes: Rhetoric and Reading from Jonson to Byron* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
[167] For instance, Feinberg, in his *Introduction to Satire*, does evoke audience's reaction as an integral part of a satirical act.
[168] Todd, "A Burkean Rhetoric for Satire," 40.

begin here: not with the recognition of difference but with anxiety about proximity or sameness or identification and with the consequent production of difference."[169] Further, he briefly summarizes this function of satire as a "ritual of separation"[170] and continues this idea following Roland Barthes and Mary Douglas by pointing out that "it is not difference but the erosion of annihilation of difference that requires ritual acts of boundary-policing and boundary-establishment."[171] According to Bogel, this situation complicates satire since the very act of satire points to a troubled distinction between the satirist and the object.

Mikhail Bakhtin also writes from the premise that satire has a complex or rather ambiguous relationship with the Other; however, his perspective is a different one. He differentiates between two types of satire, Modernist and that based on folklore, defining the difference along the lines of the concept of laughter. Bakhtin distinguishes between two types of laughter: festive, carnival laughter—the one that is directed at those who laugh—and satirical laughter, which is directed at the Other. Bakhtin maintains that before Modernity, people did not exclude themselves from a becoming world; that is why when they laughed, they also laughed at themselves, or, as he puts it, "he who laughs also belongs to it [the world]."[172] In contrast, the modern satirist, according to Bakhtin, "knows only negating laughter and positions himself outside of the phenomenon he is laughing at, and by doing so, juxtaposes himself to this phenomenon."[173] By defining the modern satirical laughter as negating and excluding, Bakhtin,

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[169] Bogel, *The Difference*, 42.
[170] Ibid., 43.
[171] Bogel, *The Difference*, 46.
[172] M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 12.
[173] I am using my own translation from Russian here because the translation of the corresponding citation from the 1984 volume distorts the meaning of the original. Here is the full citation from the translation: "The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it." (12) In the original, the laughter is not negative, it is negating, and the satirist does not place himself above the object of mockery, but beyond it—Bakhtin is pointing towards the border between the satirist and the object of satire rather than establishment of a hierarchy. Source for translation from Russian: M. Bakhtin, *Tvorchestvo Fransois Rablais i*

as well as Bogel does later, lays the groundwork for a theory of satirical laughter as laughter at the Other. Satirical laughter provides the necessary conditions for laughter at the Other—the Other is being negated and ridiculed, and through this process the demarcation line between the one who laughs and the one who is being laughed at is drawn. As Bogel explains, this line becomes necessary because of the potential contamination of the subject of laughter by the object of laughter.

Another goal that satire achieves is accusation. Though, as Shumiatskii contended in 1936, Soviet cinema did not have to rely on the accusative Russian satire of Gogol, Shchedrin and Chekhov that aroused the kind of laughter that "derived from bitterness and hatred"[174] because the Soviet society had changed, the class of workers had won, and now it could laugh a joyful and happy laughter, with the war, the rhetoric of struggle returned, and accusative satirical laughter became a way to deal with the situation of deprivation and suffering. In the context of the approach to satire as an act of accusation, the theorizing of satire by E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris is of a particular interest. According to this approach that paralleled Freud's interpretation of humor as "an outlet of human aggression," Gombrich and Kris interpreted "pictorial satire as an instrument of hostile impulses."[175] For them, the satirical images become a magic embodiment of a human object of aggression, and the actions towards the image are ultimately aimed at the object behind it. Tracing the history of relationships between the magic image and humans, Gombrich and Kris wrote,

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narodnaia kul'tura Srednivekov'ia i Renessansa. Vvedenie,
‹http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/Culture/Baht/intro.php›.
[174] Translation from Christie and Taylor, *Film Factory*, 368.
[175] E.H. Gombrich, *The Uses of Images: Studies in The Social Function of Art and Visual Communication* (London: Phaidon Press, 1999), 190.

In the early primitive stage, the hostile action is carried out on the person through the picture. Every injury done to the picture is thought to touch the person and in reality wound the individual. Picture and person are one, damage done to the picture is damage done to the person. This is the stage of all practised effigy magic; which, of course, no longer exists in this ideal form in our culture. In a second stage the hostile action is carried out on the picture instead of on the person, or else the picture is intended to perpetuate in graphic form a hostile action, injury, degradation, or shame. It is carried out only on the picture and does not wound the person himself, but only his honour. That is the stage of the defamatory or shame pictures. In the third stage, to which caricature belongs, the hostile action is carried out by altering the portrait only. It remains in the picture, in the aesthetic sphere. This sphere denotes the methods peculiar to caricature. Thanks to the power of the artist the picture is altered through the medium of his art. Man is interpreted in a picture and only this interpretation contains criticism and aggression. Only a few words of interpretation remain to be added. If we speak of elimination of magic in pictorial art we mean no more, but no less either, than what is meant in the history of science when the evolution towards rationalism and abstraction is described.[176]

Thus, for Gombrich and Kris, any forms of magic, that through hurting an object aimed at damaging an actual human that this object represented, could be considered predecessors of caricature. Maintaining that caricatures appeared as a result of the development of the humanity from the irrational state to the state of rationalization and abstraction, they believed that caricature exists only in the sphere of the aesthetic, and thus not the caricatured human, but his or her representation, become the subject of criticism in caricature. Though later, after Kris' death,

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[176] E. H. Gombrich, (with Ernst Kris) "The Principles of Caricature," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1938): 319-42 [Trapp no.1938A.1]

Gombrich abandoned this approach explaining his changed position by his doubts as to the social progress from magic to science and secularization,[177] his later argument does not change the general premise that distortion of a human face or body in the image relates to a manifestation of a desire for actually harming the object of caricature, and destroying them, which can be supported by the fact that in the time of crisis the importance of caricatures considerably increases, and by their resurrection in animation during the time of WWII. In animation, the object of satire can be manipulated, and the audience gets pleasure from identifying with the apparatus of animation, and controlling the object of satire, if not in reality, than in a dream world of animation. A human can become dehumanized or their body can be distorted, which leads to a fulfilment of the ultimate desire of caricature, which, analogously to that of black magic, deals with the destruction of its object at a symbolic level through the audience's laughter.

Viewed from these perspectives, *Kino-Tsirk* presents a case of satirical laughter at the enemy which effectively places the object of laughter, the Other (Hitler), outside of the category "we"—the potential audience of the film. Considering the historical circumstances in which the film was made—Nazi occupation of a substantial part of the European region of the Soviet Union—it is important to point out the functions satirical laughter can perform here.

According to Bakhtin, laughter performs several functions, among which are the elimination of distance between the object of laughter and the audience, and the annihilation of fear of and piety toward the object. Bakhtin writes, "As a distanced image a subject cannot be comical, to be made comical, it must be brought close. Everything that makes us laugh is close at

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[177] E.H. Gombrich, *The Uses of Image*, 191.

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hand, all comical creativity works in a zone of maximal proximity."[178] Bringing Hitler right in front of the potential audience of the animated film and making him act in a comic performance, makes him more accessible and less untouchable. The elimination of distance works both vertically and horizontally: in order to bring an object of laughter closer to the audience, it is necessary to decrease the hierarchical distance as well as horizontal remoteness. In the animated film, Hitler stops being a political figure at the hierarchical top of his country; instead, he is brought down from his political height and placed at the eye-level of the potential audience of the film.

The elimination of distance is closely connected with the second factor of laughter Bakhtin writes about—demolition of fear and piety before an object. Bakhtin writes, "Laughter demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation of it."[179] However, the question of cause and effect of laughter and fear seems to be more complex than Bakhtin is presenting it—it is hard to say what comes first—whether laughter causes demolition of fear or laughter is a sign of already demolished fear. In any case, however, laughter is a sign of absence of fear, fear disappears at the moment of laughter.

Andrew Horton also points out that accusing satirical laughter is "a potent form of survival, an alternative world view as well as a means of offense."[180] In a situation when satirist

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[178] M.M Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (University of Texas Press, 1981), 23.
[179] Ibid., 23.
[180] Andrew Horton, "Introduction: Carnival versus Lashing Laughter in Soviet Cinema," in *Inside Soviet Film Satire: Laughter with a Lash*, ed. Andrew Horton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6.

is oppressed, laughter can serve as a means of "distancing oneself from the oppressors and celebrating one's own sense of self, values, dignity."[181]

There are several ways to cause satiric laughter. Feinberg summarizes them briefly in the following way, "the basic technique of satire is distortion, usually in the form of exaggeration, understatement and pretense… A popular satiric method of achieving distortion is incongruity."[182] Incongruity is most often associated with different humor theories and is considered to be a humor mechanism at the heart of which there is a contradiction,[183] opposition,[184] ambiguity[185] or conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs[186] that is perceived by the audience as comic and thus triggers laughter.[187] According to Kenneth Burke, incongruity, was used by Spengler and Nietzsche as a device of establishing perspective by "a constant juxtaposing of incongruous words, attaching to some name a qualifying epithet which had heretofore gone with different orders of names."[188] Despite Burke's considering only verbal incongruity, scholars like Anne Teresa Demo use this term also for describing non-verbal or both verbal and non-verbal incongruities that are used for creating images.[189]

In *Kino-Tsirk*, the comic and satirical effects are created through multiple incongruities. Below, I will discuss some of them focusing on such categories as location, body, appearance

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[181] Ibid.

[182] Feinberg, Introduction, 4.

[183] Wallace Gray, "The Uses of Incongruity," in *Educational Theater Journal* 15.4 (Dec. 1963), 343.

[184] As Jeroen Vandalele points out, interpretation of incongruity as an opposition is more common in semantic terms (see Jeroen Vandalele, "Humor Mechanisms in Film Comedy: Incongruity and Superiority," *Poetics Today*, 23.2 [Summer 2002], 223).

[185] Evelyn Payne Hatcher, *Art as Culture: an Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*, 2d ed., (Westport, Conn.: Bergin and Garvey, 1999), 157.

[186] Thomas R. Shulz, "A Cognitive-Developmental Analysis of Humor," (1976): 12, cited in Vandalele, "Humor Mechanisms," 223.

[187] A very detailed and useful discussion of the definitions of incongruity and their criticism can be found in Robert L. Lotta, *Basic Humor Process: A Cognitive-Shift Theory and the Case against Incongruity* (Berlin: Walter DeGruyter, 1998).

[188] Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change; An Anatomy of Purpose* (New York: New Republic, 1936), 119.

[189] Anne Teresa Demo, "The Guerrilla Girls' Comic Politics of Subversion," *Women's Studies in Communication* 23.2 (Spring 2000): 133-157.

(clothing), and identity. These are central categories through which the image of Hitler is satirized, and analysis of which will reveal the mechanisms of the rhetoric of satire in a moving drawn image.

Incongruity of location. The animated film takes Hitler out of his habitual[190] environment—the space of governmental work and decision making, and places him into a space of circus and cinema. The spaces of circus and cinema presuppose particular functions of actors. In cinema, they are determined by the genre—the actor's performance uses the system of actions and gestures that the audience would be able to read in a way adequate to the genre and actor's performance in it. In circus, as rule, there are three types of human performers—the ones who demonstrate their skills—such as tamers, jugglers and acrobats, the ones who demonstrate a complete lack of skills—clowns, and MCs. In both environments, Hitler plays a function of a comic figure. In the circus environment, though Hitler is introduced as a skilled performer— tamer and juggler—he fails in each of his endeavor, and thus performs a role of a clown, a comic character, who undertakes an action, but is either incompetent or inobservant, and thus cannot carry it our successfully. Both episodes set in the circus involve physical comedy—in the first part, Hitler eats meat off a bone which he afterwards throws to the dogs he has, supposedly, tamed, but the dogs get out of control; in the third part, he falls and gets hit and trapped by a barrel. It is a slap-stick type of comedy that, contrary to, for instance, Chaplin's comedy, does not arise sympathy towards the actor—all of the actions are initiated by Hitler himself, and the comical situations in which he finds himself are a direct result of his ignorance and inability to understand and predict—the actions of his performing partners, the dogs, in the first part, and the environment, the fact that he is playing with fire on barrels with explosives, in the third. In the

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[190] Here I use this term as a derivative from Pierre Bourdieu's "habitus."

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second, cinematic, part, Hitler is incapable of understanding the ambiguity of his wish to become the new Napoleon: he operates within understanding that to become a new Napoleon means to conquer Europe, yet in the discourse created by the film, to be Napoleon means to be dead, and thus, when the skeleton of Napoleon invites Hitler into his tomb, and the system of meaning switches from "Napoleon the conqueror" to "Napoleon the corpse," Hitler becomes an object of a joke, a comical character.

Mikhail Bakhtin singles out three types of comic characters: the rogue, the clown and the fool. For Bakhtin, these three characters are carnivalesque inversions of the conventional social class relationships in a feudal society. He writes, "Opposed to convention and function as a force for exposing it, we have the level-headed, cheery and clever wit of the rogue (in the form of a villain, a pretty townsman-apprentice, a young itinerant cleric, a tramp belonging to no class), the parodied taunts of the clown and the simpleminded incomprehension of fool."[191] The space of the comical which for Bakhtin is the space of carnival, allows for flipping the social roles—those who have power and means are presented as foolish and laughable; those on the other end of the social scale—witty and inventive. In this overturned hierarchy, "The clown and the fool represent a metamorphosis of tsar and god—but the transformed figures are located in the nether world, in death."[192] In *Kino-Tsirk*, the character of Hitler performs a double function—he is a fool who does not understand what is happening in the world around him and thus cannot achieve any tasks he is setting for himself. By failing to read correctly the conventions of the world, the fool reveals the truth about it exposing that the "world is confused by conventions of pathos and by falsity."[193] Hitler's performance, however, does not reveal the truth about the

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[191] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 162.
[192] Ibid., 161.
[193] Ibid., 404.

world as a whole, but rather a truth about himself and the world he represents and of which he is the leader. Through Hitler's performance the audience is reassured about unsustainably of his methods and ambitions. Consistently with Bakhtin's argument about the clown and the fool being a metamorphosis of god and tsar, Hitler is represented as a fallen god of the Nazi world of violence—in each of the parts he experiences a downfall, either a symbolical one (the first part), or finds himself in the world of the dead (the second part), or he falls down literally and symbolically (the third part). Such a use of the character of a fool becomes a powerful persuasive statement of the character's failure, especially considering the fact that the statement comes from the fool himself.

The space arrangement in *Kino-Tsirk* is worth giving a special attention. Spectators of the film find themselves in a dually defined position—on the one hand, they watch the animated film, on the other, they watch a performance which is supposedly (as we can infer from the title) is taking place in a circus. However, the cinematic circus of the film does not presuppose that the events take place on a hippodrome—the mise-en-scene in the film is that of a theater. Why do the events in an animated film whose title refers to a circus take place in a theater? What does this blend of institutions—cinema and circus—suggest to us as spectators? The reason for the theatrical organization of the mise-en-scene in the film could be connected with a particular position of the spectator. Organization of a circus presupposes a wide variety of points of view around the hippodrome, whereas the theater fixes the spectator's position in front of the stage with a very limited variation. Thus, the spectator of the film is constantly occupying a position of the audience of the theatre. This double spectator's position allows the spectator of the film to identify with the spectator of the performance, but prevents from identification with the performer—there is always a gap between the spectator and the performer that is marked by the

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edge of the scene—which is also emphasized by the MC's opening and closing the curtains—and the film spectator, being at the same time a theatre spectator, can never cross it. A perfect situation for the division between "we" and "they," which in the film coincides with the division between the spectator and the Other, is created. Thus, in *Kino-Tsirk* we see a spectacle of the other presented to the eyes of the spectators. As for the MC, he occupies a position that is different from that of Hitler's—through his direct address to the audience he becomes the audience's interlocutor and the spectator of the film can identify with him through the conversation. In contrast with the MC, Hitler does not engage in conversations with the audience, his performance does not presuppose any kind of direct performer-spectator interaction, he never crosses the border between the stage and the spectator, and thus he always remains on the other side of it.

Incongruity of the body. One of the traditional objects of satirical laughter created by caricaturing an object of satire is the grotesque body—in fact the very word "caricature" contains such etymological components "exaggerated" and "overloaded," suggesting a change of a caricatured image towards a disproportional enlargement. However, as Sherry maintains, "satiric caricature cannot be satisfied with simply presenting the exaggerated, distorted or grotesque; it must present them as the expression of moral conditions, and make clear the link between the physical and moral realms."[194] In *Kino-Tsirk*, Hitler is represented in a grotesque way. His body is deformed—he has very thin and short legs and a disproportionally large torso. This combination of body parts can be interpreted in terms of its instability—Hitler is an unstable figure that is easy to knock over. It also makes Hitler's image more animalistic. In the first part, we see Hitler sitting at a table at a restaurant called "New Europe" eating meat off a large bone,

[194] James Sherry, "Four Modes of Caricature: Reflections upon a Genre," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 87.1 (1987), 29-62.

behaving like an animal.[195]   Thus, though Hitler is not represented as an animal, through the body distortion, his image acquires animalistic characteristics.

According to Bakhtin, grotesque body is a body reduced to its physiological functions; at the same time, it is a body of becoming, it is never ready or complete—it consumes the world, while the world itself consumes it. This characterization of grotesque body corresponds to the metamorphoses taking place with Hitler's body in the film—he is consuming meat from a bone in the first part of the film, and he is consumed by a barrel that completely covers his torso in the third part. Bakhtin points out that the most important parts for the grotesque body are the belly and the phallus—the parts that overgrow themselves, transgress their own boundaries and conceive a new (second) body. Hitler's dominating torso and belly indicate Hitler's appetites for power and his attempt to conceive a new body of a new country through warfare. However, the warfare metaphorized in the film as Hitler's eating habits looks appalling and uncultivated for the audience to become sympathetic with his ambitions, and also contradicts the ideology of Nazism according to which the Aryans were as a superior race.

Incongruity of clothes. If we compare Hitler's clothes in the film and the ones he wears in multiple photos, we will see a considerable difference. [196] In photos, Hitler is often dressed in suit with a tie. Even when he is dressed in army uniform, he still wears a tie. In the animated film, Hitler is dressed in clothes that do resemble Nazi army uniform; however, there is no tie present. Instead, there is a dagger behind his belt. Such a shift from a tie—which for the

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[195] For Bakhtin, combination of human and animalistic traits is one of the most typical and oldest types of grotesque (Mikhail Bakhtin, *Tvorchestvo Fransois Rable i narodnaia kul'tura srednevekov'ia i Renessanssa* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia kul'tura, 1990: 123). The meaning of the original is altered in the translation. Compare, "The combination of human and animal forms is one of the most ancient images…" (Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 109)

[196] Hitler's photos are available on multiple web sites. For instance, German History in Documents and Images has a collection of photos from the Nazi period http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_imgs.cfm?section_id=13 that features multiple images of Hitler participating in various events.

spectator, especially the Soviet one, would signify Hitler's belonging to a civilized Western culture—to a dagger, the use of which goes back to pre-civilized times, signals Hitler's downshift from a civilized to an uncivilized person, a barbarian. Hitler's eating style—eating with his hands off a large bone, solidifies this shift. Such an image is a satirical inversion of Nazi's claims for constituting a superior Aryan race, subversion from the Übermensch to the Unmensch.

Another prominent detail of Hitler's clothing in the film is his boots. The boots he is wearing are knee-high, which was a common height for marching boots in Nazi army. However, the style of the toe and the heel is very different. In Hitler's photographs, we see a round toe boot with a low wide heel. Hitler's boots in the film have long tipped toe and a higher narrower heel. Such a toe that indicates a transformation towards clown shoes in a combination with a feminized high heel would make the boots unusable for marching supporting a previously discussed message of Hitler being unequipped for his military campaign. They also contaminate Hitler's serious masculine image with marginalized inferior connotations of circus entertainment and feminization.

Incongruity of identity or dehumanization. Dehumanization as a phenomenon can be broadly defined as an act of denying humans their "humanness"—"qualities that set humans apart from objects or animals."[197] Lammers and Stapel differentiate two types of dehumanization—animalistic and mechanistic—"Animalistic dehumanization means denying to other people essential qualities that separate men from animals, such as morality and culture. Here, dehumanized people are seen as impulsive, childish, and irrational. In contrast, mechanistic dehumanization means denying to other people those qualities that separate men

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[197] Joris Lammers and Diederik A. Stapel, "Power increases dehumanization," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 14.1 (2011), 113–126, qt.113.

from machines, such as interpersonal warmth, emotions, and individual agency. Here, dehumanized people are seen as insensitive to pain." [198]

Dehumanization has historically been a part of the discourse about the enemy in a situation of war, and a mechanism of constructing the image of an enemy. Deprivation of the enemy of humane features has been widely used in propaganda regardless of the country: representation of the enemy as somebody who is not human, eliminates the complications in their perception, and promotes a clear and unproblematized idea of the necessity to exterminate them—extermination of those who are non-human is much easier than extermination of those who are similar to the audience of the message. Especially it is relevant when the enemy explicitly threatens the identity of a group of people as it happens under war conditions. In this situation, dehumanization becomes a part of the process of repudiation described by Julia Kristeva as a negation of the other in order to establish the self.[199] Kristeva points out that this process is often unconscious, however, in situations when such repudiation is a part of the official discourse, it is a very conscious process the goal of which is to unite one group of people against another group of people.

The notion of dehumanization has a curious relationship to animation in general—if dehumanization reduces the level of humanity by associating the represented person with an animal or an object, animation is filled with images of animated anthropomorphized animals and things, i.e., animals and things that, through the technology of animation are given an anima (soul). However, these characters are not dehumanized—on the contrary, I argue that by being anthropomorphized, they lose their animality and corporeality, and their representations have

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[198] Ibid., 113-114.
[199] Christine Harold and Kevin Michael DeLuca, "Behold the Corpse: Violent Images and then Case of Emmett Till," *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, ed. Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, Diane S. Hope (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2008), 257-72, qt. 262.

very little, if any, connection with their animalistic and corporeal characteristics.[200] Nevertheless, animation provides wide possibilities for representing humans as animals and dehumanize humans in such a way.

Kino-Tsirk uses the mechanism of dehumanization in a specific way. The main object of criticism and satirization of the film is Hitler, who is represented as a human, incapable and inefficient, with a grotesque body and animalistic habits, but human. However, in the first episode of the film we see a case of dehumanization of Hitler's allies—Mussolini, Horthy and Antonescu are represented as dogs. Thus though Hitler himself is represented as a human, his allies are deprived of a human identity. To understand why this particular type of an image is used for allies' representation, we should consider the cultural understanding of the social functioning of the dog—the domesticated dog is an animal that is supposed to be obedient and serve its owner without questioning the owner's commands. However, if dogs are not tamed properly, when gathered into a pack, they might get out of control and attack each other and the owner. This seems to be the implication in the first scene of *Kino-Tsirk*—the allies are represented as animalistic metaphors of dogs, and the cultural code used for this representation presupposes a culturally shared interpretation of the metaphors.[201]   At the beginning of the first scene, the dogs seem to be very well tamed, and eager to receive the bone that Hitler is showing to them; however, once the bone is thrown, they engage in a fight and completely get out of

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[200] By arguing that animals in animated films do not possess animalistic characteristics, I am not in any way maintaining that there is a set of animalistic characteristics that all animals supposedly possess, i.e., I am not making claims for an essentialist approach towards animals (see more about that in "Introduction" by Matthew Calarco, in his *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). However, I believe that anthropomorphic representation of animals negates animality.

[201] Akira Mizuta Lippit in his book *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), makes an argument that animals exist in the contemporary culture (especially in the visual culture) only in the form of a metaphor. He maintains that since the animals have been driven to extinction in the reality, they were given cultural space in which they can exist (for instance, the screen); however this space presupposes their complete reduction to metaphors.

control. Dehumanization in this scene seems to be functioning not as a goal in itself (as in other Soviet animated films produced during World War II), but as a way to complicate Hitler's image and to show his inability to be the all-controlling dictator, as well as his inability to exist in the civilized public sphere. According to Judith Butler, non-subjects are denied entry into a particular public sphere and subjects can only exist by differentiating themselves from non-subjects.[202] Hitler's position as a subject is undermined by his association with the allies represented as dogs who clearly do not belong to the public sphere. Through dehumanization of Hitler's allies, a case is made for Hitler's inability to exist in the public sphere and thus through dehumanization of the secondary characters, the power of the main character are undermined.

To summarize, *Kino-Tsirk* creates a complex satirical image that is effectively used as a means of anti-Nazi propaganda. By using incongruities of location, body, appearance (clothing), and identity, the film creates a satirical image of the enemy that is ridiculed and denigrated. The film uses a caricature-styled imagery that was characteristic of early Soviet animation, and that, due to the political tendencies in the Soviet Union that determined the politics of Soviet animation—a shift from agitation to propaganda, fluctuation of the idea of entertainment, development of children's cinema, and changes in national politics that resulted in the Russian culture becoming the normative standard in the Soviet Union—was abandoned before World War II. The fact that animation returns to the imagery based on caricature during the war time, demonstrates how the political situation influenced the animation aesthetics, and also how animation was looking for its ways to adapt to the political situation, and helps to draw connections between the aesthetic and politics of cultural production in the Soviet Union.

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[202] Harold and DeLuca, "Behold the Corpse," 262.

2.3   CONCLUSION

This chapter follows the history of Soviet animation from its inception in the middle of the 1920s to the end of the 1940s. Over this period of time, Soviet animation came a long way from performing subsidiary functions in cinema production, where it supplied images that could not be created by photographic means, to developing into an independent medium with its own set of stylistic and artistic devices and its own dominant technique, which was developing under the influence of Disney's and the Fleischers' animation—cel. As this history also demonstrates, Soviet animation developed as a political medium with its own set of political tasks, which were connected to its medium-specific characteristics, as well as to the general changes in the political climate of the country.

Soviet animation began in the middle of the 1920s as a means of agitation—the early animation films dealt with the topical contemporary thematics and were often engaged in social criticism. Stylistically, they were moving caricatures that used grotesque simplistic imagery. However, over the first decade, the topics of animated films eventually tilted towards more timeless themes, and such genres as fairy-tales and fables began dominating animation production. The reasons behind this shift were technological as well as political. From the technological perspective, the production process was too lengthy and too costly to deal with current situations, and thus creation of a moving analogy of *Okna ROST*a proved to be technologically impossible. From the political perspective, the changes in the domestic and international political agendas resulted in demand for less agitational and more indirectly propagandistic animation. In the 1930s, together with Soviet cinema, animation went through a short period of emphasis on entertainment, when production of purely entertaining animation was surging. By the end of the 1930s, however, political demands changed, resulting in the

domination of more didactic and serious topics and genres. These changes were connected with two major political and cultural shifts. First, there was a shift in the educational initiatives directed towards children and the increased realization of the importance of the role of moving images in children's upbringing, which for animation resulted in a greater production of animation for children. Second, the increase in nationalistic tendencies in the Soviet Union resulted in the emphasis on themes connected with national traditions—fairy-tales, fables, and epics. Following the official formula for cultural production, "national in form, socialist in content," each of the republics of the Soviet Union was supposed to develop its own animation. However, considering that Soiuzmu'tfil'm, the major animation studio founded in the Soviet Union in 1936, was located in Russia, and many of the Soviet republics did not have animation studios, the national form that dominated animation production was Russian.

With the beginning of World War II, animation saw a return to the genres dominant in the 1920s—political poster and satire. A number of films produced at the time were anti-Nazi shorts that depicted the Nazis as wild animals that were going to be exterminated by the human Soviet army. The film analyzed in this chapter, *Kino-Tsirk: Mul't-satira v 3-kh attractsionakh* (dir.-s by Leonid Amal'rik and Olga Khodataeva, 1942), partially follows this pattern by presenting the leaders of the allies of Nazi Germany as dogs. However, it employs a satirical stance by presenting Hitler as an unwitting human, a clown, who has a faulty perception of his abilities and fails in all his pursuits. Drawing on the conventions of two media—the circus and cinema—this animated film creates a complex satirical image by using incongruities of location, body, appearance (clothing), and identity, and creates an effective image of direct anti-Nazi agitation, reminiscent of the Soviet animated films produced in the 1920s.

3.0 THE POLITICS OF GERMAN ANIMATION: NAZI CULTURAL POLITICS IN ANIMATED IMAGES

> "By striving to produce films that would satisfy its fascist masters, the Nazi dream factory recycled *völkisch* themes that aimed to achieve the desired conformity. The recurring features that can be identified immediately include the use of stereotypes and repetitious demonstration of the patterns of conduct and visual images approved by the regime and accentuated by the national music. In this way—often with the help of historical examples—the audience's desirable emotions were evoked while undesirable rational thought was eliminated. What made these films so effective and apparently seductive was their banality; by visiting the cinema, people could pretend that fascist ideology and principles, as disseminated in films, did not meaningfully impinge on everyday life or force them to restructure their system of values radically. Film, then, could provide a comfortable continuity with the past. " [1]

There are several anecdotes about the relationship of the leaders of NSDAP with animation that are told and retold by all of the innumerous scholars who have written on Nazi animation. The anecdote about Goebbels's and Hitler's love of animation, about Goebbels giving Hitler 18

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[1] David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy: Control, Ideology, and Propaganda," in *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, Glenn R. Cuomo, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 114.

Disney films as a 1937 Christmas present, and how much Hitler loved them,[2] about Goebbels's personal supervision of foundation of the first specialized animation studio, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH[3]—all of them are used to argue that animation occupied a special place in Nazi culture, and that development of Nazi animation was a big state project that was invested with much hope and big expectation. Yet, despite all the attention that the Nazi government paid to the development of animation as an industry, and despite the governmental efforts in organizing the animation process and generous financial support that the emerging animation industry enjoyed, not very many animated films were produced in Germany during the Nazi years. This paradox can be explained by many reasons; an explanation connected with the military situation—the turning tide in World War II and the Nazis' subsequent defeat—would probably be the most obvious one. Another reason could be seen in the fact that some German animators—Oscar Fischinger and Julius Pinschewer among them—left Germany in the middle of the 1930s which created a discontinuity in the German animation tradition. Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, animation production in Germany experienced internal contradictions and inconsistencies due to the eclectic nature of German cultural politics.

As many scholars point out, Nazi cultural politics were of an aesthetic nature,[4] which makes it particularly difficult to think about the cultural politics of animation produced in the Third Reich separately from its aesthetics, and vice versa. Yet, for the purposes of a more in-depth analysis, I will address them in separate chapters. This chapter will focus on the cultural

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[2] See, for instance, Rolf Giesen and J.P. Storm, *Animation under the Swastika: A History of Trickfilm* in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945 (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2012), 13; Andre Eckardt, Ralf Foster, Nadja Rademacher and Mette Peters *Traumschmelze: Der deutsche Zeichenanimationsfilm 1930-1950* (Drezden: Deutsches Institut für Animationsfilm e.V., 2013), 15.

[3] Giesen, Storm, *Animation*, 74; Eckardt et al, 23.

[4] See, for instance, Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Crispin Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics* (Cornell University Press, 2010); Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2003).

politics that resulted in the development of non-commercial animation—the relationship of animation to propaganda and entertainment, appropriation and interpretation by animation of such foundational categories of Nazi ideology as the people (Volk) and people's community (Volksgemeinschaft), and the relationship of these categories to folklore as an officially declared primary animation genre; and the ideology behind discussions about animation audiences.

3.1 BEHIND THE FRAMES: ANIMATED POLITICS

3.1.1 The Transformation of German Animation from Commercial to Non-Commercial Forms

The development of early German animation was closely connected with advertising. Animated advertisements were already produced in the early 1900s,[5] and due to Julius Pinschewer, who had pioneered the use of animated commercials in movie theaters back in 1911, starting from then, both drawn and puppet animation were widely used for the purposes of commercial advertisement. Indeed, as Giesen and Storm state, at one time or another, most German animators worked for Pinschewer.[6] A long list of his animators includes, among others, such famous names as Lotte Reiniger, Oskar Fischinger, Hans Richter, Guido Seeber, Hans Fischerkösen, Walter Ruttman, and George Pal.[7] Advertising became the field of creativity and

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[5] Giannalberto Bendazzi, as an example of one of the earliest animated commercials, names Guido Seeber's sparkling wine commercial entitled *Happy New Year 1910.* See Giannalberto Bendazzi, "Germany: Animation in the Weimar Republic," in his *Animation: A World History, Volume 1: Foundations—The Golden Age* (Boca Raton, FL: Focal Press, 2016), 55.

[6] Giesen and Storm, *Animation Under the Swastika*, 5.

[7] Bendazzi, "Germany," 55.

innovation that encouraged emergence of aesthetically advanced images.[8] The money received for advertising work allowed animators to continue their experiments, and to produce non-commercial and experimental animation. Works of such experimental animators as Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Walter Ruttmann, and Oskar Fischinger became particularly famous for their abstract films that studied inter-relationships of line, shapes, space, color, and movement.

There was also a very pragmatic purpose behind using animation in commercials—it could show objects and processes whose imagery was impossible to obtain by means of photography. As Dietrich W. Dreyer, an engineer and film producer, stated in one of his publications, "Trick films, whether drawn animation or photographic, play a very significant role in the execution of effective promotional films today. They are the only way to show processes of nature, machines, statistics, and the like that would otherwise remain hidden to the eye. Precisely these shots, strewn throughout the film, are of particular interest to audiences. People enjoy being educated in this way and sharing the knowledge they have gained."[9] Although the cited article was dedicated to promotional films that were educating the audiences about new products, Dreyer was also one of the pioneers of using animation for the purpose clarifying difficult technical processes[10] in *Kulturfilms*, the declared purpose of which was educational and cultural enlightenment. In Germany, *Kulturfilms* became an established type of film in the 1920s, and covered a variety of educational topics, from ethnographic to industrial, and animation was frequently used in them as a means of creating a moving image that was impossible to obtain

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[8] For examples of German animated advertisements, see, for instance, Lotte Reiniger' cut-out animated short *Das Geheimnis der Marquise*, which was a 1920 Nivea skin cream commercial; Hans Fischerkoesen's stop-motion short *Das Blaue Wunder* (1935), advertisement for Muratti cigarettes; and Oskar Fischinger's stop-motion short *Muratti Privat* (1935), also advertisement for Muratti cigarettes.

[9] Dietrich W. Dreyer, "The Trick Film," in The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933, ed. Anton Kaes, Nicholas Baer, Michael Cowan, trans. Alex H. Bush (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 544; first published as "Der Trickfilm," in *Die Reklame* 20 (June 1927), 439.

[10] Schu., "Ditrich W. Dreyer 50 Jarhe," *Blatt zum Film-Kurier* 77 (3 April 1937).

through photography. For instance, the film *Der Weltkrieg* (*World War*, 1927) used animated maps that illustrated battle arrays and army deployments. Siegfried Krakauer writes about them: "Sven Noldan, their creator, called them a means of giving the illusion of phenomena not to be found in camera reality. He was also to make the maps for the Nazi war films *Baptism of Fire* [*Feuertaufe*, 1940] and *Victory in the West* [*Sieg im Westen*, 1941], but in these films their propaganda function of symbolizing Nazi Germany's irresistible military might was to overshadow their character as objective statements."[11]

If *Kulturfilms* had a declared educational purpose that remained the same throughout the 1930s, the purposes of narrative animation were more volatile in the German political climate of that decade. Narrative animation in Germany starts with Lotte Reiniger, who, due to the specificity of the type of images she produced, also often classified as an experimental animator. She worked in the technique of silhouette animation, using images arranged from paper cut-outs that looked like silhouettes. Initially, her animation was created as a part of feature films—in 1916, she was hired by Paul Wegener to do silhouette titles for his feature *Rübezahls Hochzeit* (*Rumpelstilskin's Wedding*), and in 1918, for his *Der Rattenfänger von Hammeln* (*Pied Piper of Hammeln*) "she made not only titles but also animated rat models (since the real animals refused to follow the piper)."[12] After her first independent animated film, her first independent animation film, *Das Ornament des verliebten Herzens* (*Ornament of the Loving Heart,* 1919), she worked for Pinschewer's advertising company, as well as continued creating animated shorts, among which were adaptations of such fairy-tales as Hans Christian Andersen's *Der fliegende Koffer* (*The Flying Suitcase*, 1921), *Der Stern von Bethlehem* (*The Star of Bethlehem*, 1921), as well as

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[11] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 155.

[12] William Moritz, "Some Critical Perspectives on Lotte Reiniger," in *Animation: Art and Industry*, ed. Maureen Furniss (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 13.

Aschenputtel (*Cinderella*, 1922). In 1923, she received an offer from a Berlin banker to sponsor her production of a feature-length animated film. As a result of this, Reiniger, together with Walter Ruttmann, Berthold Bartosch, and Carl Koch, produced the first German feature-length animated film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926, *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*) that was based on the collection of Middle Eastern folk tales, *One Thousand and One Nights*.[13]

So in the pre-Nazi period, German animation was predominantly developing for the purposes of advertisement, and was also used in *Kulturfilms*. Production of experimental and narrative animation was in the hands of individual artists or small groups of artists who created original animated images that were not intended for mass audiences.

With the Nazis coming to power, the changes in the cultural politics of animation were initially not radical, if yet nevertheless noticeable. Though some animators left Germany in the middle of the 1930s, and thus are widely perceived as a part of intellectual refugees from the Nazis, many famous artists continued working on animated films in Germany during the early years of the Nazis in power. This controversy was first pointed out by the animation scholar William Moritz. As he writes, "The question of animation in the Nazi era has been largely ignored or even falsified. In many texts and films rental catalogues, the dates for films such as Oskar Fischinger's *Composition in Blue* [*Komposition im Blau*, 1935] or Reiniger's *The Stolen Heart* [*Das gestohlene Herz*, 1934] are given as 1932 or 1933, as if to suggest that they had not been made in Nazi Germany.… In fact, dozens of animators worked in Germany before and during the Nazi era. …"[14] The press also continued to provide information about the achievements of avant-garde animation directors discussing their films and their recognition

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[13] More on the film see Bendazzi, "Germany," 61-2; also on production of the film, see Lotte Reiniger, *Shadow Theatres and Shadow Films* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1970), 120-23.

[14] William Moritz, "Resistance and Subversion in Animated Films of the Nazi Era," in *A Reader in Animation Studies*, ed. Jayne Pilling (London: John Libbey, 1997), 230.

abroad.[15] In the second half of the 1930s, however, the tradition of animation production experienced a break in continuity—many animation directors and animators, including such famous ones as Oskar Fischinger, Julius Pinschewer, George Pal,[16] left the country by the beginning World War II, and started working elsewhere. It is important to point out, however, that even after these artists left Germany, they continued to be a part of the discourse on animation created by the press. For instance, *Film-Kurier* intermittently wrote about Lotte Reiniger who was not residing in Germany from 1936 up to 1943, reporting on her departure, work abroad, plans, and expressing hopes for her return to Germany once she "receives German commissions."[17] Another example can be found in a *Film-Kurier* article on a competition of animated advertisement shorts in Amsterdam that, though focusing on Hans Fischerkösen, lists such animators as Oskar Fischinger and George Pal, who had emigrated from Germany by the time the competition took place.[18] The press expressed regrets for the departure of German artistes;[19] and emphasized the German connections of those who were not German.[20]

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[15] For instance, Frank Avril ("Avangardisten des deutschen Film," *Der deutsche Film,* Heft 5 [1936]: 135-36), wrote about avant-garde films, in particular those by Walter Ruttmann; the article, "Avantgarde interessiert," provided information about the foreign sales of Oskar Fischinger's film "Komposition in Blau" (*Film Kurier* 157 (9 July 1935). Moreover, an article by Victor Schamoni, "Die Anfänge des absoluten Films in Deutschland," *Der deutsche Film,* Heft 9 (1938), 242-45, tells about the history of avant-garde animation in Germany.

[16] The situation with Lotte Reiniger was more controversial. According to some sources, she emigrated (see, for instance, Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928* [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982], 245) or fled (Moritz, "Some Critical Perspectives," 14) to London in the 1930s. However, though she apparently did go to London in 1936, Reiniger emigrated there only after WWII. In the second half of the 1930s, she and her husband, Carl Koch, worked in Paris and Rome, and returned to Germany in the end of 1943 to either "care for Reiniger's sick mother" (Philip Kemp, "Reiniger, Lotte [1899-1981]," *BFI Screenonline*, http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/528134/), or because they were forced to reevacuate back to Germany by the retreating Nazi occupation army after the Allied troops landed in Italy (Moritz, "Resistance and Subversion," 231).

[17] See, for instance, "Nach Fischinger Lotter Reiniger," *Beiblatt zum Film Kurier* 75 (28 March 1936); „Lotte Reinigers England Arbeiten," *Film Kurier* 1 (2 January 1937); Curt Cäser, "Wiedersehen mit Lotte Reiniger," *Beiblatt zum Film Kurier* 17 (20 January 1940).

[18] "Auslandserfolg eines Leipziger Trickfilmzeictners," *Film Kurier* 89 (17 April 1937).

[19] See, for instance, "Oskar Fischinger von der Paramount verpflichtet," *Film Kurier* 22 (27 January 1936).

[20] "Starewitch in Berlin: Betrachtung zu seiner Arbeit und zum absoluten Film," emphasizes that Starewitch was a Polish national and had a "German-born spouse" [*hat eine geborene Deutsche zur Gattin*]. *Film Kurier* 27 (April, 1937).

Simultaneously with the departure of the animation directors who were particularly active in producing commercial (and experimental) animation, a new tendency in animation becomes increasingly dominant—a tendency for the production of non-commercial animation. The development of non-commercial animation in Germany is closely connected with popularity of Disney animation that for the first time demonstrated that animated films can be profitable by themselves, without participating in the commercial promotion of commodities. In early 1930s Germany, Disney fascinated highly diverse audiences, and Disney himself became an object of rumors, speculations and fantasizing on the pages of newspapers and in official correspondence. For instance, an article titled "Walt Disney, a Spaniard," informed readers about the "true" name of Walt Disney—Jose Luis Guirao Zamora—and offered details of his life which included his birth in Spain.[21] In a letter from May 5, 1941, addressed to Reichsfilmkammer, a documentary filmmaker Hans Cürlis stated that "Walt Disney was born in Germany, baptized "Walter Distler," and had worked for some years in Germany."[22] Also, Disney became such a huge name that it was often used metonymically standing for American animation in general. For instance, an article in *Film-Kurier* described Disney as, "the famous American producer of animated films and creator of such animated images as Mickey Mouse, Felix the Cat, and three little pigs."[23]

The press generously reported on Disney's releases and screenings which praised Disney's films and emphasized their popularity with audiences. [24] For instance, an article

[21] "Walt Disney–ein Spanier," *Film Kurier* 265 (11 November 1940).
[22] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 24.
[23] "Drei neue Disney-Fime Märchen im Zeichentrickfim," *Film-Kurier* 106 (7 May 1938).
[24] "Vom Mäuslein, das fliegen wollte," *Film-Kurier* 78 (1 April 1936); "Disney vergrössert Mitarberiterstab," *Beiblatt zum Film-Kurier* 142 (20 June 1936); "Lullaby Land, " *Film-Kurier* 4 (6 January 1936); "Micky Mouse hat heute Geburtstag," *Film-Kurier* 226 (26 September 1936); "'Lustige Menagerie': Sieben Disney-Filme in der "Kurbel," *Film Kurier* 279 (28 November 1936); "Walt Disney verfilmt ein Märchen von Grimm," *Film-Kurier* 208 (7 September 1937); "Disney-Kamera kostet 70000 Dollar," *Film-Kurier* 282 (4 December 1937); "'Sneewittchen' in Hollywood aus der Taufe gehoben," *Film-Kurier* 300 (27 December 1937); "Disney verfilmt zweites Grimm-Märchen," *Film-Kurier* 89 (16 April 1938); "Drei neue Disney-Fime Märchen im Zeichentrickfim," *Film-Kurier*

"Kinderlachen in den Kammer-Lichtspielen" told about a matinee in a cinema theater in Potsdamer Platz in Berlin during which the young audience could watch a program that consisted of Disney shorts and German Kulturfilms. The author pointed out that "Naturally, the Walt Disney films won over German Kulturfilms. The weapons were not equal. The bright fairy-tales about Hansel and Gretel and the Santa Claus were the triumph of the afternoon."[25]

The efficiency of Disney's films in affecting the audiences and their commercial success were the two attractive features that instigated production of non-commercial animation in Germany. There were many plans and several attempts—beginning with the UFA-based project from 1934 that was supposed to be implemented by cartoonist Otto Waffenschmied and that was never completed due to discontinuation of financing—to produce animated films that would rival those of Disney's. However, very few animated films were released. Some of the projects, even those that were already in production, were never completed,[26] and information about their participants, the amount of each project completed, and the reasons for abandoning them is scarce. For instance, *Film Kurier* reported about a German illustrator, Edmund Smith, who in 1935 was working on a color animated film about Gevatter—Death—"coming to the world and bringing death in all contemporary guises."[27] Other than this article, however, there is no mention of this project in other sources.

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106 (7 May 1938); „Der Scheewittchen-Film von Disney, " *Film-Kurier* 7 (10 January 1938); "Man hört und liest," *Film-Kurier* 32 (8 February 1938); "Walt Disney vergrößert," *Film-Kurier* 223 (23 August 1938); "Einstwellige Verfügung gegen Schneewittchen?" *Film-Kurier* 246 (20 October 1938); "Schneewittchen schlägt Rekord," *Film-Kurier* 246 (20 October 1938); "Schneewittchen und die werge—Auch ein italienisches Lustspie erfolgreich," Film-Kurier 199 (26 August 1938); "Disney dreht drei abendfüllende Filme," *Film-Kurier* 39 (15 February 1939);"Schnell noch lesen," *Film-Kurier* 224 (26 September 1939).

[25] g., "Kinderlachen in den Kammer-Lichtspielen," *Film-Kurier* 295 (17 December 1934).

[26] See discussion of such projects in Giesen and Storm, *Animation,* in particular, chapter "Kurt Stordel and Purzel: A Self- Proclaimed German Walt Disney and His Dwarf," 58-63.

[27] "Deutscher Zeichenfilm: Edmund Smith schafft einen ersten Trickfilm," *Film Kurier* 178 (2 August 1935).

Like in many other countries, German animation was produced by small studios (Ateliers) in an artisan way. With the foundation of a studio that specialized exclusively in animation production—Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH (DZF)—Nazi animation approached closest the task of rivaling Disney. The studio was founded on August 6, 1941, which was particularly timely considering the beginning of Germany's swift military advancement to the East, and thus opening rapidly growing markets for distribution of German cultural products.

The next step in the institutional advancement of animation production was an attempt to create a broad system of animation studios, a project called Zeichenfilm-Ring (Drawn Film Circle). Zeichenfilm-Ring appeared as a result of an attempt to increase production of animated films and involve the newly occupied territories into the production process. As the Expose for the Drawn Film Circle stated, "One year ago, Deutsche Wochenschau received an order to set up a production of a German drawn film, which would be capable of obtaining the technological and artistic level of the American animation production within a very short time. In Germany and in the occupied territories, the appropriate advertising film companies were adapted accordingly, and skilled workers and equipment were procured. Furthermore, some companies were re-installed in the occupied territories, and finally the artistic, and in some cases also the technical control of the drawn-film departments is performed through state companies. In each of these working groups, the animators and new scriptwriters worked together on creation of new manuscripts, and the studios were commissioned to bring them to life."[28]

The Expose suggested including the following studios into the animation circle: 1.Fischerkösenfilm, Potsdam und Den Haag; 2. Bavaria-Zeichenfilm, München und Den Haag;

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[28] Expose "Zeichenfilm-Ring" Vorschlag einer zusammenfassung der kleinen Zeichenfilm Ateliers in Europa zur Steigerung der künstlerischen und wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit (9 February, 1944), 2, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

3. Prag-Zeichenfilm, Prag; 4. Joop Geesink, Amsterdam; 5. Toonder-Bouman, Amsterdam; 6. Les Gemeaux, Paris; 7. Andre Rigal, Paris; 8. Raymond Jeannin, Paris; 9. Dansk. Favre ok Tegne Film, Kopenhagen; 10.Zeichenfilmabteilung der Descheg, Zlin; 11. Philippart, Brüssel; 12. Ehemalige Bassoli-Gruppe, Rom.[29] The rarticipation of Deutsche Zeichenfilm G.m.b.H. in the Zeichenfilm-Ring was still undecided at the time when the Expose was written, and this decision was left to the "higher ranks."[30]

The project of Zeichenfilm-Ring was not realized due to endgame of World War II and the Nazi's retreat from the territories that were involved into the project, and subsequent collapse of the Third Reich. However, some of the studios involved in this project continued functioning after the end of the war and went on to be national studios in the countries in which they were organized. Had the project been realized, it would be the biggest system of studios specializing in animation production in the world.

Thus the move from commercial to non-commercial animation had, paradoxically, mostly economic grounds, was fostered by expanding German cultural markets due to warfare instigated by Germany. The German government was hoping to use the newly available markets for distributing their cultural products, including animation. However, along with other cultural production, animation participated in the Nazi propaganda machine and, judging by the amount of documentation that discusses animation, including letters of various Nazi officials and articles in periodicals, was considered to be an important asset for it. Even though the animation industry did not produce many completed animated films, the plans for their production as well as the relatively few films that were produced demonstrate how propaganda worked in Nazi animation.

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[29] Expose "Zeichenfilm-Ring," 5.
[30] Ibid.

3.1.2 Animation as a Means of Propaganda and Entertainment

Once the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) took over the German government at the beginning of 1933, the cultural politics of cinema were a matter of the merged governmental and party strategic planning that was shared by three institutions: the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksausklärung und Propaganda), the Central Propaganda Office of the Party (Reichspropagandaleitung), and the Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer, or RKK). As David Welch points out, "the political structure of the Third Reich was based on the twin pillars of the Party and the state.... The creation of the Propaganda Ministry in March 1933 was a significant step toward the merging of the Party and the state. Goebbels continued to be head of Party propaganda, but he greatly strengthened both his own position within the Party and the scope of propaganda by setting up this new ministry—the first of its kind in Germany."[31]

From the very beginning of the work of the Ministry, Goebbels was very open about the role of propaganda in the nation's cultural programming, "We have established a Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda. These two titles do not convey the same thing. Popular enlightenment is essentially something passive: propaganda, on the other hand, is something active. We cannot be satisfied with just telling people what we want and enlightening them as to how we are doing it. We must replace the enlightenment with an active governmental propaganda that aims at winning people over. It is not enough to reconcile people more or less to our regime, to move them toward a position of neutrality towards us; we would rather work on

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[31] Welch, "Nazi Film Policy," 95.

people until they are addicted to us…."[32] Thus, from the very beginning, the task of the Ministry was to attract and charm people rather than appeal to their intellect and rationality.

While these general goals for propaganda remained constant throughout the Nazi period, the temporal orientation of the topics that were desirable for cinema shifted within the first three years of the Third Reich. If in the beginning, the Ministry's cultural policies for the film industry, despite participating in the general process of cultural restoration of German nationalism (or *Nationale Erhebung*—"national renaissance"), were also oriented towards the present, by 1935, the temporal orientation of cinema lost its sense of contemporaneity. Calls for orientation towards the present were replaced with calls for the eternal. Thus, shortly after establishment of the Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, Goebbels had a press conference during which he stated the tasks of the Ministry for theater and film. As *Film-Kurier* rendered them, "Theater and film also have to adjust themselves to the new times…. On the question of the choice of material the Minister explained that he did not agree with complaints about a lack of suitable topics in film and theater. The revolutionary events in the life of the nation must receive an artistic rendering. When it is necessary, the government will show the right way."[33] At the end of 1935, however, Goebbels declared a change in the film industry policies, or the beginning of "stage 2" in film industry development. Among multiple regulations of production and distribution introduced at the time that included refusal from block-booking distribution, completion of the script before the beginning of the shooting, and others, there were a number of changes that would influence the content of films, such as refusal of moralization, and emphasis on entertainment (Erholung) and spiritual support (Erbauung). Emphasizing that it is important for cinema to take into consideration the people's interests, Goebbels stated, "The

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[32] David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy," 96.
[33] „Reichspropaganda-Minister über deutche Film-Aufgaben," *Film-Kurier* (16 March 1933).

German filmmakers will then also strive to provide the people who have enough serious problems to solve with a lot of entertainment and uplifting. The film is supposed to capture life with real optimism, the real life as it has been, as it is today, and how it will be in all eternity."[34]

In pursuit of this policies and recognizing importance of cinema as a cultural and political medium, Goebbels stated, "One of the most important propaganda media besides the radio and press is the film. It speaks to millions, and it is a true mediator between leadership and the people. Therefore, it should not fall into intellectualizing and experimentation, but must always turn to the people in the widest sense. The basic principles of good propaganda, simplification and constant repetition, may not be ignored."[35] Emphasis on simplicity and repetition of the cinematographic message accounts for the fact that Nazi film industry tilted towards production of seemingly apolitical films, or rather films that presented Nazi politics by apolitical means. As David Welch points out, of the films produced during the Third Reich, "virtually 50 percent were either love stories or comedies, and 25 percent dramatic films, such as crime thrillers or musicals."[36] This completely corresponded to Goebbels's views on propaganda which he stated in his 26 April 1928 diary entry: critiquing Sergei Eisenstein's *October: Ten Days that Shook the World* (1928), Goebbels maintained that "the best political propaganda is the most subtle, 'woven into the affective fabric of entertainment and rendered compelling through cinematic style and technique.'"[37]

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[34] "Deutscher Film – Etappe 2: Dr. Goebbels verkündert neue Schaffensgrundsätze. Ganzjärige Produktion – Abschaffung des Bildbuchens, Fertigstellung des Drehbuchs vor Drehbeginn – Erholung und Erbauung für das Volk," *Film-Kurier* 293 (16 December 1935).

[35] "Dr. Goebbels vor den Gaufilmstellenleitern: Der Film als Propagandamittel," *Film-Kurier* 29 (3 February 1940).

[36] Welch, "Nazi Film Policy," 97.

[37] Brett Bowles, "Introduction: The Politics of French and German Cinema, 1930-1945," *Historical Reflections* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 1.

With the beginning of World War II, the cultural politics of cinema emphasized optimism and spiritual support (Erbauung) more than ever.[38] For Goebbels, it is the "cheerful" cinema that was mostly appropriate for the war times. As an anonymous reporter formulated Goebbels's stance, "Even the most amusing comedy could have a deeper meaning, while some so-called 'serious' films that deal with uncommon problems and have unnatural dialogues could be completely meaningless."[39] Goebbels' position registered not only through the reporting of his speeches, but also through other voices significant for the German film industry. For instance, in the words of Karl Ritter, an UFA German film producer and director during the Nazi times, "The German cinema, already today, can do infinitely a lot in order to distract people from their little difficulties that are inevitable during the war. It can amuse, inspire, and delight, it can make people cheerful, fresh, and joyful. It can be a good weapon against despondency, against hopeless whining, it can lead and encourage people. This does not have to be done through great heavy topics, in serious times, this can also be done with humor."[40] Thus, Nazi film policies were directly connected with the war affairs. Cinema was seen as a means of distracting the audiences from the everyday hardships caused by the war, as well as a means of elevating their spirits. Consequently, the militaristic plans of the Nazi government and the development of the war affairs influenced the film industry production. For instance, David Welch connects a tendency of the German film industry towards an increase in production of films that facilitated

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[38] "Zum Gründungstag von KdF: Dr. Goebbels dankte den Männern der Wochenschau, " *Film-Kurier* 278 (28 November 1939).
[39] "Dr. Goebbels über Kriegsaufgaben des Films: Auch heitere und musikalische Stoffe gerade jetzt erwünscht," *Film-Kurier* 75 (30 March 1940).
[40] "Karl Ritter sprach in Leipzig: Die Kriegsaufgabe des deutschen Films," *Film-Kurier* 46 (23 Febraury 1940).

escapism—especially love stories, comedies—with the war situation, and deteriorating conditions on the front.[41]

These policies were first and foremost relevant for live-action feature films. Institutionally, animation in Nazi Germany was a part of a Special Department of Cultural Film (*Sonderreferat Kulturfilm*), the Department that dealt with *Kulturfilms*. However, such a categorization of animated films that preceded Nazi times,[42] can be attributed to the complex functionality of animation as a medium and its use in different types of cinema for various purposes, and not to animation being treated as a means of direct propaganda—the task performed by some cultural films during the Nazi era.[43]

In addition to the propaganda requirements of cultural products in the Third Reich, there was the material reality of animation production that also influenced the choice of themes—animated films took a long time to make, and political issues could potentially become obsolete before an animated film that dealt with them would be released. Thus, the current political situations as well as changes in Nazi mythology that were connected with, for instance, the development of the war situation—such as introduction of the myth of sacrifice—did not influence the content of animated films. Nazi animation was never overtly propagandistic—there were no animated films with a direct propaganda message produced in Nazi Germany. For instance, during the first years after NSDAP came to power, the press reported on plans to produce weekly political animated shorts that were supposed to be screened together with

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[41] David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy," 107.

[42] See, for instance, the 1924 edited volume *Das Kulturfilmbuch*, ed. E. Beyfuss and A. Kossowsky (Berlin: Carl P. Chryselius'scher Verlag, 1924), in which several articles dedicated to animation explore its functioning in different types of films: commercial, educational, and entertaining. Among these articles are "Der Trickfilm" by Hans Ewald sen., "Zeichenfilme" by Harry Jäger, "Reklamefilme" by Julius Pinschewer, and "Wie ich meine Silhouettenfilme mache" by Lotte Reiniger-Koch.

[43] For more on Kulturfilms during the Nazi period, see Ramón Reichert, ed., *Kulturfilm im "Dritten Reich,"* (Vienna: Synema, 2006).

newsreels in order to "provide satirical commentary on the recent political events of the world."[44] However, there is no evidence that such animated films were in fact produced. Together with the Nazi requirements for newsreel production that included coverage of the latest events, [45] and animation technology being unable to meet these requirements, one of the possible reasons for cancelation of this project could be a general shift in the cultural politics of the German film industry that was declared at the end of 1935. Nonetheless, this shift was not in any way a departure from the cultural politics that were declared in 1933, but rather their evolution towards less intellectual and more entertaining cinema.

Thus, during the Nazi period, animation was after stable ever-lasting topics that were consonant with the general ideals of Nazi ideology rather than with the current political affairs. For instance, the only overtly anti-Semitic drawn animated film that was made during the period, *Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt* [*Of the Little Tree Which Wished for Different Leaves*][46] formally could not be called a pure propaganda film—it was based on an eponymous fairy-tale in verse of a nineteenth century German poet Friedrich Rückert from his 1813 cycle *Fünf Märlein zum Einschläfern für mein Schwesterlein*.[47] As the title indicates, the fairy-tale is about a tree that wanted to have leaves other than the ones it was born with. Its wishes get granted, but every time, it loses the granted leaves. In one of the episodes, the leaves of gold get

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[44] "Politische Trickfilme? Origineller Plan eines Graphikers," *Film-Kurier* 216 (16 September 1935). The artist who supposedly was going to direct the political animated shorts was "an employee of the well-known political-satirical weekly 'Die Brenn-nessel,' the graphic artist Eduard Hermann Kolb" (Ibid.)

[45] See, for instance discussion of newsreels in Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler.* One of the principles of newsreel production that Kracauer specifies is speed (the other two being truth to reality and substantial length). He writes, "The third principle was speed. Nazi newsreels had not only to be true to reality but to illustrate it as quickly as possible, so that the war communique's were not forgotten by the time their content appeared on the screen. Airplanes flew the negatives from the front—a dynamic procedure apparently designed to parallel and support the radio front reports" (276).

[46] Director Heinz Tischmeyer (Berlin: Naturfilm Hubert Schonger, 1940).

[47] The cycle was published in multiple editions, for instance, Friedrich Rückert, *Ausgewählte Werke: in einem Band, herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Julius Kühn* (Leipzig: P. Reclam jun., [1920], 16-28; Friedrich Rückert, *Gedichte. Mit dem Bildnis und Facsimile des Verfassers* (Frankfurt am Main: Sauerländer, 1841), 107-118.

stolen by "a Jew" who walks by "with a big sack and a big beard" [Aber wie es Abend ward / Ging der Jude durch den Wald/Mit großem Sack und großem Bart].[48] The film's imagery caricaturizes Jewish people, however this caricature is imbedded in an adaptation of a moralistic fairy-tale poem by a famous German poet who, writing it at the time of widespread anti-Semitism in Germany, used the image of the "greedy Jew" as a part of "common knowledge," as an image that would be socially easily recognizable and uncontroversial in an anti-Semitic society. The animated adaptation of the poem provides a link from the German anti-Semitic culture of the nineteenth century—the period that was deemed by the Nazi government as a "golden age of German culture"—into the anti-Semitic Nazi culture of the 1930s and 1940s. In the press, the short was presented very neutrally, too, and its anti-Semitic imagery and content is not mentioned.[49] In an overview article "Neue Märchenfilme" [New Fairy-Tales] characterizes it in the following way, "Rückert's poem "Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt" was adapted in a color short featuring a dissatisfied little tree which wanted, instead of the needles, leaves of glass, gold, and foliage, but then regretfully regained its needles."[50] What is particularly curious about these publications is that they categorize the animated short as a *Märchen (fairy-tales)*,[51] i.e., one of the canonical genres in Nazi culture that were actively promoted by the government across the media for broad audiences, in general, and children's audiences, in particular.

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[48] In later publications and adaptations of the poem, the word "der Jude" [Jew] was replaced by "der Bauer" [farmer] (See, for instance, the 1916 adaptation by composer Hans Gál (1890-1987)).

[49] "Wundervolle Märchen," Film-Kurier 222 (21 September 1940).

[50] "Neue Märchenfilme," *Film-Kurier* (30 January 1940).

[51] The term *Märchen*, which is usually translated as "fairy tales," in German refers to a variety of literary forms, including fairy-tales, folk tales, fables, etc. Hence, authors who write about *Märchen* often do not discriminate different subgenres that are terminologically included into this category. Here, for the sake of consistency, in translation of the term *Märchen*, I use the term "fairy-tales," for *Volksmärchen*—"folk tale," and for *Fabel*—"fable." When I cite English language sources, I use the terminology of the sources.

3.1.3 Animation Audiences: "The People, not the 'Public'"[52]

Though most of film industry policies were mainly focused on films produced for general (i.e., adult) audiences, in Nazi Germany, cinema was also broadly recognized as an important part of children's and youth culture. As David Welch pointed out, "The Propaganda Ministry… wished to shape this generation into an audience that would genuinely appreciate the aesthetic and revolutionary qualities of the National Socialist film and at the same time reject the degenerate and sensational blandishments associated with Weimar cinema."[53] In one of the speeches delivered at a *Jugendfilmstunde* (youth film hour),[54] Goebbels emphasized the formative role of arts in general and cinema in particular for adolescents. He pointed out that while sport is important for the body, and upbringing and education, for ensuring responsible thinking and behavior, it is art that creates the soul and makes it stronger. "And here, pointed out Goebbels, the worthy German films ... play an important role." [55] Thus, cinema was considered an important cultural phenomenon that had a formative social function.

Cinema was also seen not only as a medium that could become involved in children's upbringing, but also as a medium that can repair mistakes made by parents in educating children not up to the cultural standards of the national community (Volksgemeinschaft). Thus, at the premier of a film *Erwachen der Seele* (Rauten-Film studio, 1934), the presenter, Sturmbannführer Seidler, speaking about the relationship between cinema and children, pointed

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[52] "The People, not the 'Public'" [Das Volk—nicht das Publikum] is the title of a part of the article published in *Film Kurier*: Friedrich Munding, "Krisis des Films," *Film-Kurier* 304 (31 December 1935).

[53] David Welch, "Educational Film Propaganda and the Nazi Youth," in David Welch, ed., *Nazi Propagdana: The Power of the Limitations* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm; Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1983), 66.

[54] *Jugendfilmstunden* were "film performances organized jointly by the Hitler Youth and the Propaganda Ministry" (See David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy, 113).

[55] "Dr. Goebbels spricht im Rahmen der Jugendfilmstunden," *Film-Kurier*, 251 (27 October 1939).

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out that "The best breeding ground of the good is the model of the parents, and above all the psychological harmony that parents can offer to the child. Never can external circumstances be an excuse that the child's mental development is thereby endangered. Above all, the human self-esteem in the child must be developed. The child should not be inoculated with parental fear of life. Parents need help in this task. This is the most important duty of the national community [Volksgemeishaft]. To intervene here is our most important task in this assistance, so that we would help mothers in their rights."[56] This speech demonstrates the hopes for the government to use the medium of film as a means of involvement in children's upbringing and a vehicle for conveying the state ideology even in such private spaces as family. By offering the ideological "help" through cinema, the state was offering a means to control the ideology in which German children were brought up.

Multiple writings of the time contended that cinema and animation were to be produced for the broadest public possible or, as the quotation in the title of this section indicates, not even for the public, but for the people (*Volk*). As one of *Film-Kurier* articles stated, "Whether or not the works of the film industry are comedies, dramas, acting or political representations, they are produced exclusively for the people, not just for some upper class, not only for the audience in the cities, … but also for the millions who live in the rural areas."[57]

Children's cinema and animation were no exception from this rule—their task was also to reach "the millions" of potential audiences. The genre that the press nominated to perform the function of the all-children genre was fairy-tales. For instance, one of the *Film-Kurier* articles pointed out that since fairy-tales could speak in a language that a person of any age, education or

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[56] A. "Um die Seele des Kindes," *Film-Kurier* (9 April 1934).
[57] "Propagandaleiter der partei über nationalsoziaistische Filmarbeit: der Film als politisches Führungsmitte unserer Zeit, " *Film-Kurier* 36 (12 February 1938).

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cultural background could understand, the main audiences of fairy-tales were supposed to be children from "lower class suburbs" [*Arbeitervororte*] and industrial areas. In the article's words, "Here we first and foremost speak about the audiences not in Kurfürstendamm,[58] but in Wedding, in Ruhr region, and in Saxony. And to nurture their cultural tradition [*Bildungsgut*] should be one of the privileged tasks of the present."[59] In other words, fairy-tales were seen ideologically as a cultural tradition of the poorer and less educated population, whose interests they were supposed to present. Such a presentation, however, was not aimed at the people's enlightenment or cultural education, but rather at the preservation of the traditions that were already a part of their culture. Behind this stance is the intention to show to the audience what it is used to dealing with; not educating or challenging it, but rather pacifying it through the familiar content and form.

The press actively reported about importance of fairy-tales for children, about popularity of fairy-tale films with children, and about special screenings of fairy-tales organized for children[60] thus categorizing fairy-tales as children's genre. With the beginning of World War II, the press started paying attention to another specialized audience—the soldiers—and fairy-tales were also recognized as a genre popular with them. As an article that dealt with the issues of "cultural maintenance" [*Die kurturelle Betreuung*] of Wermacht stated, "Fairy tales and animal films are particularly popular with the soldiers."[61]

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[58] A wealthy neighborhood of Berlin.

[59] Max Weinheber, "Unterredung mit Hubert Schonger: Nur Familienväter sollten Märchenfilme drehen. Disneys „Schneewittschen" ist ein Erwachsenen-Erfolg. Wir brauchen Märchenfilme für Kinder," *Film-Kurier* 286 (7 December 1938).

[60] See, for instance, "Das Recht des Kindes aud den guten Film: Zum Thema 'Maerchenfilm,'" *Film-Kurier* 2 (3 January 1939); "'Schneewittchen' vor Kindergruppen der NS-Frauenschaft: Der November in Rheinland-Westfalen," *Film-Kurier* 289 (11 December 1939).

[61] "Die kurturelle Betreuung der Deutschen Wermacht," *Film-Kurier* 277 (27 November 1939).

Importance of fairy-tales for cinema and animation as a means of propaganda, as explained by some German authors, were (un)surprisingly in sync with the above-mentioned Lunacharskii's interpretation of importance of moving image, animation in particular, for children.[62] For instance, demonstrating an acute awareness of the fact that cinema has come to replace the reading of fairy-tales [*Märchendämmerstunde*], a reporter at *Film Kurier* points out that fairy tales can be easily shown to children not only through cinema theaters that are sufficiently widespread, but also, in absence of those, anywhere where appropriate equipment is set up.[63] The article also emphasized the educational significance of fairy-tale and the fact that "the film can be a very strong and illustrative mediation of spiritual values and moral views for children."[64] Among the prescriptions to cinematic fairy-tale adaptations, the author pointed out the following ones: a fairy-tale film must not differ significantly from the plot of the fairy tale; and a fairy-tale film must also not attempt to educate morally or to interpret the fairy tale. The former presented a version of Goebbels' directive adopted to the situation with fairy-tales to rely on the script. As to the latter, the author explained that "The moral values are in the fabric and in the simple action [of the fairy-tale] itself! Only those fairy tales remain true folk fairy tales, which conceal these moral values and yet carry them effectively. Artistic fairy tales, which attempt to exercise moral education, have not been able to either win children's soul or gain the love of adults."[65] Once again, the metaphor of the fabric that inconspicuously weaves in the ideological message becomes relevant for the discussions of fairy-tales—fairy-tales presuppose a shared understanding of values and social norms, and their presence in the narrative of a fairy-tale reestablishes their normativity and unambiguity.

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[62] See pg. 88.
[63] Fr. W. "Grundlagen der Erziehung zum flilm: Das Märchen im Kino," *Film Kurier* 195 (21 August 1936).
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

Concerns were raised, however, about live-action fairy-tales and their potential influence on children. For instance, an article in *Film-Kurier* with a telling title "Children's Phantasy and Fairy-tales: In the film, it is difficult to make a fairy-tale," painted a dark picture of a child watching a fairy-tale film in a cinema theater and, instead of getting a pleasurable experience, being terrified and upset by scary realistic images. The author poses and answers the central question of the article—how to make a fairy-tale in such a way that its unrealistic nature would be obvious to the child—in two ways. One way to do it is through drawn animation. As the author points out, "The realm of poetic and fascinating in fairy tales is the unreal, in the abolition of any gravitation, invention of beings that do not exist, such as elves, fairies, mermaids, sorcerers, gnomes, giants, talking flowers and animals. All this can be admirably drawn, as the small and larger animation films, which are often true works of art, have proved."[66] The other is to do it through puppet animation. As the article points out, because the doll looks like a human but will always remain a doll, puppet animation is a good way of "transformation into the unreal."[67] Thus, the ability of the animated image to prevent conflation of fantastical and real by creating an unrealistic image that was obviously unrealistic, was interpreted as an advantage that animation had for adaptation of fairy-tales comparing to live-action cinema.

Thus, the audience of fairy-tales, together with cinema in general, was officially declared as the broadest population, the people. However, since the Nazi understanding of the concept of the people was rather limited, it is important to point out its borders. In late 1935, one of the *Film-Kurier* critics, raising the question of the Nazi cinema audience, wrote, "For whom is cinema? For the people in the widest extent. Like the spectacle of the Greeks. Every class, every

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[66] Ursula von Kardorff, "Kindliche Phantasie und Märchenfilme: Schauspieler können im Film nur schwierig Märchenhaftes gestalten," *Film-Kurier* 301 (23 December 1940).
[67] Ibid..

level of education is subject to its influence, which is immediate because it speaks to us through imagery and parables." This quotation points to the ability of cinema to influence the vast population across their education and socioeconomic situations. The comparison of cinema with a Greek spectacle is particularly telling—on the one hand, because of the citizens of Ancient Greek polies had to be present at theater performances, the ideas presented in them reached all of the citizens of the polis; on the other hand, because in Ancient Greece, the audience of a theater performance consisted of the citizens of a polis, a large part of the population, including women and slaves was excluded from the performances because they were not citizens. The concept of Volk in Nazi Germany similarly excluded a large part of German population, namely, "non-Aryans." Since this concept was central to the politics of nationalism exercised by the Nazis, it was actively cultivated in different media, including, animation, with the help of folklore and fairy-tales.

3.1.4   Construction of the German Nation, Nazi Style: Volk, Volksgemeinschaft and Folklore

In his 1933 speech on the future of German radio broadcasting, Goebbels very clearly formulated his vision of the focus of Nazi national media politics: "To characterize the political sea-change in its simplest terms I would say that on the thirtieth of January the age of the individual finally came to an end. The new age is not for nothing called the Age of the *Volk* [*völkisches Zeitalter*]. The single individual has been replaced by the community of the Volk. When I make the Volk the central point of my political thought, the immediate conclusion is that anything that is not Volk can only be a means to an end. Therefore, in our confirmation, we have again a center, a fixed pole in the flux of phenomena… the Volk as the thing-in-itself, the Volk as the definition

of inviolability, which everything serves and to which everything is subordinated."[68] Goebbels's speech presents the Volk as the priority of Nazi politics, and as the phenomenon that generates politics.

The term *Volk* could be translated into English as "the people." It had been central for discussions of German national identity starting from the Romantics.[69] However, most scholars writing on the Nazi period in Germany prefer to use the German original: the term is semantically specific to the Nazi period, and preservation of its German version emphasizes this specificity. Hellmuth Langenbucher, a Nazi literary scholar, provided a useful definition of the Nazi understanding of the phenomenon of *Volk*, "People (Volk) is for us a spiritual and political law, but it is also the sign under which all men of German blood—the historical knowledge gained since the days of Grimm have taught us to go beyond the idea of common language to the more comprehensive idea of common blood—meet in a living community, which is felt as a community of fate…."[70] This quotation presents the Volk as a natural phenomenon based in blood, but also the one that is united by the historical and cultural knowledge, which is generative of another Nazi specific phenomenon, the community, or *Volksgemeinschaft*.[71]

The Nazi conception of the Volk was organized around two primary dimensions: the material one, connected with the biological and geographical characteristics of the actual bodies that constituted the Volk; and the spiritual one—the shared history, language, arts, and

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[68] Joseph Goebbels, "Die zukünftige Arbeit und Gestaltung des Deutschen Rundfunk," ["The Future Work and Configuration of German Broadcasting"] speech given 25 March 1933, translated in Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticism: A German Affair* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 241.

[69] See, for instance, Peter Hallberg, "The nature of collective individuals: J.G. Herder's concept of community," *History of European Ideas* 25, no. 6 (1999): 291-304; Adelheid von Saldern, "Volk and Heimat Culture in Radio Broadcasting during the Period of Transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 76, no. 2 (2004): 312-46; Aret Karademir, "Heidegger and Nazism: On the Relation between German Conservatism, Heidegger, and the National Socialist Ideology," *Philosophical Forum* 44 (2013): 99–123.

[70] Cited in H.G. Atkins, *German Literature Through Nazi Eyes* (London: Methuen, 1941), 22.

[71] Safranski contends that the term Volksgemeinschaft as an equivalent of national community was introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Adam Müller. (Safranski, *Romanticism*, 241).

folklore.[72] *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft*—the community of people that was usually conceptually

juxtaposed to the Gesellschaft, i.e. a society that emerged as a result of modernity—was a

naturalized conception of the German nation and an organic model of an ethnically homogenized

community, respectively. Both were idealistic and almost mythological conceptions that created

an image of an ideal and uncontroversial community of biologically and culturally connected

people. As Mechtild Rössler contends, "The so-called '*Volksgemeinschaft*' (People's

Community) became the model for the National Socialist society. This construction of a new

social entity bringing all classes, all walks of life and social strata, was not defined by status or

profession, but rather by 'blood'. This model therefore functioned as a racial basis and excluded

non-Aryans and Jews. The interests of the Volksgemeinschaft were dictated by Nationalist

Socialist policy. This almost mythical construction of Volksgemeinschaft was intended to

conceal social and internal conflicts in society."[73]

Nazi leaders promoted the idea of a peaceful society, free from the political and class

conflict that many Germans associated with the Weimar Republic. According to Nazi leaders,

this peace could be achieved only in an ethnically pure and healthy society.[74] Thus, the *Volk* and

the *Volksgemeinschaft* presupposed an ethnical homogeneity, a "logical" step towards which was

the politics of purification, i.e., extermination of the ethnicities that did not fit into the image of

the Aryan: first of all Jews, but also Slavs. It also presupposed "healthy normativity" which did

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[72] Safranski, *Romanticism*, draws a distinction between these two political tendencies in terms of realism and romanticism. For him, the realist direction is the one based in the materiality, whereas the romantic is the one based in spirituality (241-242).

[73] Mechtild Rössler, "'Area Research' and 'Spatial Planning' from Weimar Republic to the German Federal Republic: Creating a Society with a Spatial Order under National Socialism," in *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 131. As Rössler points out, however, in Nazi Germany, there was no unanimous understanding of the concept of Volksgemeinschaft, and "several institutions and offices fought against each other with different concepts" (Ibid.).

[74] Charles Closmann, "Legalizing a Volksgemeinschaft Nazi Germany's Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935" in *How Green Were the Nazis?: Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, ed. Franz-Josef Bruggemeier, et al. (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2005), 27.

not include any kinds of "deviations," be they sexual, psychological, or physical—German society was also supposed to be "purified" from those.[75]

As with any concepts, *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft* were in need of artistic and cultural representations and narratives that could provide them with the necessary content. Since the conceptual emphasis was on the natural and organic origins of the concepts, such representations and narratives also had to have *völkisch* origins. Summarizing the specificity of the *völkisch* origins of Nazi arts, Crispin Sartwell wrote, "The art of the Third Reich was of necessity a popular art, both for its propagandistic function and in its origin in nationalism, a (reified) 'art of the people.'"[76] This statement is true not only for Nazi fine art, but also for Nazi cinema and animation—it had to reach a broad audience, and this outreach had a nationalist premise. This quotation points towards the Nazi cultural strategy of nationalism and construction of the idea of "Germanness" that lay in the heart of the *Nationale Erhebung* (national renaissance), the concept that, as Edgar Feuchtwanger puts it, "churned out by the newly installed Goebbels propaganda machine, was characteristic of the attempts to cloak the Nazi take-over with the language of restoration, tradition and continuity, reaching back beyond 1918."[77] The Nazi concept of German nationalism was constructed in a form of a collage that comprised a variety of diverse aesthetic phenomena. Crispin Sartwell asserted that during the Nazi period "the German nationalism… was articulated almost exclusively in aesthetic terms: in terms of poetry, folktale, myth cycle, blackletter typography, music, vernacular language, clothing styles …."[78]

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[75] More on the politics of purification and its connection with the aesthetics, see Chapter 5.

[76] Crispin Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 21.

[77] Edgar Feuchtwanger, "The Transition from Weimar to the Third Reich: The Political Dimension," in *Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. Panikos Panayi (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 105-106.

[78] Sartwell, Political *Aesthetics*, 19.

By using the above cultural phenomena, the Nazi culture was assembling the construct of the German national culture, thus creating an idea of a united nation.

For Nazism, the main cultural inspiration for the idea of nationalism came from pre-romantic and romantic thought. As Peter Viereck noted, "We can enter the ideological house that Hitler built only by entering through the underground passage—apparently far off, apparently un-Nazi—of romanticism."[79] At the center of German romanticism were the concepts of *Volk* (people), *Volkstum* (folkdom) and *Gemainschaft* (people's community)—notions connected with the idealization of traditional values, rural living and nature. The latter in particular allowed parallels to be drawn between natural living and biological purity—Nazis emphasized the like in nature, especially in the biological segregation that allows for maintaining distinctions between species. Thus, quoting a Nazi ideologue Gottfried Feder, Safranski writes, "Nationalist Socialism would 'bring order back … to a world out of kilter" and arrange the 'chaos organically' to form out of 'mere mass' the 'intelligently articulated whole' of a *Volksgemeinschaft*."[80] The idea of a natural organic social order was based in the perception that following the rules of the nature with its hierarchical distribution of power among animals as well as between different genders within the same species, it is possible to create a harmonious society in which every person would know their place and social function from birth.[81]

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[79] Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: From Wagner and the German Romantics to Hitler* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 16. Though I generally agree with Viereck's interpretation of romanticism as a phenomenon that existed on multiple plains, and whose main characteristics were sometimes contradictory, e.g., romantic individualism which Viereck associates with early romanticism and romanticism outside of Germany vs. romanticism of a later period associated with Fichte, Hegel and Hitler, that "of a totalitarian collective," I strongly disagree with his claim that no matter what form of romanticism, it is "really the nineteenth century's version of a perennial German revolt against the western heritage" (19). To claim this is to occupy an essentialist position in which the concept of "the western heritage" that, as interpreted by Viereck, consists of three constituencies—rationalism, classicism, Christianity—has a narrow and exclusive meaning that overlooks complexity of the "western" history. Ideologically, such a position is similar to Nazism.

[80] Safranski, *Romanticism*, 242.

[81] This is a simplified version of appropriation of romanticism by the Nazi politics that does not reveal different versions of romanticism that existed in the Third Reich and their internal contradictions. For a more multi-faceted

Folklore that had Germanic, as well as Pan-European, origin played a particularly important role in this national system. Christa Kamenetsky explains the reasons for the importance of folklore, "After Napoleon's conquest, the three hundred diverse little dukedoms and kingdoms that made up Germany were reduced to forty-eight, which still did not bring about political or cultural unity. Officially, Germany did not reach statehood until 1871, and even then there were diverse systems, customs, and traditions that seemed to work against the ideal of the folk community. Nordic Germanic folklore, and peasant folklore in general, were at least a bond in history that was thought to work in favor of national unity."[82]

However, not all of the romantic ideals were equally important for the Nazi culture. As Christa Kamenetsky points out, "The Nazis glorified Herder, the Brothers Grimm, and the Romantic movement as a whole, but mainly for their contribution to the discovery of the 'healthy folk reality'—not for their discovery of free imagination."[83] As Rüdiger Safranski points out, this tendency stems from the Heidelberg Romantics for whom the focus of attention was not an individual and his or her creative potential, but the Volk and "poetic national treasure (*Volksvermögen*)."[84] In this regard, animation that was seen as a main heir of oral and print fairy tales was csummoned for purpose of translating 'healthy folk reality' into the language of drawn imagery. In this translation, animation was supposed to create a world that, on the one hand, was populated with recognizable images of animals, and on the other, to avoid using fantastical imagery.

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image of the relationship between romanticism and Nazis see Safranski, *Romanticism*, in particular Chapter Seventeen (239-253).

[82] Christa Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany: The Cultural Policy of National Socialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984), 8.

[83] Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature*, 5.

[84] Safranski, *Romanticism*, 241.

In the media that could also use imagery for creating "healthy völkish atmosphere" for children, a careful approach to the choice of themes was particularly emphasized. For instance, in discussions about children's picture books, Hugo Wippler, a recognized Nazi expert on the subject, condemned a number of themes that did not promote "raising a child in a healthy Volkish atmosphere"—such topics as "religious themes and sentiments, themes of tolerance toward other races, an over-emphasis on urban life, an interest in fantasy and the "miraculous" element, and a preconcern with deplorable, problematic or morbid situations," as well as "picture books that characterized children as spoiled and overprotected creatures who had not learned to share their lives and goods in the community," and "books portraying lonely, dreamy, moody or unstable children," had no place in German society.[85] On the contrary, the "following themes would be acceptable for the picture book in the Third Reich: 1. Folk rhymes and tales. 2. Customs, traditions, festivals of Nordic German origin; symbols of the Germanic past. 3. Modern German achievements: highways, bridges, transportation. 4. Home and country; the German landscape. 5. Protection of the German forest. 6. Protection of mother and child."[86]

Such an attitude toward appropriation of folklore by the Nazis explains why, though the German animation industry strove to recreate Disney's success by producing fairy-tales, animation imagery was limited to anthropomorphic animals, and no fairy-tales with fantastical imagery were produced during the Nazi period. Though German animation was heavily influenced by Disney, it was not Mickey Mouse that attracted the most attention from the German press during the Nazi period, but Disney's fairy-tales. For instance, writing about an Italian release of *Lullaby Land*, a Silly Symphonies short from 1933, *Film-Kurier* reported, "The Italian company 'Artisti Associati,' the local representation of 'United Artists' had invited the trade press to a special

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[85] Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature*, 152.
[86] Cited in Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature*, 152-3.

screening of the latest Disney films. For the first time they had the opportunity to see these last creations of Walt Disney, that do not show, as before, Mickey Mouse or her[87] relatives in all possible life situations, but rather conjure on the screen small stories and fairy tales that are funnier, more colorful and infinitely more artistic. Hardly has anyone seen anything more delicate and enchanting than the film from of the Silly Symphonies, the Lullaby Land in which a little person finds himself in a colorful, sunny world, and at the end of his colorful dream adventure, is gently covered by the sandman with a flower meadow. Apart from this short, the audience saw, among other films, two charming colored fairy tales. 'The Pied Piper' and 'The Old King Cole,' which, like the first one, delighted the eye and the heart of the audience with their charming bright images, their lively rhythm and their artistic execution."[88] The poetic and colorful description of the animated fairy-tales of the article emphasizes their attractiveness to the audience, and the sense of pleasure that they bring to the audience. This description is predicated upon an idea of pure entertainment, and for the German press at the time it seemed that animation could be the medium that would bring such entertainment to the audience, and fairy-tales could become the primary genre in animation.

However, before the end of 1937 there was some controversy in the press as to expediency of fairy-tale adaptation in animation, and some of those involved in animation production did not consider fairy-tales priority material for animation. A major article in *Film-Kurier*, "*Wirkliche Unwirklichkeit*" [Real Unreality], based on a lecture on animation delivered by Kurt Wolfes, a film and animation producer, stated that fairy-tales do not make the best material for animation. Wolfes criticized the use of various sources for animation production,

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[87] In German, the word "mouse" is feminine, thus in the German language Mickey Mouse is often called "she." Here, the pronoun corresponds to the one used in the German article.
[88] "Disney: Filme auch in Rom," *Film-Kurier* (9 April 1934).

including comics and illustrations, arguing that aesthetically they represent "captured movement," and that animation is "real movement, even though stylized," [*zwar stilisierte, aber wirkliche Bewegung*]. As for fairy-tales, Wolfes claimed that fairy-tales are an oral medium that "should be best heard" or at least read, and that creation of animated imagery would prevent from perceiving them as a source of fantasy. "I do not advocate for use of old German fairy tales for animation, such fairy tales like Little Red Riding Hood, The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats, Hansel and Gretel, etc., i.e., of fairy tales, whose content and forms are rooted in the wonders of the fantastic and the visionary."[89] For Wolfes, material appropriate for animation would be fables and humorous situations that stem from the "poetic present" [*die poesievolle Gegenwart*]. As an example of a humorous situation he suggests using such everyday topics as traffic offenders. And regarding fables, he contends, "I could imagine, however, that literary fables could be successfully transformed into a German cartoon. Such are fantastic fables, whose form and imagery should not be created in one's imagination, but whose imagery is generally known."[90] Developing his argument, he compares a fairy and a camel—for him a fairy is "a very imaginary image" [eine sehr imaginäre Gestalt], and should not be used in an animated film, whereas a camel is an animal, and "everybody knows what it looks like," which makes it a more appropriate object for animation. Thus, for Wolfes, the subject matter of animated films had to be connected with imagery grounded in reality, imagery easily recognizable by the audiences, and thus uncontroversial in its interpretation. Since fairy-tales often deal with less verisimilitude in their subject matter, and thus potentially can provoke unruly imagery that would resist an unambiguous interpretation, Wolfes strongly objected to animating them.

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[89] "Wirkliche Unwirklichkeit: Die Filmkunst des Trickfilms," *Film-Kurier* 59 (11 March 1937).
[90] Ibid..

However, by the beginning of 1938, after release of Disney's *Snow White*, there were no sceptics left who doubted the possibility of animated adaptation of fairy-tales whose characters were not limited to animals, especially in the format of feature-length films. And it was not only the novelty of the subject matter that raised an increase in interest in *Snow White*. As one of the articles stated, *Snow White* is "of a special interest to us because it is based on the Grimm brothers' fairy-tale Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."[91] One of the most frequently recurring topics emphasized by the press was that Disney's film was based on "the German fairy tale of the Grimm brothers," and that it "offered a primeval material [*Urstoff*] from which a great deal was made, and which was inexhaustible."[92]

Release of the *Snow White* was a huge success that received considerable coverage in German periodicals. As Giesen and Storm point out, "No other American movie received that much attention in the National Socialist press."[93] Though Disney's *Snow White* was widely praised, its style gave rise to new controversies. In December 1938, a lengthy article based on an interview with Hubert Schonger, a film director and animation producer whose specialty was fairy-tale adaptations,[94] was published on the front page of *Film-Kurier* and even spilled over the next one. The author of the article, a certain Dr. Max Weinheber,[95] cited Schonger criticizing strongly Disney's adaptation of *Snow White* for its lack of consideration of children's audiences and its betrayal of the original fairy-tale—Schonberg emphasized that it was too scary for

[91] "Schneewittchen entgruselt," *Film-Kurier* 232 (6 October 1937).
[92] "Schneewittchen und die Werge—Auch ein italienisches Lustspiel erfolgreich," *Film-Kurier* 199 (26 August 1938).
[93] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 13-14.
[94] As Giesen and Storm put it, "Thanks to a long- term distribution contract with Willy Wohlrabe's Jugendfilm Company, Schonger started to adapt fairy tales in 1938" (*Animation*, 164)
[95] During the Nazi times, Dr. Max Weinheber published a monograph on Hollywood cinema, and contributed articles on cinema to different newspapers.

younger children, and spoke more to adults' than children's sensibility.[96] Apart from criticism of Disney, the interview is a remarkable document that laid out the cultural politics of fairy-tales characteristic of Nazi Germany. The two main ones that the article advocated were "firstly, to meet the world of the child in a clear and comprehensible form, and secondly, to give justice to the essentially fantastical without distorting the meaning of the fable by "stylizing" it."[97] These tasks were consistent with the above choice of the target audience and its treatment: the visual language of the fairy-tales had to be easily understandable. The second task in which the authors euphemistically criticize "stylizing" of a fable is a reference to the aesthetic of realism vs. degenerate modernist aesthetic.

The article demonstrated a full awareness of the political nature of a seemingly unpolitical genre of fairy-tale—the idea of political import of fairy tale is mentioned twice. The first time, Schonger discusses one of the animated fairy-tale shorts, *Tischlein deck dich* (The Wishing-Table, 1936; directors Ferdinand and Paul Diehl), pointing out that its content stimulates child's imagination and thought. "In this sense," he states, "every fairy tale can be politically oriented without vandalizing the poetry and, as it has been suggested to me about the Snow White film, without giving the evil stepmother Jewish features."[98] The second statement about the politics includes both voices—those of the film director, and the author of the article— "we believe that the fairy-tale film could, in the most beautiful sense of this notion, unite nations: its language—the world language of the child—would be understood in the London East End as

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[96] Max Weinheber, "Unterredung mit Hubert Schonger: Nur Familienväter sollten Märchenfilme drehen. Disneys 'Schneewittschen' ist ein Erwachsenen-Erfolg. Wir brauchen Märchenfilme für Kinder." *Film-Kurier* 286 (7 December 1938). It is important to keep in mind that the interview was given around the time when chances of purchasing Disney's Snow White by the Reich were getting slimmer, as a result of which, in 1939, "he rushed into production with his own live-action version of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale *Schneewittchen und die sieben Zwerge* directed by Carl Heinz Wolff" (Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 164).

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

well as in Paris's Clichy district. It would be the unpolitical film with the strongest political effects, for it could kindle a flame of pure human sympathy in young souls, and contribute to the fact that in the future lack of understanding among different people will be overcome by a true camaraderie!"[99]

The last part of the quote is particularly curious in its appeal to a union of nations and a "pure human sympathy" that do not seem to have a Volk ground. Yet, considering that their geographical scope does not exceed the territory of Western Europe, and that the Nazi viewed German culture as a part of the Western European cultural space, a union of Western European nations, especially in 1938, before the beginning of the German military activities, particularly under a German fairy-tale, could seem like an appealing perspective. Such a union could have not only cultural but also economic benefits. In the 1930s, possessing the second largest film industry, after the USA, Germany was losing the cinema war in European markets, and production of animated films that could appeal to different national audiences—something that Disney was already doing at the time—could significantly strengthen the positions of the German film industry. From this position, fairy-tales, many of which had Pan-European origins, were a particularly safe choice for production.

The above ideas instigated foundation of the first German studio that specialized in production of animated films—Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH [German Drawn Film Ltd, DZF]. DZF was supposed to produce animated films that could rival those of Disney's and that could compete with Disney's films in the expanding German markets. As one of the reports on DZF stated, "Particularly with regard to the future importance of drawing films for cultural propaganda and export, the implementation of the plan is to be further pursued towards the

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[99] Ibid.

original goal of the production of feature-length drawn films."[100] It does not seem accidental that DZF was founded in the August of 1941, a month and a half after the beginning of Blitzkrieg in the Soviet territories.[101]

For the already existing animation departments at larger film studios, establishment of DZF meant that some of them were to shut down, and that the personnel working at those departments was to work at DZF. Such was the position of the director of DZF, Neumann. It was opposed by other studio animation departments who were fighting for preservation of the animation departments within their studios. For instance, Bavaria, according to Neumann's plans, was to lose its animation department, and yet it survived and remained at the studio. In a top-secret report on the conversation with Pfennig that took place not long before an official opening of DZF, Herbell wrote regarding the situation with centralization of drawn animation production: "I reported on my conversation with H. Regierungsrat Neumann (Kulturfilm-Abtlg.). H. Pfennig informed me that the office of Dr. Winkler did not approve the plans of H. Neumann. They were of an opinion that he had to try to put something on his feet himself before seizing all the departments. However, there is already a broad agreement between the Minister and H. Neumann. I myself want to get back to H. Neumann in August. H. Schier will arrange that H. Dr. Winkler and H. RA. Pfennig (at least the latter) are shown our film *Der Störenfried* and a maximum number of samples from the film *Münchhausen*."[102] However, though the animation department at Bavaria continued working at the studio, its functioning was complicated by much turmoil, as a result of which the list of the films it produced is limited to the two mentioned in the report, *Der Störenfried* and *Münchhausen*, both directed by Hans Held.

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[100] "Report on Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH.," 5 October 1943. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1709.
[101] I will discuss the history and animation of DZF in more detail in Chapter 4.
[102] "Streng vertraulich. Aktennotiz über meine Besprechung mit H/RA. Pfennig in Berlin am 7. Juli 1941 nachmittags im Berliner Büro." Signed by "Gez. Herbell," Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140a.

3.2   CASE STUDY: *DER STÖRENFRIED* (1940)

Der Störenfried [The Troublemaker] was released the same year as the anti-Semitic short *Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt,* and like the latter film*,* it presents an image of an enemy who is criticized through caricature. What is also similar between these two films is that despite their political message, both of them use an artistic form that wraps their political message within a visualized poem, in the case of *Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt,* and within a fable in *Der Störenfried.*

The animator who directed the short was Hans Held, an actor, pilot, and Nazi party member beginning in 1932, who became interested in animation early on, and as a "high school student, he drew on bare film strips without having the slightest idea of the technique."[1] He learned the trade between 1935 and 1937 at a small Berlin animation studio that made credits and advertisements.[2] In 1938 he, together with animator Max Wüstemann, founded a studio with the purpose of producing an animated adaptation of Friedrich Schiller's poem, *Der Handschuh* (The Glove). The short was never finished, but Held kept the unfinished material and the rights; later he used the materials for *The Glove* to get a job with Bavaria Filmkunst[3] and Bavaria, at some point, had a plan to finish and release *The Glove*, but this plan was never realized. In 1939, as Giesen and Storm write, Bavaria "was commissioned by the Film Department of the Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda to produce their own short films. Held approached them with the

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[1] Hermann Jockisch, "Hans Held: Ein Trickfilmzeichner," *Film-Kurier* 171 (24 July 1940).
[2] Giesen and Storm, *Animatio*n, 55.
[3] Ibid.

idea of producing cartoons. On August 2, 1939, Held signed the contract for *Einigkeit macht stark* [Unity makes strong],"[4] which was later released under as different title—*Der Störenfied*.

The animation department of Bavaria Filmkunst was located in Babelsberg. Like other animation departments at larger film studios, it was rather small. In 1940, ten people worked there: "two animators, the studio director, the cameraperson, and the six young ladies who take off the individual stages of the future film picture and color them according to the designs of Hans Helds."[5] In 1944, when Held was no longer working there, it consisted of twelve people apart from the directors: one main animator, three inbetweeners, seven background artists, and one technician.[6] By 1944, a second animation department of Bavaria was open in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Though, as Giesen and Storm note, *Der Störenfied* "passed the Board of Censors (No. 59626) and received the rating volksbildend (people educative)" only on November 4, 1940,"[7] already in the summer of 1940 *Film-Kurier* published several articles about the short and its director, two of which, penned by Hermann Jockisch, included a short biography of Held, described the film and the production process, as well as provided Held's own commentary. The articles praised Held's work and presented him as a new hope for German animation, the person who provided "German color animation with the right to exist [*Daseinsberechtigung*]," and whose films were going to be "a breakthrough in this direction."[8] Luis Seel, a pioneer of German animation, in his statement on history and contemporary affairs in animation, asserted, "I express

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[4] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 56.
[5] Jockisch, "Hans Held."
[6] Report signed by Karbe "Zeichenfilm-Produktion; Stand vom 15. Mai 1944, " 6. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734. It is worth noting that all of the staff members, except for the directors and the technician were women.
[7] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 57.
[8] "Aus der Perspektive einer Dissertation: Rund um den Trickfilm, Seineverschiedenen Erscheinungsforme in Europa und Amerika" *Film-Kurier* 228 (28 September 1940).

my appreciation of Hans Held's recent breakthrough."[9] *Film-Kurier* called Held "the Wilhelm Busch of cinema," [10] after a popular German cartoonist and humorist (as well as painter and poet) whose comic *Max and Moritz* was an inspiration and a model for *The Katzenjammer Kids* published in the *American Humorist*, the Sunday supplement of Hearst's *New York Journal*.[11] Like Busch, Held simultaneously performed different functions—he acted as director, as well as screenwriter and animator, executing drawings, including the background. Held's name carried so much weight that from the time of its founding until 1944, the animation department at Bavaria was called "Held's animation department" [*Held Zeichentrickfilmabteilung*].

An article in *Film-Kurier* wrote about him, "He learned all the particularities of his art from men; his own being made him recognize nature. He rightly calls her his great teacher."[12] The press's critical evaluations of *Der Störenfied*, Held's first completed film, were very positive. It was described as "an adorable animal fable"[13] and "a fairy-tale film of the Reineke Fox, the enemy of all animals, who then chase him down together in a joint effort."[14] Critic Hermann Jockisch wrote, "What a great sense of humor, what a sophisticated sagacity speaks in these colorful pictures! No, one should not try to describe their colorful beauty in black type. One should see for himself these enchanting, delicate, and subtle images, and let them impress

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[9] "Aus der Anfangszeit des Trickfilms: Ergänzende Feststellungen eines deutschen Trickfilm-Pioniers, der aus dem Ausland zurückgekehrt ist," *Film-Kurier* 230 (1 October 1940).
[10] Jockisch, "Hans Held." Another article pointed out that he performed the function of the cameraperson as well. ("Die Kulturfilme der Bavaria 1940-1941: Von den Alpen bis Patagonien—Zukunftfragen—Zeichentrickfilme, " *Film-Kurier* 203 [30 August, 1940]).
[11] For more on Busch and *Max and Moriz,* see, for instance, Anthony Krupp, "Unruly Children," in *New History of German literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 608-14.
[12] Jockisch, "Hans Held."
[13] "Die Kulturfilme der Bavaria 1940-1941: Von den Alpen bis Patagonien—Zukunftfragen—Zeichentrickfilme," *Film-Kurier* 203 (30 August 1940).
[14] Jockisch, "Hans Held."

him."[15] "Hans Helds' filming is of great artistic and technical interest,"[16] stated another article in *Film-Kurier*.

The evaluations by state institutions, though positive, too, were more reserved, and more controversial. According to the evaluation of the Special Department of Cultural Film, "*Der Störenfried* has to be recognized as a first work of the kind. Two years ago, when there was still nothing available in the field of drawn film in Germany, a film like *Der Störenfried* would be quite satisfying, although the artistic level left more to be desired and the humor contained in it was relatively primitive. The costs incurred for this purpose in the amount of R.M. 92,667.68 seem quite appropriate."[17] However, when Held first presented *Der Störenfried*, apparently it was received with suspicion due to the color of the Fox that by some critics was perceived as brown. The attack on the Fox's by a formation of dive bombers featured in the film was seen as a defamation. Only after Hermann Göring[18] declared such an interpretation to be nonsense, was the film "back in grace."[19]

Held's animation style also raised controversy in official circles. In a note addressed to Winkler and director Herbell, the author of the note, Pfennig, who visited Held's animation department on 14 May 1942 for an unannounced inspection, wrote, "I was shown a test-strip from the colored animated short 'Münchhausen'—the animated film that Bavaria has demonstrated in black and white. I found the workmanship very artistically made. I have strong doubts, however, that this is the animation procedure from which German drawn film, especially

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[15] Ibid.

[16] "Die Kulturfilme der Bavaria."

[17] "Sonderreferat Kulturfilm to Max Winkler (Special Department of Cultural Film)," 21 February 1944. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

[18] Hermann Göring was commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe from 1935 to the end of WWII, as well as Reichsmarschall, and Hitler's official successor starting from 1941.

[19] "Fräulein Mabel fällt aus dem Rahmen," *Der Spiegel* (1 January 1949) 23. It is important to note that this story was told after the end of World War II, I did not find any documentation in the archives that would support this story.

German drawn feature film, will emerge, though it is a much cheaper and simpler production process than the one used at DZF."[20]

However, in a report addressed to Max Winkler that was written very shortly after (21 May), Herbell wrote in more detail and with more praise about Held's animation: "In assessing the work of Held's animation department by Mr. Pfennig, it is interesting to me that he sees it as a substantially cheaper and easier form production than that of the Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH. In regard to the doubts expressed by Mr. Pfennig, as to whether the German animated film could, one day, emerge from Held's department, I would like to point out that, as is well known, the American animation company Walt Disney has grown out of small and simple beginnings. They started with animated shorts, and gradually, through taking on appropriate resources and taking a leading artistic initiative into account, moved on to produce world-famous feature-length animated films."[21] In any case, however, it must be stated that it was possible for the Bavaria to complete three animated films (namely the film *Der Störenfried* and two Münchhausen films), which have not yet been shown to the public because, as we know, we were denied the use of the Gasparcolor process for film production, and we were therefore forced to make a change to Agfacolor with considerable time loss and labor. It would be a pleasure for me, if you, my dear Mr. Mayor, would take a very quick look at this work so far. I believe that you too would gain the impression that at a relatively low cost we can gain here great results, an undertaking which deserves every support."[22]

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[20] "Betrifft: Trickfilm-Atelier der Bavaria-Filmkunst G.m. b .H. in Babelsberg, Berlin, den 16. Mai 1942." Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140.

[21] "Report addressed to Dr. Max Winkler, signed by Herbell, from 21 May 1942, topic: Betrifft: Kontrolle des Zeichenfilm-Ateliers in Babelsberg.," Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140.

[22] Report addressed to Dr. Max Winkler.

Despite the high expectations for Held's animation department, the plans for establishing a unique animation style via Held turned out not to be viable. After he released *Der Störenfried*, it took Held several years to complete his other animated film—*Abenteuer des Freiherrn von Münchhausen: Eine Winterreise.* Though Held had started working on it while he was working on *Der Störenfried,* the film was not released until 1944, and by then Held was no longer working at Bavaria. At this point, there is not enough evidence to establish with certainty which events played the most decisive role in Held's dismissal from the department, however, there were several factors that could have contributed to it.

One of the issues discussed in multiple archival documents is the situation that emerged at the department in the summer of 1942, and that led to several studio inspections. Even Goebbels visited the studio[23] though the purpose of his visit was unclear and considering that he had been at the studio the previous year about the same time,[24] it could be interpreted as a regular event. The number of confidential reports and notes regarding the studio was nevertheless very high that summer. One of the reasons for such close attention to the working situation at Bavaria were the "rumors"—the term that comes up in every report of the period, most often without explanation—about a sexual scandal, of which Held was a part. The accusations were eventually dismissed, and the source of the rumors—a certain Dr. Nier—was pin-pointed, with a verdict that he was solely responsible for spreading the false information.[25]

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[23] Confidential letter from Herbell to Winkler, 9 September 1942, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140.

[24] Report of Special Department of Cultural Film addressed to Max Winkler, Betrifft: Zeichentrickfilme der Bavaria, 21 February 1944. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

[25] Report by Herbell, "Stellungnahme zu den Äusserungen des Herrn Klar v. 10.6.42 in Sachen Zeichenfilm-Abteilung der Bavaria in Babelsberg," 23 June 1942, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140. Dr. Nier was later presented as not the actual source of the rumors, but rather their distributor (See, for instance, Herbell's "Stellungnahme zu den Äusserungen des Herrn Klar v. 10.6.42 in Sachen Zeichenfilm-Abteilung der Bavaria in Babelsberg," 23 June 1942, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140).

Yet, considering the volume of writing that these "rumors" caused, it is possible to assume that they made an impact on the work of the department.

Starting from 1941, the animation department at Bavaria also faced strong competition from DZF, whose first film was on the way to be released. DZF, a governmentally sponsored and supervised studio, had the best financial and people's resources, which put Bavaria into an unequal situation. In order to gain support from the government, Bavaria asked Pfennig for assistance with their animation department. In his report about a conversation with Pfennig, Herbell maintained, "I asked H. RA Pfennig to join us in our endeavors to foster production of Held's animated films and to expand them within the necessary framework. H. Pfennig promised to do so, and then asked to contact him directly if we have complaints against the Neumann organization [DZF]."[26] Though in 1942 the animation department at Bavaria was supposed to be shut down, as the report of a conversation with Pfennig states, Pfennig guaranteed that the department would be working until at least the films that were then in progress were completed, i.e., by the middle of 1943, but he was open to continuing the department's work even later.[27] Such a situation of high uncertainty as to the future of the department could not but influence its performance.

Another complication with release of animated films which slowed down the work of the animation department at Bavaria was connected with the use of color systems. Writings on *Der Störenfried* demonstrate lack of agreement as to the question of its intended color system. Giesen and Storm write that the film was produced in Agfacolor, and then that some of the prints were made in Gasparcolor. In particular, they point out that "It was first screened as a German entry at

[26] E.W. Herbell, Akten-Notiz über die Besprechung mit H/RA. Pfennig in Berlin im Büro Dr. Winkler am 19. Januar 1942. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140a.
[27] Aktennotiz über die Besprechung mit Herrn RA. Pfennig am 11. 6.42 nachmittags im.Berliner der Bavaria, p. 2. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140a.

the Biennale in Venice in 1941. As Geyer Laboratories in Berlin were not able to deliver prints on Agfacolor film stock, in September 1941 prints in the Gasparcolor process were shipped to Venice. Prints were also given to the army's transportable cinema wagons for troop entertainment."[28] However, even before the film was released, it was described as one produced in Gasparcolor in the press, for instance, Jockisch wrote the following in one of his articles about Held, "The color composition is determined by Hans Held, and he himself blends the colors to ensure their uniformity. The finished colored phases are placed one after the other on the corresponding background—which is again a small masterpiece in itself—and the film camera is now takes singe shots, image by image, by the Gasparcolor method. This is a very cumbersome and painful work, since every picture has to be photographed three times: once red, once blue and once green. The exposure time is the same in each case."[29]

The Gasparcolor process was used predominantly for animation and was characterized by the breadth of the color scheme and longevity of colors.[30] Because it was invented in Germany, it was particularly praised by the German press as a national color technology with an international impact and for its ability to create "perfect natural color."[31] However, starting from the 1940s, the German film industry was moving to Agfacolor, and animation followed the trend. The change of the color systems contributed to the delays in animation production at Bavaria. As Herbell pointed out in one of his reports, "[I]t must be stated that it was possible for the Bavaria to complete three animated films (namely the film *Der Störenfried* and two Münchhausen

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[28] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 57.
[29] Hermann Jockisch "Das Werden eines Farbtrickfilms: "Einigkeit macht stark" 28000 Einzelbilder für 400 Meter Film" [Becoming of an animated film: Unity makes strength, 28000 Pictures for 400 Meter Film], *Film-Kurier* 183 (7 August 1940).
[30] More on Gasparcolor. see William Moritz, "Gasparcolor: Perfect Hues for Animation," in Fischinger Archive, http://www.oskarfischinger.org/GasparColor.htm (accessed September 3, 2017).
[31] B-p, "Trick und Natur im Farbfilm," *Film-Kurier* 287 (9 December 1935).

films[32]), which have not yet been shown to the public because, as we know, we were denied the use of the Gasparcolor process for film production, and we were therefore forced to make a change to Agfacolor with considerable time loss and labor."[33]

Another factor of the must have contributed to delays in animation production was Held's absence from the department. In the beginning of 1942, Held was "borrowed" by Ufa-Filmkunst G.m.b.H. for several months to work on the special effects (tricks) for the full-length color film "Münchhausen," [34] which UFA produced for its jubilee. The same year Held also went to Denmark, and while he was away, the department was criticized for delays and not meeting deadlines.[35]

It is impossible to assert with certainty how all these events, separately and in sum, influenced Held's work, but it would probably be safe to suggest that these investigations and uncertainties as to the life of the department, together with Held's prolonged work on the special effects for the UFA film Münchhausen were among the reasons why Held's department did not produce any films till 1944, when the above-mentioned animated film *Münchhausen* or *Abenteuer des Freiherrn von Münchhausen – Eine Winterreise* was released.

The official evaluation of Held's Münchhausen was very negative. It was not approved by the authorities on the grounds that, since the story was already known to the audience, the film did not offer what an animated film should—surprise and gags.[36] However, such a

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[32] It is unclear why the document mentions "two Münchhausen" since only the animated one was produced by Bavaria, whereas the live-action one was produced by UFA.

[33] Report addressed to Dr. Max Winkler, signed by Herbell, from 21 May 1942, topic: Betrifft: Kontrolle des Zeichenfilm-Ateliers in Babelsberg. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140.

[34] Betrifft: Trickfilm-Atelier der Bavaria-Filmkunst G.m. b .H. in Babelsberg, Berlin, den 16. Mai 1942. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140.

[35] Notiz über die Besprechung mit Herrn RA. Pfennig in Berlin 21./22. Mai.1942. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/2140a.

[36] Letter to Max Winkler from Sonderreferat Kulturfilm (Special Department of Cultural Film), 21 February 1944. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

justification seems insufficient and leaves much room for speculations as to the reasons why the film was not well-received.

By 1944, however, Held was criticized not only for his work connected with animation production, but also for his style of running the animation department. The Report of the Special Department of Cultural Film addressed to Max Winkler pointed out Held's wastefulness and unrealistic expectations: "The main difficulties of the drawing film department of Bavaria are to be found in the undisciplined workings of the artistic director Hans Held. Since Mr. Held does not stick to approved scripts, and constantly changes and redesigns already drawn scenes, the completion of each of his films is delayed by many months. In the past year as well, we have again drawn more than 1000 meters, which could not be used later. For this reason, we have suggested replacing Held with an artistic director who has sufficient capability of planning and can oversee production of animation dramaturgically in order to apply his people only to truly manageable scenes. A final decision on this is to be made at the end of this month after the inspection of the film *Das Gespenst* (The Ghost)."[37]

Apparently, *Das Gespenst* was not received well—in 1944 Held's contract was terminated,[38] and the studio replaced Held with Heinrich Pieper who had previously worked at Wünsdorf-Berlin for Wehrmacht, and was characterized as "a reliable film drawer."[39] Soon another co-director/animator, Johan Weichberger, was added to the studio[40] corresponding with the plans to have a "more continuous and faster handling of the production process"[41] at the

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[37] Sonderreferat Kulturfilm to Max Winkler (Special Department of Cultural Film), 21 February 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.
[38] Bavaria-Filmkunst GmbH to Ufa-Film GmbH, 29 March 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.
[39] Sonderreferat Kulturfilm to Max Winkler, 3 April 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.
[40] Department of Cultural Film Report on Production of Drawn Films [Sonderreferat Kulturfilm Zeichenfilm-Produktion Stand], 15 May 1944, p. 6, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.
[41] Minutes of the conversation regarding the department of animation with Dr. Karbe (Department of Cultural Film) on 26 April 1944, with Mr.-s directors Herbell and Mosich (Aktennotiz; Betrifft: Zeichenfilmabteilung. –

Bavaria animation department. The official version of Held's dismissal was that the work of the studio "so far has not met the requirements."[42]

After World War II, Held, together with Hans Georg Dammann, produced an animated short *Kalif Storch* (1949).[43] He also worked on the production of advertisement posters with a famous animation and comics character Mecki (Meckiwerbung) for a popular magazine *Hörzu*, and was engaged in a number of other projects.[44] Der *Störenfried* was Held's only animated film that was completed and well-received both by the press and official institutions during the Nazi period, and thus was ideologically successful in the Nazi context.

Der Störenfried tells the story of a fight of forest animals against an intruder—a fox. *Einigkeit macht stark* [Unity is Strength], the initial title of the film, and the one by which the film was known in the press as late as the summer of 1940, seems to correspond much better to the content of the film because of its general focus not on the intruder—the fox—but on the community of animals who live in the forest and who, together with the "armed forces"—the infantry represented by hedgehogs and the air force represented by wasps—manage to defeat the intruder. The change in the title during the time of the film production corresponded to the changes in the political situation. The contract for the film was signed one month before the beginning of World War II. With the war's outbreak, the idea of the unity of the German nation was not sufficient anymore, and an image of a threatening enemy had to be introduced and amplified.

Besprechung mit Herrn Dr. Karbe (Sonderreferat Kulturfilm) vom 26.4.44. Anwesend Herren Direktor Herbell und Mosich), Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

[42] Report signed by Karbe "Zeichenfilm-Produktion; Stand vom 15. Mai 1944," p. 6, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.

[43] Giesen, Storm, 217; Anon. "Fräulein Mabel fällt aus dem Rahmen," *Der Spiegel* 1 (1 January 1949): 23.

[44] For more on Held's after-war life, see Erika Held und Alfred Schubert, *Hans Held-Haid: Lebensmosaik eines Genies* (München: Kedzierski-Beber, Irena 2009).

The film begins with a screen-size dark menacing figure of a fox captured against a background of pre-dawn light.[45] The fox is depicted walking on his hind legs, and due to his raised paw and tail, he occupies most of the frame. The figure seems especially large with the far-away mountains in the background only reaching its ankle. The white title credits that appear diagonally across the figure emphasize its contrasting darkness. The fox's open jaw together with his raised paw reinforces his threat, and his slightly bent knees point to his sneakiness.

In the next shot, multi-colored and multi-font credits list the films' director (Hans Held), composer (Leo Leux), the color system (Gasparcolor-Geyer-Kopie), and the sound system (Tobis-Klangfilm). The credits appear against the same background with far-away mountains as the previous shot of the fox, though the color of the background is lighter, producing an image of breaking dawn. The credits then disappear, revealing a misty landscape of a vast field with a winding narrow river and occasional trees framed by a mountain chain in the background and tops of pine-trees in the foreground. Within the next seconds of the scene, the mist disappears, revealing pastel colors of the patches of field, the river, the mountains, and the vegetation of the landscape. The image has a clear sense of perspective—the mountain chain in the background, even though it rhymes with a dense row of pine-trees in the foreground, gives a clear sense of the horizontality of the space of the landscape and its distance from the audience.

From the middle of the frame, a black-and-brown bird rises up into the air and starts flying almost vertically up.[46] In terms of the technical aspects of its movement, the bird is the weakest part of Held's animated short. Apparently, due to the lack of in-between images, the animation of its wings reveals two wing positions at once—when the bird raises its wings, we

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[45] *Der Störenfried*, Title frame. https://youtu.be/leDEGmgmms4?t=2
[46] *Der Störenfried* is available online only in an abridged form which does not include the establishing sequence. A complete available film can be found in a video collection *Geschichte des Deutschen Animationsfilms*, Ulrich Wegenast, ed., Vol. 2, *Animation in der Nazizeit* (Studio: Absolut Medien GmbH, 2011).

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simultaneously see them in a downward position. In fact, this is a feature of all the flying characters of the short, including other birds and the multiple wasps that play the role of the Luftwaffe. However, if with wasps such animation can be perceived as natural due to the speed of the wing's movement, with birds, due to the size of their wings, it reveals an optical discrepancy between the anticipated and the animated movement of the birds.

Such a technical problem with the movement of birds and wasps is curious since a part of Held's public personae was his interest in flying and his past in the Luftwaffe. According to Giesen and Storm, Held later claimed that his dream to become a pilot was the only reason why he "join the SA and, a few months later, on November 20, 1932, the Nazi Party."[47] However, despite the technical imperfections, the very animalistic representation of the Luftwaffe in the image of wasps as the most efficient militaristic force may have instigated the positive evaluation of the film. The Luftwaffe occupied an important position in the Nazi imaginary of Germany as a military country—images of planes discharging bombs were a permanent staple of newsreels, and it was "commonly considered to be the National Socialist element among the German armed forces."[48] Moreover, the promotion of the Luftwaffe in feature films, especially those that had the qualification [Prädikat] "Jugenwert," was strongly encouraged by officials.[49]

Another technical problem with the opening scenes of the short is coloration. All the objects in the opening scene that have small details, such as trees and the bird, are surrounded by a white halo produced by a gap between the color of the background and the objects. The halo mostly disappears in the following scene once the color scheme gets darker.

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[47] Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 53.

[48] Ulrich Albrecht, "Military Technology and Nationalist Socialist Ideology," in *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 90.

[49] See, for instance, S-k., "Deutsche Film im Dienst der fliegerischen Idee: Spiel- und Kulturfilme fördern die Bewunderung und das Verständnis für die Leistungen unserer Flieger," *Film-Kurier* 51 (1 March 1939).

Perhaps these were the reasons why the film did not receive massive support from officials, and why their response to it was somewhat lukewarm. Still, even the opening scene and the following scene in the forest reveal the originality of Held's aesthetics in terms of color and drawing techniques, of his treatment of the fable characters and their actions—which was very different from Disney's—and of his approach to the construction of the animated landscape.

In the following scene, the image moves diagonally from upper left to lower right, creating the illusion of a diagonal camera movement, behind the tops of the pine-trees, inside a forest. It briefly pauses on a squirrel sleeping in a nest that looks like a bed. The squirrel's head rests on a pillow, and he is covered with another pillow for a blanket. When the alarm clock that sits on a shelf right above the nest starts ringing, the squirrel's hanging tail repeats the vibrating movement of the alarm clock, and the squirrel, without waking up, hides it under the pillow that covers him. After that, the image continues moving vertically down, and then horizontally to the right, and having made another swift diagonal move, it pauses again at a clearing that opens between two large trees. In the idyllic image of the clearing that remains vertically framed by the tree trunks, there is a thatched white house with a tall chimney on the right part of the roof, and a low fence with two tall sunflowers that considerably exceed the height of the house. The horizontal framing of the image in the background is provided by a narrow line of blue that can be interpreted as either an ocean or a very low chain of mountains in the far distance. In front of the blue line there are some fields on the left, and its right side is partially covered by a forest of tall pine trees. In the foreground, the image is framed by wild flowers, including two symmetrical cornflowers on which sit two butterflies that themselves look like flowers. The butterflies' nature is revealed a second later, when they spread their colorful wings and fly away.

The establishing episode reveals the playful and humorous mood of the short—things are not what they seem, and revelation of their other (or true) nature can be anticipated at any given second. Another wrinkle is added by the scenery—the combination of the details in the image with the house—the blue of the background, the forest, the house, and the sunflowers—produce a composite landscape in which everything looks realistic, except that this combination of parts is impossible in reality. The blue of the background is reminiscent of the Alps or the Northern Sea which would be geographically remote from the forest, which is reminiscent of the Schwartz Wald. The house itself looks like an Eastern European thatched house rather than a "Western" one that traditionally has a differently shaped, pointed, roof. Such an interpretation would also be supported by the sunflowers—a traditional image for Eastern Europe, and especially iconographic for Ukraine after Alexandr Dovzhenko's *Earth* (1930), except it could also come from a Vincent van Gogh painting, which is also the case for the fields in the establishing shot. Once the inhabitants of the house come out running, the audience's attention shifts onto them, and, once again it seems that the mystery of the origin of the landscape is revealed—the three hares that come running out of the house wear white shirts, with two of them wearing Bavarian-styled shorts, and one wearing a skirt. However, the hares wear white mittens (reminiscent of Mickey Mouse), and they arrange themselves in a line and start performing Tchaikovskii's little swans' ballet moves. However, because the inhabitants of the house are clearly identified as "German," the audience perceives the whole scene as set somewhere in Germany.

Next, we see a magpie in a cap sleeping in her nest, on a white sheep and a pillow, covered with a blanket. In front of her bed, there is a pair of high-heeled red shoes and a feather on a carpet, and behind it there is a hanger with female clothes. The magpie stretches, opens her eyes, and utters a cry of surprise. In the next frame, representing a reverse shot, we see the back

of a fox dressed in a red jacket and pants the color of his fur, moving on his hind legs, his long bushy tail dragging behind him. The fox is nonchalantly walking away, his front paws in his pants' pockets, but once he hears the magpie's cry, he stops, turns around, and swiftly curls his tail up, posing with a sense of imperviousness. His posture seems to be saying "There is nothing you can do to me."

The magpie immediately starts dressing. She uncovers herself revealing that she is dressed in a bra and underwear, she puts on her modern blouse and skirt, as well as the heels, attaches the feather that turns into her tail, and takes off. While flying over the forest, she screams "Ein Feind!" [An enemy], and we see how different animals react to this—some birds poop from a nest that functions like a toilet, and a beaver drops his groceries, which results in a mess of scattered goods, broken eggs, and unrolling toilet paper.

In terms of the narrative structure of the film, the moment of the intruder's emergence indicates the end of the exposition and the beginning of its narrative development. It is also a moment of change in the narrative mode—if the exposition has a humorous tenor, then the appearance of the enemy—the fox—does not lead to his satirical denigration, as one might expect, but rather is treated with seriousness and awe. After a short last wave of jokes (which also includes an episode when the father hare decides to fight the fox, but then changes his mind, and is physically attacked by his wife[50]) the film's spirit changes to a more serious one. What is also notable about the jokes that follow the fox's appearance is that they become more corporeal and even scatological, whereas the visual jokes in the beginning are more light-hearted and playful.

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[50] *Der Störenfried*, The hares. https://youtu.be/Q8MUYCVD-VM?t=95

Though the Nazi leadership could appreciate the value of satire in animation,[51] and though satire was the most developed type of entertainment exploited by the National Socialists, after 1934 it stopped being successful as a propagandistic tool and consequently vanished from Nazi media. As Patrick Merziger, referring to press publications criticizing satire as well as sales figures of satirical magazines, convincingly demonstrates, "if one looks at the development of satire past 1934 […] it becomes clear that satire ran into difficulties as the public began to express their dislike of its destructiveness."[52] One of the articles that Merziger cites that "appeared in the nationalistic and anti-modern *Fridericus*, whose publisher, Friedrich Carl Holtz, was seen as a 'pioneer and fighter for National Social Germany'"[53] stated that satirical or 'cutting humour' "was no longer appropriate in the *Volksgemeinschaft* [community] of National Socialism, given the new mood of the people within it."[54] Merziger explains this change of mood in the following way, "In 1932 a National Socialist critic praised the political weapon of satire with the statement that 'laughter kills.' After 1933, from the public's point of view, satire really did have this effect. People wanted above all else to avoid social death [or exclusion from any social spheres] by all means. Because of this it can be concluded that the public's complaints about satire were not an expression of resistance; instead they showed the overwhelming desire of the greater part of the population to belong, to be part of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Furthermore, behind these complaints lay a deep trust in the National Socialist state."[55]

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[51] See, for instance, discussion of satire in a letter from Gez. Winkler sent to Richard Dillenz and Oberregierungsrat Neumann (no date), Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734—"It is certain that a good animated film can be of a significant importance in the field of political satire."

[52] Patrick Merziger, "Humour in Nazi Germany: Resistance and Propaganda? The Popular Desire for an All-Embracing Laughter," *International Review of Social History* 52 (2007): 282-283.

[53] Ibid., 286.

[54] Ibid., 286.

[55] Ibid., 288.

Merziger argues that the dominant type of laughter-provoking humor becomes "German Humor"—"the all-embracing, harmonious, and non-contentious laughter."[56] In another article, Merziger offers a further interpretation of a connection between the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the disappearance of satire and the popularity of "German Humor." The idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* was based on the idea of social harmony and on the ability to laugh together. In contrast to satire that antagonizes society and exposes its imperfections, "German Humor" produced the feeling of unity. After the "chaotic" and "fractured" period of Weimar, as Merziger states, "'German Humor' was welcomed as something new, refreshing and genuinely popular. Its focus on harmony and circumscribed lifestyle was a soothing contrast to the perplexing times that preceded it. The popularity of 'German Humor' is thus the sign that the central ideologies of National Socialist propaganda, especially that of 'Volksgemeinschaft', satisfied real yearnings in the populace, and that the politics of exclusion were not limited to the politics to a political 'elite', but were instead a popular project."[57]

However, this type of humor is not harmless or apolitical—it produces a tightly-knit homogeneous community that consists of like-minded participants and rejects any deviations that cannot be inscribed into the existing order. As Merziger puts it, "The text of 'German Humour' carries a latent message that becomes blatant in propaganda promoting the '*Volkgemainshaft*': the promised, all-encompassing community is always based on the complete ostracism of those who truly deviate."[58] *Der Störenfried* skillfully demonstrates both sides of "German Humor." On the one hand, it contains many instances of light-hearted humorous images; on the other hand, it

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[56] Ibid., 277.
[57] Patrick Merziger, "'German Humour' in Books: The Attractiveness and Political Significance of Laughter during the Nazi Era," in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d'Almeida (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 125-6.
[58] Merziger, "German Humour,".125.

is a cautionary tale that warns the audience against any kind of intruders and gives a lesson on how a community should respond to an intruder who presents a perceived threat to the Volksgemeinschaft.

Thus, already during the credits and the establishing episode, the film presents the audience with several themes integral to Nazi cultural politics that are developed throughout the film: the theme of the threat of an intruder—the central theme and conflict of the film—the theme of nature and landscape; and the theme of the traditional and modernism.

The appearance of the intruder sets up the conflict of the film. If before the magpie spots the fox, the film presents the peaceful scenery of the forest, once the magpie sees the fox, the action starts developing. The father hare himself makes an attempt to approach the fox, but then changes his mind, apparently frightened, and returns home, thus demonstrating that one animal cannot fight an enemy. In the meantime, the infantry (hedgehogs) and the air force (wasps) are called in and start attacking the fox with active help from the local community of forest animals: they create a lever that is triggered by a large rock which they initially use to catapult hedgehogs onto the fox, but eventually employ to kill the fox by smashing him with the rock. What is peculiar about the moment of the magpie spotting the fox is the vigilant magpie's instant recognition of the fox—she immediately is able to identify the enemy and raise the alarm. However, in the history of fables the figure of the fox has a much more complex interpretation than that of an animal easily recognized as an enemy—the controversial figure of Reinecke the Fox, with whom the fox in *Der Störenfied* was compared by critics, is a significant example.[59]

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[59] The fox in *Der Störenfried* was not the only one that appeared in German animation during the Nazi time. Other examples include Hans Fischerkösen's *Das Dumme Gänslein* (Fischerkösen Film, Germany/The Netherlands, 1944) and Egbert van Putten's *Van Den Vos Reynaerde* (The Netherlands, 1943). If the former short presents the fox in his traditional role as a predator, the latter, an adaptation of an eponymous 1937 book by Robert Van Genechten, a member of Dutch National Socialist movement, changes the fox's function: Reineke the Fox is the one who helps

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Reineke or Reinhard Fuchs (the Fox) was the main character of the first animal epic in the German language composed by Heinrich in the years between 1177 and 1197. "In a string of episodes, RF [Reinhard Fuchs] features a fox who, by cunning, deceit and slyness, dupes every fellow animal, including the most powerful of all, the lion king."[60] Though the story is not unique to Germany—it existed in different versions in different European countries, and in terms of the use of anthropomorphic characters it can be traced back to Aesop—it became particularly popular in Germany, and saw many adaptations and translations, including those by Gottsched,[61] the Grimm brothers[62] and Goethe.[63]

What is special about Reinecke's story, and what made it different from most fables, is that Reinhard the Fox—an anti-hero, an outsider who infiltrates a community and then disrupts its life, harming its members—escapes his punishment due to his wits. As Helmut Puff suggests, in Heinrich's "*RF* [Reinhard Fuchs], a crisis of sociability is linked to the ascent of self-interest unchecked by communal codes of conduct, by individuality, one might say, if that wording did not unduly modernize a medieval concept of the self that is clearly viewed negatively."[64] In the

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the animals to get rid of an infiltration of rhinoceroses, "jodocusses," who by introducing their rule, cause a falling apart of an animal empire. Van Putten's film is overtly anti-Semitic, with the rhinoceroses performing the function of the deviating animal intruders. The film was commissioned to the Nederland Film in 1941, and was completed in 1943. However, it was never released for reasons not exactly clear. As Egbert Barten writes, "From the minutes of 27 April 1943, it appears that the [Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging or NSB] members now had a problem with the fox figure: according to the council it was badly chosen from 'a National-Socialist point of view'. This objection is all the more remarkable since the Reynaert in the film is exactly the same National-Socialist folk hero as in the book. […] In October 1943, Van Putten wrote a letter about the film to DVK that implied that the German authorities also had some reservations about the film, although it does not become clear what" (Egbert Barten "Dutch Anti-Semitic Colour Animation in World War II: Robert Van Genechten's Van Den Vos Reynaerde (1943)," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 31, no. 1 [2011]: 1-41). Though the fox performs a positive role from the nationalist perspective f. in Van Putten's short—he keeps the animal empire clean from the deviating "jodocusses," and is not a deviating animal himself,—the structure of the narrative is the same as in the traditional tale: a homogenous society is to be purged from deviating social elements.

[60] Helmut Puff, "A Satire of Courtly Literature," in *New history of German Literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 71.

[61] Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Reineke Fuchs* (Leipzig und Amsterdam: P. Schenk 1752).

[62] Jacob Grimm, *Reinhart Fuchs* (Berlin: Reimer 1834).

[63] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Reineke Fuchs*, written in 1793 and published in Berlin by B.J.F. Unger in 1794.

[64] Helmut Puff, "A Satire of Courtly Literature," 74.

story, Reinecke, intelligent and skillful in the art of rhetoric and courtship,[65] using his wits, flattery, and lies, wins against the traditional medieval values of loyalty to the court and the society. As Puff points out, the story by Heinrich was a satire of the Hohenstaufen court[66] and an allegory of the political situation at the time. The later versions of the story (those by the Grimm brothers and Goethe) probably did not have direct political references and, in terms of the genre, could be categorized as fables. As Alexander Rogers wrote about Goethe's version, "It is a fable, in which beasts, whilst retaining their characteristic traits and propensities, display worldly wisdom combined with the quaintest humour."[67] Rogers' was not the only interpretation of Goethe's rendition of the story in terms of politics—other scholars, for instance, Roger H. Stephenson, read it as a commentary on the contemporary political situation.[68] But even if we accept Rogers' reading, the fact that this story resurfaced in particular historical times, and within specific political contexts, and was altered by the authors retelling it from the standpoint of their historical circumstances is in and of itself significant for dealing with it as a political object.

The version of Reineke's tale presented in *Der Störenfried* has a general similarity to the plot of the traditional tale: the fox invades a peaceful forest and presents a threat to its dwellers. However, the figure of the fox here has a range of crucial differences. First, as I have already pointed out, the fox is immediately identified as an intruder by the vigilant magpie who alerts the guard—the crow. Thus, the premise of the traditional tale—that he is mistaken for a friend, and

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[65] The rhetorical skills of Reineke are particularly prominent in Goethe's version. For more on that, see Roger H. Stephenson, "The Political Import of Goethe's Reineke Fuchs," in *Reinard the Fox: Social Engagement and Cultural Metamorphoses in the Beast Epic from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Kenneth Varty (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 191-207.

[66] Puff, "Satire," 71.

[67] Alexander Rogers, "Introduction," in Goethe's *Reineke Fox, West-Eastern Divan and Achilles,* trans. Alexander Rogers (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), v.

[68] For a political reading of Goethe's *Reineke Fox*, see Stephenson, "The Political Import."

that he uses his wits to deceive others—is not in Held's interpretation of the story. Second, the fact that in the end of *Der Störenfried*, the Fox is executed, points to a clear moral, and a very different one from Reineke Fuchs—it is the society that wins through joint effort and prevents the intruder from committing his crime, as well as from escaping without punishment.

Such a clear-cut moral and the unambiguous interpretation of animals as natural friends or enemies characteristic of fables in general and of *Der Störenfried* in particular resonates with the political theory of one of the most important Nazi theorists of law and politics, Carl Schmitt. Schmitt had a successful academic career during the Weimar Republic but, once the Nazis came to power, was invited to join in. During the Third Reich, Schmitt was appointed President of the National Socialist Jurists Association; he also served as a Professor of Law at the University of Berlin (now Humboldt University of Berlin).[69] In his seminal work, *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt pointed out the political meaning of fables in his brief discussion on the anthropological distinction of good and evil:

> Evil may appear as corruption, weakness, cowardice, stupidity, or also as brutality, sensuality, vitality, irrationality, and so on. Goodness may appear in corresponding variations as reasonableness, perfectibility, the capacity of being manipulated, of being taught, peaceful, and so forth. *Striking in this context is the political significance of animal fables*.[70] Almost all can be applied to a real political situation: the problem of aggression in the fable of the wolf and the lamb; the question of guilt for the plague in La Fontaine's fable, a guilt which of course falls upon the donkey; justice between states in

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[69] On Schmitt's biography, see, for instance, Joseph W. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt, Theorist For the Reich* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Reinhard Mehring, *Carl Schmitt: A Biography* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2014), as well as George Schwab's introduction to Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 3-16.

[70] Emphasis is mine.

the fables of animal assemblies; disarmament in Churchill's election speech of October 1928, which depicts how every animal believes that its teeth, claws, horns are only instruments for maintaining peace; the large fish which devour the small ones, etc. This curious analogy can be explained by the direct connection of political anthropology with what the political philosophers of the seventeenth century (Hobbes, Spinoza, Pufendorf) called the state of nature. In it, states exist among themselves in a condition of continual danger, and their acting subjects are evil for precisely the same reasons as animals who are stirred by their drives (hunger, greediness, fear, jealousy).[71]

There are several aspects of this quotation that are relevant to the discussion of *Der Störenfied*. First, this citation is Schmitt's only application of his political theory to a literary genre (other than political writings) that he uses in *The Concept of the Political*—his main work on political theory. For Schmitt, the sphere of the political is founded on a basic distinction between friends and enemies. If the moral sphere is concerned with good and evil, and the aesthetic sphere with the beautiful and the ugly, the political sphere operates as a framework for making a distinction between the enemy and the friend. In the realm of the political, these categories are always public. As Schmitt puts it, "The enemy is not merely any competitor or just any partner of a conflict in general. He is also not the private adversary whom one hates. An enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity. The enemy is solely the public enemy, because everything that has a relationship to such a collectivity of men, particularly to a whole nation, becomes public by virtue of such a relationship."[72] In a fable like *Der Störenfried*, in which the relationship among the characters is built as an opposition and a conflict between the forest animals—the friends—and the fox—the

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[71] Schmitt, *Concept,* 58-59.
[72] Ibid., 28.

enemy,—the political relationship is presented as unambiguous and natural. Analogous to the natural division between predators and prey, the potential prey—the forest animals—are defending themselves from the predator, and thus the political acquires a natural premise, which leads us to the next point—Schmitt's interpretation of the state of nature.

In drawing his analogy between an anthropomorphized kingdom of animals in fables and human states, Schmitt focuses on the discussion of the state of nature by the writers who either connected it with war (Hobbes) or with the necessity of submission to discipline in order to prevent war (Pufendorf). For Schmitt, war is not a necessary condition of the political sphere, but war is a direct result of the political sphere because it "follows from enmity." In Schmitt's words, "War is the existential negation of the enemy."[73] Connected with adherence to essentialist qualities of animals based on their species, such a position makes a war of one species against another an inevitable and a regular outcome of the political which does not need any moral or ideological justification. "The only justification for war is political," [74] writes Schmitt and continues, ""The justification of war does not reside in its being fought for ideals or norms of justice, but in its being fought against a real enemy."[75]

Since, like many other fables, *Der Störenfried* is a political fable that operates in categories of friend and enemy, it is not accidental that the conflict of *Der Störenfried* emerges at the moment of recognition of the fox as an enemy. Schmitt points out, "Political thought and political instinct prove themselves theoretically and practically in the ability to distinguish friend and enemy. The high points of politics are simultaneously the moments in which the enemy is, in

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[73] Ibid., 33.
[74] Ibid., 49.
[75] Ibid.

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concrete clarity, recognized as the enemy."[76] The magpie, who immediately sees the fox as a public enemy, simply acts as a political figure who recognizes and determines the politics of the fable.

The intruder, the fox, does not have a set of specific markers that could be definitively read by the audience as an allegorical representation of a particular type of enemy of the Third Reich. However, his image can be interpreted as a composite type of an enemy, or a hybrid. The fox wears a red jacket, which could be read as a marker of his communist orientation. At the same time, his wandering into the space of the forest yields an interpretation of the fox as Jewish—it was the "rootlessness" of the Jewish people which was presented by the Nazis as a particular threat to the stability and rootedness of the German community.

Another feature that distinguishes the fox from the rest of the animals, emphasizing his otherness, is that he is the only animal who loses his human appearance, visually turning into an animalistic creature. The clothing of the animals in the film, their style of living and actions are highly anthropomorphized. This contrasts with Disney's cartoon characters, who are dressed only partially, and whose clothes are never age-specific and perform only a symbolic function— they symbolize that the characters represent humans, contrary to other animals who do not wear clothes and who represent animals:[77] characters in *Der Störenfried* are completely dressed, and their clothes are specific their age, area, period, and occupation. Thus, the magpie wears a bra and underwear beneath her modern costume of a blouse and a skirt (Fig-s 11, 12); the young hares are dressed in children's clothes of Bavarian style; the father hare is dressed in a full suit with a long jacket and suspenders (Fig. 17); his wife wears a Bavarian-style female outfit that

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[76] Ibid., 67.

[77] I have written about this distinction elsewhere—Olga Blackledge, "Violence, Chases and the Construction of Bodies in American and Soviet Animated Series," *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5(1), 2010: 41–56.

looks like a modernized version of a dirndl—a blouse, a skirt, and an apron; the crow's outfit looks like a doorman's uniform, and the uniforms of the hedgehogs and wasps are reminiscent of those in the Nazi infantry[78] and the Luftwaffe,[79] accordingly. All the animals walk on their hind legs, and their movement is not connected with their species—throughout the film they move like humans. The appearance and behavior of the fox, however, transforms during the film. In the beginning, he is fully dressed in a red jacket, blue shirt, a striped scarf and brown pants and shoes, and moves like other animals. However, from the point when he prepares a pot to cook the kidnapped little hare, he starts turning into an animal: he is already not wearing his jacket. When he is attacked by the infantry and the air force, he starts running on his four limbs, completely transforming into a wild animal, losing any similarity with the rest of the forest animals, as if revealing his animal and enemy essence.[80]

Contrary to the other film characters, the fox is the only animal who does not talk and does not communicate with others in any other way. One of the *Film-Kurier* publications quoted Held as saying in an interview about *Der Störenfried*, "It is not permissible to choose sounds that are too realistic …if the fairy-tale character [of the film] is to be preserved. That is why I do not let animals speak the human language, I use inarticulate sounds instead of clear words."[81] And yet, in the actual film, we hear a lot of human speech: the magpie alerts the forest dwellers to the presence of the intruder and informs the guard-crow of the appearance of the fox; the father hare talks to himself, practicing how he will threaten the fox; the young hares complain about the fox to the armored hedgehog, etc. There is also a brief scene in the short, in which the father hare

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[78] *Der Störenfried*, The infantry. https://youtu.be/Q8MUYCVD-VM?t=106
[79] *Der Störenfried,* The wasp aviation. https://youtu.be/Q8MUYCVD-VM?t=109
[80] There is another animal who loses his clothes in the film—the crow. When he sees the fox attack the little hare, the crow takes his uniform off and flies for help.
[81] Ibid.

does his morning exercises and follows the routine as instructed by a radio announcer. Considering that the radio was the main medium of propaganda in Nazi Germany,[82] its presence in the film as a medium of direct instruction, and to demonstrate how these instructions are followed by a character in the film with a maximum precision, despite an obvious difficulty—the father hare's leg does not bend, which can be interpreted as a legacy of World War I—performs the function of an always present pervasive authoritative voice that has the right to direct the characters in their actions. Father hare is the only male civilian who is not on duty in the film, and the fact that the radio speaks to him emphasizes the patriarchal hierarchical structure of the world presented in the film, and also the fact that even civilians have to stay fit and follow a military-styled routine.

However, Held also uses non-human sounds for his characters. For instance, in the scene in which a squadron of wasps attacks the Fox, the original sound of dive bombers' engines and sirens is used,[83] thus transforming the natural wasps into technologically created weapons. The technological nature of the wasps is also present in their appearance—their clothes make them look like humans in uniforms with an attached yellow and black striped abdomen which has a capacity for the sequential shooting of multiple stings. The image of the infantry—hedgehogs— is similar, they are represented as highly anthropomorphized animals who wear special uniforms that turn them into hedgehogs with technologically created protective spines that when attacking, they use as a weapon.

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[82] For an analysis of the role of the radio in Nazi Germany see, for instance, Horst J. P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, eds., *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); David Bathrick, "Making a National Family with the Radio: The Nazi Wunschkonzert," *Modernism/modernity* 4.1 (January 1997): 115–27.

[83] Dirk Matthias Alt, "Frühe Farbfilmverfahren und ihr Einsatz durch die NS-Propaganda, 1933 – 1940," Magisterarbeit im Fach Geschichte an der Leibniz-Universität Hannover, Prüfer: Prof. Dr. Füllberg-Stolberg, Hannover, August, 2007, 87.

These complex images that combine the technological and natural and blur their borders are reminiscent of the Nazi's complex relationship with technology. The importance of technology, especially war technology, was understood and articulated by the Nazi leaders. Thus, in a recorded table conversation, Hitler stated that "[D]ecisive for the winning of any war remains … that one is always in possession of the 'technically superior weapons.'"[84] However, such an investment in technological development contradicted the Nazi condemnation of modernity, of which technological development was a part, and their ideological thrust towards the natural. Coining the term "reactionary modernism" to describe this National Socialist paradox, Jeffrey Herf maintained, "Nazi ideology was a reconciliation between the antimodernist, romantic, and irrationalist ideas present in German nationalism and the most obvious manifestation of means-ends rationality, that is, modern technology."[85] Herf continues, "Reactionary modernism was not primarily a pragmatic or tactical reorientation, which is not to deny that it transformed military-industrial necessities into national virtues. Rather, it incorporated modern technology into the cultural system of modern German nationalism, without diminishing the latter's romantic and antirational aspects. The reactionary modernists were nationalists who turned the romantic anticapitalism of the German Right away from backward-looking pastoralism, pointing instead to the outlines of a beautiful new order replacing the formless chaos due to capitalism in a united, technologically advanced nation. In so doing, they contributed to the persistence of Nazi ideology throughout the Hitler regime. They called for a revolution from the Right that would restore the primacy of politics and the state over economics

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[84] Cited in Ulrich Albrecht, "Military Technology and Nationalist Socialist Ideology," in Renneberg and Walker, *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, 88.

[85] Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1. Herf is not alone in pointing out the contradictory standpoint of the Nazi ideology in in relationship to the natural and technological (or scientific). See, a similar idea developed in, for instance, Mark Bassin, "Blood or Soil? The Völkisch Movement, the Nazis, and the Legacy of Geopolitik," Bruggemeier, *How Green Were the Nazis?*, 206.

and the market, and thereby restore the ties between romanticism and rearmament in Germany."[86] Though it is hard to agree with Herf's interpretation of German culture looking forward to a "beautiful new order" rather than backwards, especially in animation, which did not offer much new cultural imagery or themes, the interpretation of the military technology in *Der Störenfried* points to the confluence between the romanticism and militarization of Germany. In the images of the wasps and hedgehogs, their natural protective devices—the stings and the spines—are not integral parts of their natural bodies: rather they are efficient technological weapons designed to attack and destroy. Though they are not technical images of the future—after all, they are still "natural creatures"—they represent technologically upgraded images of the past. Their sound—that of the dive bombers—emphasizes their new ability to destroy, which becomes their new function.

Not only the characters, but also the landscapes are of a hybrid quality in *Der Störenfried*. As discussed above, the scenery in the opening credits is created through a combination of landscape elements that belong to different locations—both aesthetically and geographically. Such a collage-styled organization of the scenery reveals the complex relationship of German politics to the issues of landscape that had two intertwining roots—in romanticism and in the post-World War I socio-economic condition of Nazi Germany.

From the romantic perspective, nature was perceived as having a national spirit, and thus it had to be protected and preserved—preservation of nature meant preservation of the nation and the national character. As one of the advocates for nature protection, musicologist Ernst Rudorff argued in the nineteenth century that preserving the "monuments and beautiful objects of nature" would preserve the "deutsches Volkstum,"and that the "roots of the German essence" lay within

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[86] Herf, *Reactionary Modernism,* 2.

the German people's "deep feeling for nature."[87] This nationalist rhetoric of nature protection was directly connected with the threat of the destruction of the natural scenery by modernization and capitalism. In Nazi Germany, however, the movement for nature preservation also acquired openly racist features. Charles Closmann states that "Like Alfred Rosenberg, Richard Walther Darré, and other National Socialist ideologues, some leading conservationists were coming to the conclusion that a mystical connection of 'blood and soil' existed between the people and the land."[88] One example of Nazi rhetoric that he provides came from Walther Schönichen, director of the Prussian Office for the Care of Natural Monuments during the 1920s and one of the most prominent fascists within the nature-protection movement in the 1930s. Closmann writes, "In 1934 he [Walther Schönichen] stated that 'the nature of our homeland, with its woodlands and meadows... has formed the essence of the German people,' and that 'in order for a new peoples' community to exist... the nature-loving soul of our race must break through.'"[89] Because the issues of preservation of nature were set into a racial framework, the German people were designated as the ones capable of caring about it, while other, inferior races did not have the ability to appreciate natural resources. Thus, as Closmann states, during World War II, the German nature preservation experts "justified the forced removal of thousands of Poles from their homes on the grounds that such an allegedly degenerate race of people could never have a proper relationship to nature and to those portions of the countryside occupied by the German army."[90]

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[87] Charles Closmann, "Legalizing a Volksgemeinschaft Nazi Germany's Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935," in Bruggemeier et al., *How Green Were the Nazis?*, 24.
[88] Ibid., 26.
[89] Ibid., 27.
[90] Ibid., 34.

Nature also provided the German nation with a natural organic environment which ensured its spatial stability. As Bassin writes, "The inherent need for an enduring 'inner correspondence' and 'intrinsic unity' between Volk and the natural universe was expressed through the image of the Bodenständigkeit—roughly, the 'organic territoriality'—of the Volk-organism and its 'rootedness' (Verwurzelung) in the natural environment."[91]

Considering the socio-economic standing of Germany, the land, landscape, and nature became a part of the conception of Germans as the people without space (Volk ohne Raum),[92] when Germany's territory was limited by the Versailles Treaty. Creation of the Lebensraum—the living space for the German Volk—was the main task of WWII. The plan for the occupied territories was to integrate them into the German space through their Germanization, since according to the Nazi ideology, any space where Germans lived could be considered German. Thus, the constructed landscape of *Der Störenfried* occupied by German-dressed animals is immediately perceived as German, and the incongruity of its elements does look unnatural due to the presence of the animals representing the German Volk.

The natural appearance of the landscape in *Der Störenfried* is also supported by the natural, almost washed out colors. In one of his interviews, Held stated that this choice was not accidental: "Up to now, one has always used bright colors. […] I've chosen very delicate watercolor paints, and this is for a deliberate purpose."[93] Though the article does not provide an explanation of the purpose—thus making the quotation look more like an excuse for not using the bright, Disney-style color palette, than an ideological technique—the image created with the subdued pastel colors looks realistic: the colors used in the images adhere to the idea of natural

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[91] Bassin, "Blood or Soil?," 206.
[92] The title of the 1926 novel by a nationalist writer Hans Grimm.
[93] Jockisch, "Das Werden eines Farbtrickfilms."

colors, and so do the overall shapes of the depicted objects and their movement, even though at times they tilt towards more expressionist style.

In this natural context, the forest animals appear as the natural inhabitants of the landscape, and their emphasized German (Bavarian) clothing causes the space to be perceived as German even though the landscape is a composite. The Nazi state politics of expanding the Lebensraum acquire in *Der Störenfried* a very concrete imagery, which does the cultural political work of normalizing occupation.

By way of conclusion, though the fable *Der Störenfried* has a clear-cut and seemingly universally applicable moral—everyone who threatens the life of a community will perish—in and of itself, it does not function within the system of moral law like other fables; rather it functions within the Schmittian political system established by the binary opposition of friend and enemy—the enemy is immediately recognized as such and exterminated. The use of anthropomorphic animals in *Der Störenfried* is conducive to how Nazi cultural politics established and naturalized the categories of *Volk* and *Volksgemneinschaft,* which portrayed German society as natural and organic, with some species belonging to it and others not, and to how Nazi land politics presented occupied territories as German natural *Lebensraum.* The way in which the Nazis simultaneously appropriated romanticism as a source of the nationalist tradition and promoted scientific and technological development, which is characteristic of modernity, enters into this animated film through the hybrid characters of the military troops—the infantry and the air force—that, on the one hand, are connected with their natural qualities, but on the other, are a result of a sophisticated technological upgrade of their physical capacities. *Der Störenfried* can be seen as a visualization of the Nazi utopia—a new compound space populated by united characters who are actively supported by the advanced military forces. All of the

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species are clearly distinct—each of them performs a specific function. *Der Störenfried* is an excellent example of reactionary modernism —it presents a community that has been created via modern means, but the means are hidden or obscured, while leaving only the final naturalized image of a well-known fable with a new narrative, recreated in a new medium of animation.

3.3   CONCLUSION

Early German animation, including some made by avant-garde artists, was mostly used in commercials. The rare exceptions of feature animation produced at the time did not use the cel technique (for instance, the work of Lotte Reiniger). Even though from the technological perspective, development of industrial animation in Nazi Germany was a continuation of the animation production tradition of the Weimar period—the technology of celluloid was already being used in Weimar Germany, and continued to be used in Nazi Germany—the Nazi era started a new period in the history of German animation. NSDAP's coming to power dramatically changed German animation production, first, in terms of the continuation of the animation tradition—some of the animation artists left the country; second, in terms of animation genres—fables with anthropomorphic animalistic characters became the new dominant genre; and third, in terms of animation audiences—children became the target audiences of Nazi animation production.

The political function of Nazi animation was to be apolitical and to provide entertainment and escape. Similar to Soviet animation that in the 1930s developed with predominantly children's audiences in mind, animation in Germany also considered children as its primary audience, but what was more important, the intended audience of animation was the *Volk*—the

Aryan community of spectators. Nazi animation was supposed to present an unambiguous image of the homogeneous *volkisch* society. Additionally, German animation was not intended for enlightenment, but rather for the presentation and consolidation of the idea of the *Volk*'s unity. In order not to disturb or damage this newly developing form of the German *Volk*, satire officially excluded from Nazi animation after 1934. Thus, German and European folklore and specific genres such as fairy-tales and fables were considered most appropriate for animation—they not only provided a connection with the national tradition, but also connected different European countries, creating a sense of common history.

Even though German animation of the Nazi period was not overtly political, the political informed animation in terms of its content and form. The animated film analyzed in the chapter—*Der Störenfried* (dir. Hans Held, 1940)—provides a good case for studying how Nazi ideology formed the basis for German animation at the time. The chapter also follows the history of the animation department of Bavaria Filmkunst, where this film was created, and of the film's director, Hans Held. The animation department at Bavaria Filmkunst operated on more artisanal than industrial principles, even though it functioned according to the principles of distribution of labor.

The narrative of *Der Störenfried* is based on the traditional European epics about Reineke Fuchs—the animal that disturbs a community of forest dwellers, and in order to protect themselves, the forest creatures get rid of the troublemaker. In *Der Störenfried*, the intruding fox is killed by the joint effort of the naturalistic anthropomorphic animals and the military, represented by hybrid cyborg animals that possess naturalistic and technological features. Through these militaristic animals, the film creates an image that combines both of the aspirations of the Nazi culture—for Romanticism and technological advancement. The

environment in which the events of the film take place is also a hybrid one. It is populated by animals who can be identified as "German," but it is composed of features that belong to different geographical places, becoming a visualization of the ideal of the *Lebensraum*—the space for the German nation as envisioned by the Nazis. The story of the fox, who is immediately identified by the forest dwellers as the enemy, follows the Schmittian understanding the enemy, whose political function is to be exterminated. This Schmittian understanding of the political finds its implementation in Nazi racist politics and aesthetics that are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.0 THE AESTHETICS OF SOVIET ANIMATION: STRIVING FOR SERIALITY AND PURSUING FAIRY TALES

> We do not have to, following the motto "give us a new Mickey Mouse," fit Soviet content into this anti-artistic form of American art. We do not have to do it because, first of all, nothing but nonsense will come out of it, secondly because there is hardly another country that has as many first-class graphic artists and caricaturists in stock as ours, and probably no other country is capable of using its artistic forces as rationally as we can when we want to. The problem is that in this field of arts we still do not know exactly what we want. [1]

After the 1920s, during which Soviet animation started as an aesthetic, political, and technological experiment characterized by a high level of modernism and avant-garde, other aesthetic criteria, such as realism of the animated image, along with its affinity to traditional cultural images and to literary illustrations, started dominating the animation production process. Traditionally, in the history of Soviet animation these aesthetic changes are attributed to the introduction of the celluloid technique of animation production and the influence of Disney.[2] On

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[1] Mikhail Tsekhanovskii, "Ot 'Murzilki'—k bol'shomu iskusstvu" [From Murzilka, to Big Art], *Sovetskoie Kino* no. 10 (1934): 26.

[2] See, for instance, Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za Kadrom* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1980); Semion Ginsburgh, *Risovannyi i kukolnyi film: Ocherki razvitiya sovetskoi multiplikatsionnoi kinematographii* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1956); Sergei Asenin, *Volshbniki Ekrana* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1974), Anatolii Volkov, "O Putiakh Razvitiia Sovetskoi Multiplikatsii 30-kh Godov," in *Na Perekrestkah Kino* (Moscow: VNII Kinoiskusstva, 1993), 21-33.

the one hand, this position can be supported by considerable evidence,[3] and yet, on the other, I argue, it does not fully explain the scope of the aesthetic changes in Soviet animation, considering that these changes were consistent with the state-endorsed shift, first from modernism to realism, and eventually, to socialist realism. With establishment of socialist realism as an official artistic method, animation workers also looked for ways to adapt the principles of socialist realism to animation, which also influenced animation aesthetics.

As the previous chapter on Soviet politics in animation has demonstrated, ambiguity surrounding the position of animation in Soviet cultural production—between its subsidiary and independent functions,[4] between the diversity of political requirements and potential uses, and technological possibilities—resulted in its in-between status throughout its history: it strived for technological advancement but remained technologically inferior; it had potential for a multiplicity of forms and functions, yet it was delegated to the role of the live-action cinema's apprentice, or reserved for children's education and entertainment. A similar instability and uncertainty was characteristic of animation in terms of its form: such questions as what animation had to look like, and what aesthetic criteria to be employed were discussed widely and wildly at animators' meetings and on the pages of papers and journals, with the voices of not only animators but also of critics and administrators heard in the discussions. The main topics under discussion included the relationship of Soviet and American animation, the visual sources of Soviet animation, the types of imagery and characters appropriate for Soviet animation, and the genres of Soviet animation. To understand the nature of these topics, as well as the relevant current and projected concerns, this chapter will examine the aesthetics of animation within the

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[3] See, for instance, Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za Kadrom*, 100, where Ivanov-Vano discussed the methods of teaching new animators how to draw for animated films using Disney's animated frames.
[4] See more about this distinction of types of animation in Chapter 2.

context of the historical changes in cultural politics of the Soviet Union, and will also treat these topics as part of the technological and political developments in that country. In this chapter, I will consider the issues encountered by the animation studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm in general, and by animation directors in particular, on the way to achieving the goals of socialist realism. I will first discuss the requirements of socialist realism, then discuss the controversies around the notion of Disneyan imagery, and then will address the most frequent subjects of discussions of animators and animation critics in the press as well as in meetings at Soiuzmul'tfil'm, which were also reflected at such archival materials as the meetings' shorthand reports, a variety of written reports, letters, directives, etc.

4.1   ESTABLISHING SOCIALIST REALIST AESTHETICS

4.1.1   Socialist Realism and its Animated Forms

The tendency towards a more realistic aesthetic in animation began in the Soviet Union towards the end of the 1920s, coinciding, on the one hand, with a general tendency in Soviet arts towards a more realist aesthetic; on the other hand, this trend coincided with the arts becoming overall less overtly propagandistic and political. Animation, in turn, began engaging more diverse topics and genres that on the surface moved away from the rhetoric of direct persuasion to a realistic depiction. Officially, socialist realism was proclaimed the artistic method approved by the Party at the First Meeting of the Union of Writers in 1934.[5] However, socialist realism did not emerge

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[5] It is important to acknowledge three different approaches and interpretations of socialist realism: as a program, as a method, and as an aesthetic. Socialist realism is interpreted as a program in Lunacharskii's eponymous speech (see

overnight—both the name of the method and, especially, its foundational ideas have a much longer history. The term "socialist realism" already existed by that time: according to the anecdote told by C. Vaughan James, it was coined by Stalin himself in 1932.[6]

As for the ideas of socialist realism, they were already fully developed and formulated by Anatolii Lunacharskii who presented them in his speech at the Second Meeting of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Writers in February of 1933. Lunacharskii died at the end of 1933, several months before the First Meeting of the Union of Writers, hence the impossibility of his presence at that event. However, according to James, starting from 1929, it was Andrei Zhdanov, not Lunacharskiiy, who played the main role in the formulation of Soviet artistic politics.[7] Yet, in his study, James does not mention Lunacharskii's speech on socialist realism, which leaves the question open regarding its importance and influence. James maintains that socialist realism was a continuation of the realist aesthetics that had been rather prominent in Russian literature since the nineteenth century. As he points out, "…in the arts, the meeting of the Union of Writers in 1934 denotes only the formal institutionalization of the 'method' of Socialist Realism that had been evolving throughout the proletarian period."[8] James shows how ideas later employed in literary socialist realism had been developed by Russian writers and thus maintains that socialist realism emerged as a result of literary continuity and succession rather than as a break in the literary tradition. Moreover, one of the first novels that post factum was

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below for a detailed discussion), where he states, "Socialist realism is a broad program that includes many methods." After the First Meeting of the Union of Writers, socialist realism was officially interpreted as a methodological approach to arts, "the fundamental method of Soviet literature and literary criticism" (See, for instance, *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, September 3, 1934). However, right from the beginning of the turn towards socialist realism, there were searches for an adequate aesthetic implementation of the tasks of socialist realism, which allows for speaking about a specific socialist realist aesthetic. One of the earliest discussions about the aesthetic formalism of socialist realism arose in the Brecht/Lukacs debate, discussed in Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and Georg Lukács, *Aesthetics and Politics*.

[6] C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 86.
[7] Ibid., 77.
[8] Ibid., 35.

claimed to be a socialist realist novel, Fedor Gladkov's *Cement*, had already been written in 1925, almost a decade before socialist realism was proclaimed as a leading Soviet aesthetic method, which suggests that this tradition was never interrupted: socialist realist works existed even amidst the formalist avant-garde experiments. However, I believe that in connecting socialist realism to the realist novel, James and others who were following the same line of thought, are exercising a rather formalist move—they are referring not to the idea of socialist realism, but to its aesthetic form. This is exactly the problem that Brecht saw in Lukács' rendering of socialist realism.[9] Ideas of socialist realism, however, can be traced back to Plato— with his emphasis on the importance of arts' correspondence to the demands of the Republic, and his very direct recommendations as to how arts should function in order to produce the good citizen—and to Aristotle—with his emphasis on imitation (mimesis) as an important formative practice. The lineage of socialist realism can probably possible be traced from Plato, through Hegel's criticism of Plato's take on the notion of the idea, and then through Marx's criticism of Hegel's idealism, Plekhanov's reading of Marx, and, finally, through Lunacharskii's debate with Plekhanov and the latter's call for the development of a new system of art, on Marxian grounds, that could challenge the bourgeois system of art.[10] It is interesting to note that in Ranciere's aesthetic system, socialist realism would occupy the place between the representative and the ethical regimes that he associates with the Aristotelian poetics of mimesis and the Platonic ethos of community, respectively. What is also helpful in Ranciere's writing on aesthetics for understanding socialist realism is his take on the relationship between the sayable and visible, and between the visible and invisible, in the representative regime. He points out that this is a

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[9] See Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and Georg Lukács, *Aesthetics and Politics*.

[10] A more detailed discussion of socialist realism and its origins would outside of the scope of this dissertation.

particular system of relationships that presupposes a fixed distribution of the sensible, which creates an order of stable relationships, a codified expression of thoughts or feelings, or a consensus. Additionally, the representative regime is the regime driven to a large extent by the logos—it is the logos that determines the visual meaning—which is consonant with the way socialist realism was conceived and developed.[11] The problem of the aesthetic form of the socialist realism becomes especially acute when the visual is considered, and animation in this regard becomes a good case of demonstrating the level of confusion which existed in interpretation or translation of socialist realism into the visual language.

Thus in his speech, Lunacharskii laid out the main principles of the method.[12] He stated that art is always a part of the social life, socialist struggle, and socialist construction. It should be realistic (not naturalistic[13] or romantic[14]), which means accepting and not negating the

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[11] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (London: Continuum, 2004); idem, The Future of the Image (London: Verso, 2009).

[12] Anatoli Lunacharskii, "Sotsialisticheskii Realism (Doklad)," Speech delivered at the Second Meeting of the Organizing Committee of the Union of Writers of the USSR, February 12, 1933. The internet publication is a reprint of the publication in journal "Sovetskii Teatr," no. 2-3, February-March, 1933 (The title in the journal publication is "Socialist Realism"). http://lunacharsky.newgod.su/lib/ss-tom-8/socialisticeskij-realizm#n11

[13] Lunacharskii makes a clear distinction between realism and naturalism that is important for further understanding of the debates about the animated image, and criticism of naturalism in the animated image. If realism is linked to the method of expression of the active class, naturalism is categorized as a negative realism, as a method of expression of among the petite bourgeoisie which focuses on the negative sides of the reality instead of trying to recreated and overcome these negative sides. As Lunacharskii ironically formulates the lament of petite bourgeoisie as a result of which naturalism comes to being, "'We are completely captured by bourgeoisie, we are condemning it, we are at the verge of cries of despair, but we cannot free ourselves,' this is the leitmotif of petit bourgeoisie naturalism" (ibid.).

[14] Below, Lunacharskii remarks that socialist romanticism is possible, but it should be radically different from bourgeois romanticism. As he formulates this difference, "Because of our enormous dynamism, it [socialist romanticism] engages such areas, in which fantasy, and stylization, and all kinds of freedom of treating the reality play a very big role" (ibid.). Such interpretation of romanticism is consistent with the one introduced at the First Meeting of the Union of Writers in 1934 by Zhdanov: "To be engineers of human souls means to stand with both feet on the ground of the real life. It means, in its turn, a break from the romanticism of an old kind, with romanticism that depicted a non-existent life and non-existent characters taking the readers away from the contradictions and the oppression of life into the world of unachievable, into the world of utopias. Romanticism cannot be alien to our literature, which stands on the solid materialist basis with its both feet, but it should be romanticism of a new kind, revolutionary romanticism. We are saying that socialist realism is the main method of Soviet literature and literary criticism, and this presupposes that revolutionary romanticism should be an integral part of the literary creative work." (A.A. Zhdanov's speech, *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd Sovetskikh Pisatelei, 1934,*

previous historical development of humankind and asserting its further transformation. Lunacharskii's concept of realism was based on the idea of class struggle, with socialist realism being active and passionate, rather than objective,[15] in understanding the reality; and dynamic, rather than static,[16] which allowed for showing the perspective of social development. He also outlined the main genres of socialist realism, such as tragedy and comedy, pointing out that the form of these genres was not static, and that they were in a constant state of development and change.

After 1934, the main principles of socialist realism were consolidated into three bigger categories: "*narodnost'* (literally people-ness)—the relationship between art and the masses, *klassovost'* (class-ness)—the class characteristics of art, and *partiinost'* (party-ness)—the identification of the artist with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)."[17] The latter meant that the artists were supposed to promote the party politics by their creative work.

The aesthetics of socialist realism emerged, first of all, as a literary one, where it had particular sources and canons to follow—the nineteenthth-century realist novel. In other media, especially in the ones connected with moving images (including film and animation), there were no obvious canons to refer to, which created many debates as to how these media should follow the requirements of socialist realism. The attempts to find some already existing sources for animation were twofold: first, they were connected with finding sources for the animated image, and second, for scripts. I will consider the problem of the animated image below in conjunction with Disney's influence on the aesthetics of Soviet animation. As for scripts, the lack good

Stenographicheskii otchet. [First All-Union Meeting of the Union of Writers, 1934, Shorthand Report] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1934), 4.

[15] This thesis relates to importance of the character, a hero in the transformational mission, and gives agency to the individual, rather than reserves understanding of the social transformation to objective processes that for Lunacharskii is characteristic of men'shevism.

[16] For Lunacharskii it means depicting the reality not as it is, but as it is going to be or become.

[17] See, for instance, James, *Soviet Socialist Realism*.

scripts and the lack of the authors who could write them were among the most frequently raised issues at the meetings at the animation studio.[18] This was considered to be one of the most important problems that was hampering animation production. Moreover, it seems that this was the most persistent issue—the lack of good scripts and scriptwriters was permanent: it was mentioned at multiple meetings at animation studios throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

The choice of an appropriate script and its approval became the first, sometimes most difficult, step in the process of a live or animated film production. There can be several reasons for such a heavy reliance on script. It is hard to control the process of cinematic and animation production because both cinema and animation are synthetic arts that presuppose involvement of many people responsible for a variety of different processes and stages—development of an image, choosing the right actor, camera, montage, sound, light, etc.—at any of these stages something can 'go wrong,' whereas a book or a script is a tangible and fixed product. It is easier to make an author to rewrite a book, whereas remaking a film would involve more state funding spent on it. Such an emphasis on script often resulted in an extremely slow approval of scripts by the State Committee of Cinematography,[19] which in turn created a problem for the animation directors who could not start working on the film without Committee's approval. However, there were also situations when an animated film would be cancelled at the stage of preproduction. For instance, at a Meeting of Creative Sector of Soiuzmul'tfil'm studio that took place on October 3,

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[18] See, for instance RGALI (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art), fund 2450, inventory 2, item 32; fund 2450, inventory 2, item 55; fund 2469, inventory 1, item 1071, and many other archival items, in particular in funds 2450, 2456, and 2469.

[19] According to many film directors, the procedure of script approval by the Committee could take up to two months. (See, for instance, the notes of Ptushko's speech at the Meeting on the Issue of Thematic of Animation of the Creative Workers Engaged in Animation ["Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii"], May 20, 1938. RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 2, item 32, 12).

1946, Faina Epifanova[20] describes a situation when production of an animated film was terminated after eight months of preproduction due to script issues.[21]

Procrastination over approving scripts at times impeded the whole process of animation production. An example of such a situation can be found in the protocol of the above-mentioned Meeting Creative Sector of Soiuzmul'tfil'm studio. During his speech at the meeting, Nikolai Bashkirov[22] directly connects the problem with scripts to the problems with animation production. His position, however, is rather indicative as to the tensions between the roles of animation directors and the Script Department: he accuses animation directors of working with low quality scripts, and suggests that creative workers should "help the Script Department and provide themselves with scripts."[23]

An additional problem with scripts for animated films, pointed out at multiple meetings, was that the authors of the scripts were not always aware of the specificity of the process of animation production, and their scripts were simply too hard to transform into animated films. As one of the animation directors, Vladimir Suteev put it, "our script writers write scripts in a form of an illustration rather than depiction. It is a very important question. We need scripts, in which one sees immediately, what happens."[24] He and other animation directors suggested that scripts should be written by scrip twriters together with artists and animation directors. This suggestion

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[20] Faina Georgievna Epifanova (1907-1988), Soviet animator and animation director.
[21] "Protokol sobrania tvorcheskoi sektsii," 3 October 1946. RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 10, 8.
[22] Nikolai Vasilievich Bashkirov was the head of production department at Soiuzmul'tfil'm before and after World War II.
[23] [Необходимо, чтобы творческие работники помогли сценарному отделу и обеспечили бы себя сценариями.], ibid.
[24] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 16.

was occasionally taken into practice,[25] yet, the fact that this issue was raised so many times suggests that this never became a regular practice.

In addition to the nineteenth-century novel, there was another literary genre that, according to Maxim Gorky, the officially leading Soviet writer and theoretician of Soviet literary studies, complied with the requirements of socialist realism—folklore. Gorkii first spoke about folklore as a potential source for socialist realist arts at the First Meeting of the Union of Writers. As Ursula Justus maintains, Gorky equated folklore, as the people's literature, with Soviet literature. Before Gorky's speech, "the Soviet cultural and literary unions, such as Proletkult, RAPP, and LEF, rejected folklore, and considered it to be an atavism of peasant and aristocratic cultures. It was Gorky who gave folklore the status of archetypical ideal for socialist realistic literature."[26] According to Justus, after Gorky's speech, folklore literature became the people's literature "freed from capitalist and feudalist alienation, and thus the one that has returned to its natural origin."[27] Such a change of attitude towards folklore resulted in major changes in considerations of sources for animation: folk tales, and then fairy tales, became first tolerated, and soon required genres of Soviet animation.

The folk and fairy tale became a permanent staple of Soviet animation by the end of the 1930s, and established themselves as the dominant animation genres after World War II. This process of genre establishment also coincided with the release of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, which, undoubtedly, impacted the industry of animation and the directions of its genre development. However, in order to understand the mechanism of Disney's

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[25] See, for instance, the description of work on the script for *Fedia Zaitsev* by Nikolai Erdman and Mikhail Vol'pin. "Fedia Zaitsev: materialy fil'ma." RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 513.

[26] Ursula Justus, "Vozvraschenie v Rai: Sotsrealism i Folklor," in *Sotsrealisticheskii Kanon*, eds. Eugeny Dobrenko and Hans Gunther (Sankt-Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proiect, 2000), 72-73.

[27] Ibid., 73.

influence, it is important to understand how Soviet animation worked toward finding its place in the system of Soviet media and arts under the main artistic method of socialist realism.

The artistic tendency towards realism that dominated at the end of the 1920s and the subsequent establishment of socialist realism created a rather specific situation for animation: on the one hand, for artistic workers engaged in production of animation, participation in the Party arts program was the only way they could continue working in the field of animation, especially after 1936, when Soiuzmul'tfil'm was established, and animation production was centralized, which deprived the animators from a possibility of migrating from one little animation studio to another. A move towards socialist realism was essential for the whole field of animation production since only participation in the governmentally sanctioned projects could guarantee a stable future for the development of the medium of animation. For instance, in his speech at the 1st All-Union Meeting of Animators in 1936, Grigorii Roshal' formulated the question of socialist realism in animation in the following way, "the issue of socialist realism is a crucial one for the style of animation, as well as for the live film, our literature, and our theatre."[28] Roshal's rhetorical gesture, by placing animation on the same level with other more well-established and acknowledged art forms, on the one hand, attempted to draw attention of the authorities and convey to them the importance of development of animation, and, on the other hand, to articulate such importance to the public. Moreover, as Georgii Borodin maintains, many Soviet animators perceived the new governmental program as a creative challenge and were enthusiastic about meeting the new task.[29]

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[28] Cited in G.K. Elizarov "'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' (Biografiia Tvorcheskogo Kollektiva)," in *Soviet Animation: Handbook* (Moscow: Committee on Cinematography, Council of Ministers of the USSR, State Film Fund, 1966), 40.
[29] Georgii Borodin, for instance, in his interview mentions that most Soviet animators were doing their best to correspond to the Party new aesthetic course (Interview conducted in July 2012) However, it was not always the

However, there was an aesthetic problem that became immediately obvious—it was not clear what images would correspond to the ideas of socialist realism. On the one hand, these images had to be idealistic rather than realistic—they were supposed to represent an ideal situation of a communist society characterized by prosperity and well-being rather than the reality of hardship and need. On the other hand, they had to be less elitist, i.e., less avant-gardist, and closer to and more comprehensible for the mass audience. Here the idea of comprehensibility of an image presupposes not only its unambiguity for interpretation but also its integrity and affectivity. Thus, what socialist realism was supposed to depict was not the rational reality but rather the idealized and romanticized idea of communism that was hard to locate in the present. In animation, the issues with the search of the animated imagery that could correspond to such requirements, and with the adequacy of animation as a medium to the tasks of socialist realism were, to a large extent, of an aesthetic nature: the methodological and aesthetic tasks of socialist realism could not be easily translated into the visual language of animation. These complications were not entirely technology specific—as the archival materials show, they were topical already when Soviet animators were using paper drawings and cut-outs, before the introduction of cel animation. However, with the introduction of celluloid, they became more challenging, especially because of constant comparisons between the work of Soviet animators and that of Disney, which created the myth of the totality of Disney's influence on Soviet animation. In the following section, I will analyze the phenomenon of Disney's influence on Soviet animation, which was present but also exaggerated.

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case. The most famous example was Nikolai Khodatayev, one of the first Soviet animation directors, who left the industry and continued his career as a book illustrator.

4.1.2 Disney and Soviet Animation

In 1936, one of the pioneers of Soviet animation, Nikolai Khodataev, summarized two aesthetic tendencies in Soviet animation. The first tendency was to follow the style of American[30] animated shorts. According to Khodataev, this type of animation stemmed from advertisement, had very simple plots based on gags, and serial main characters that were animalistic, and were anthropomorphized (for instance, Mickey Mouse). Khodataev writes, "The partisans of American animation think that Soviet animation should also follow the same route: we should produce shorts with simple plots of the same light-weight eccentric genre even if they would be different in their content. There should be found a character for a serial production, like in American animation."[31] The other tendency was much more negative about and critical of the American animation style. Its supporters considered, according to Khodataev, that "the form of animation established in the West is contradictory in its core to our ideological orientations in art. … Its [art's] form changes according to the themes and content. That is why it is a mistake to put a new subject-matter and content into the traditional forms of Western animation. This mistake slows down a normal development of Soviet animation."[32] Khodatayev, himself supporting the second tendency, was highly critical of the attempt to produce "a Soviet Mickey

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[30] It is important to point out that Khodataev is one of very few people in animation that refers to American animation as American rather than "Disney." Most other commentators do not. Such a situation led to confusion in understanding the American sources of Soviet animation. For instance, with a very few exceptions, animation historians and directors do not write about the influence of the Fleischer brothers on Soviet animation though there is direct and circumstantial evidence about it. An example of a piece of direct evidence would be the fact that a consultant from the Fleischers' studio, Lucille Cramer, worked at Viktor Smirnov's Experimental Studio at the Scientific-Research Sector of State Institute of Cinema. An example of circumstantial evidence could be the image of the eponymous main character of the Brumberg sisters' short *Red Riding Hood* (1937) that closely resembles the Fleischer brothers' Betty Boop.

[31] Nikolai Khodataev, "Genres of Artistic Animation," in *Multiplikatsionnyi film*, ed. Grigorii Roshal' (Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1936), 69.

[32] Ibid.

Mouse."[33] His main concern was that the animated would be standardized, which could decrease variability of styles and images in animation. He wrote, "Proponents of the second tendency think that there should be no standard form in Soviet animation."[34] Thus for Khodataiev, the influence of American animation on Soviet animation could result in a decrease in stylistic diversity that at the time was characteristic of Soviet animation, and the establishment of the domination of a comical serial character.

A similar position was occupied by the Leningrad animation director Mikhail Tsekhanovskii. He maintained that aesthetically, American animation takes its roots from the "cheap low quality press" and is essentially "anti-artistic," and thus not worth following as an aesthetic form.[35] Tsekhanovskii, as well as Khodataiev, was a proponent of positioning animation as an art, an "art of graphic cinema," and having high expectations for it he believed that Soviet animation is capable of creating animated films comparable to other arts.

If among other animation directors, there were supporters for either of these positions,[36] the administration was clearly on the side of the "pro-American," or "pro-Disneyan" one. Its main advocates were Viktor Smirnov, Head of Experimental Studio at the Scientific-Research Sector of State Institute of Cinema, as well as Boris Sumiatskii, Head of the Chief Administration of Cinema and Photo Industry, Soiuzkino, from the end of 1930 to the end of 1937. For Smirnov, to produce animation based on Disney's style meant, first of all, creating a serial character and achieving an increase in production of animated films through the serial character's reuse; second, making animation more intellectually accessible for mass audiences;

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[33]"Give us Soviet Mickey Mouse" was a motto of the day supported by some of the animators, but first of all, administrators.
[34] Khodataev, "Genres of Artistic Animation," 69.
[35] Mikhail Tsekhanovskii. "Ot 'Murzilki'—k bol'shomu iskusstvu" [From Murzilka, to Big Art], *Sovetskoie Kino*, no, 10, 1934: 26.
[36] In his memoir, Ivanov-Vano names among such supporters Alexandr Ivanov and Iurii Petrov. (*Kadr za kadrom*, 97).

and third, he saw the serial form as most appropriate for raising topical questions.[37] The rationale behind such an interpretation of animation was as follows: when audiences see a familiar serial character, there is no need to give them time to familiarize with him or her, or to explain to them the character's background. In this way, it is easier to get the message across in a shorter period of time. Smirnov believed that this would allow producers to make short animated films more topical and more corresponding to the current political and social demands. From this perspective, Mickey Mouse was praised, not only by Smirnov, but also by many other animators, as an ideal serial character and a "good model" that demonstrated the unique possibilities of animation as a medium.[38]

In the Soviet press of the period, it is possible to find discussions that demonstrate other opinions on Disney that emphasize different aspects of his films and their relevance to Soviet animation. Although Soviet critics were very enthusiastic about the technological advancement of Soviet animation under Disney's influence, it was not always exactly the case with Disneyan aesthetic. The initial reactions to it were already controversial. In 1936, *Iskusstvo Kino* published two short articles about Disney's animation. The first one, Cheremukhin's "Walt Disney's Naïve Symphonies," analysed Disney's films from two perspectives: content and technology. From the technical perspective, Cheremukhin pointed out the aspects of Disney's animation that were more advanced than in Soviet animation: rhythm and timing. From the perspective of the content, he praised Disney for the fact that his animation evokes "a smile without a sting of sarcasm and satire."[39]

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[37] See "Meeting on the Issue of Thematic of Animation of the Creative Workers Engaged in Animation" [Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii], May 20, 1938, RGALI, fund 2450, inventory 2, item 32.
[38] Alexandr Ptushko, "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 132.
[39] M. Cheremukhin. "Naivnye Simfonii Walta Disney'a." *Iskusstvo Kino* (March 1936): 39.

The article that followed, Skytev's "Dramaturgy of Walt Disney's Films," dealt with the content and the form of Disney's films, however, though it praised the form, it came to a very different conclusion regarding the content. Skytev criticized Disneyan animation for shallowness and oversimplification of its characters, pointing to their mask-like qualities. He wrote, "Being unsurpassable in mastery and completeness of his works, being equally perfect in dynamic graphics of the drawing, plot, color and sound, perfectly connecting all these elements of a colored animated film into a coherent work, Disney can tell us nothing except standard Sunday school sermons. His humor never turns into satire, it's toothless and blunt."[40] The same idea of a combination of a technical perfection and a lack of depth in Disney's films is developed in the next article of the same issue, "Tasks of Soviet Animation" by Alexandr Ivanov who writes about "poor ideological (*ideinyi*) content" and "high technological quality" in Disney's films.[41] Thus the very first series of articles published in *Iskusstvo kino*, that were concerned with Disney's animation, established the basis for the debates around Disney and articulated the main arguments that were developed in further articles.

In the later publications, the topic of Disney's technical perfection, though it was never argued against, gradually faded away—instead of discussing Disney's technological achievements, authors of later articles emphasized the improved skills of Soviet animators and the increase in the technological level of Soviet animation. Criticism of the content of Disney's films was developed in further articles along several lines. First, it was an "uncritical borrowing" of the Disneyan imagery. Already in his 1938 article, Kamenogorski criticized copying Disney's animated films by "some animators" who were influenced by Disney "more than it is necessary

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[40] S. Skytev, "Dramaturgiya Filmov Walta Disney'a," *Iskusstvo Kino* (March 1936): 44.
[41] A. Ivanov, "Zadachi sovetskoi animatsii," *Iskusstvo Kino* (March 1936): 45.

for our purposes."[42] The central argument around which this later criticism evolved was that Disney's films had roots in American culture and were closely connected with American cinema, whereas Soviet animation had to create images that were to stem from Soviet culture.

The evasiveness and obscurity of language used in this article is very typical of Soviet critical writing on animation in general. The adjective 'some' in such word combinations as "some animators" or "some drawbacks" is used in many of the articles. This creates a style of universal criticism without particular examples. On the one hand, no names are mentioned, on the other hand, since there is no finite list, the critical structure can be filled with potentially any names. It seems to be working as a perfect case of interpellation – everybody feels interpellated because nobody knows exactly whose name can potentially be on the list. Another reason for such evasiveness could be the fact that the individuals criticized in the articles could have already been purged. For instance, in the case of Kamenogorski's article, it is possible to assume that Kamenogorski is writing about Boris Shumiatski who was behind the project of Soviet Hollywood, and who was purged in 1938.

Another point related to copying Disney was discussed by Ivanov-Vano. He equated Disney's animation with formalism pointing out that Soviet animators often interpreted it as a way of bringing Soviet content into the American form. What is especially interesting in his account is his reference to the Soviet as Russian—'Russian' becomes synonymous to 'Soviet.' He writes, "Thus [as a result of copying Disney] we have characters in Russian fairy-tales with obviously American masks that have nothing to do with the traditions of Russian art."[43] According to Katerina Clark, it was only a decade before Ivanov-Vano wrote his article that

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[42] A. Kamenogorski, "Na Lozhnom Puti: Obzor Produktsii Soiuzmul'tfil'ma za 1937 god," *Iskusstvo Kino* (April-May 1938): 65.
[43] Ivan Ivanov-Vano, "Iskusstvo Multiplikatsii," *Iskusstvo Kino* (June 1947): 22.

Russian culture started occupying a leading role in the Soviet Union. As she points out, by 1937 "Things Russian—Russia's culture, its language and even its people—were increasingly depicted as a primus inter pares, the pares being the other ethnic groups within the Soviet Union and their cultures."[44]

Relevance to the national tradition became one of the dominating themes in discussions on Soviet animation. National in its form and socialist in its content—the widely popularized formula of Soviet art—became the point of departure for criticism of animation influenced by the "American tradition." Only several years after Ivanov-Vano's article, Ginsburg generalized this critical argument:

> American animation stemmed from the national traditions that had nothing in common with our art. The images of American animation, as well as the specificity of graphical representation of these images were infinitely far away from the traditions of folklore and graphics intrinsic to those of the peoples of the USSR that nurtured our animation. …To imitate American animation, to follow its ideological [*ideinyi*] tasks meant to deprive Soviet animation of its inherent ideological and artistic specificity. … Imitation of Disney, the Fleischers, and other American animators, uncritical borrowing of their experience, acknowledgement of their standards of scriptwriting and representation as an unquestionable specificity of the drawn film—all these did not help to master the professional-technical level of drawn films produced in the USA, but led to almost complete loss of the specificity of Soviet animation, its connection with the national traditions of the people's arts of the USSR.[45]

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[44] Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 308.
[45] Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1957), 137-39.

The rhetoric about different cultural origins of Soviet and American animation used by Ginsburg was widespread starting from the second half of the 1930s. It became a staple of the discourse about the importance to follow the national traditions in animation, and using the traditional national imagery for development of Soviet animated imagery.

Another specific point of criticism was related to realism and its rendering in animation. All of the critics who mentioned this topic in their writing, interpreted realism as finding and rendering "the typical, essential, and characteristic of life" through the means of drawing. The authors explicitly emphasized the difference between "imitation of reality" which was considered to be a naturalistic approach, and construction of reality through the means specific to animation that involved conventionality and artistically expressive movement based on hyperbole and grotesque. Much criticism was connected with the technique of rotoscoping which, according to the authors, made the image 'naturalistic,' 'average' and robbed it of expressiveness. Thus we can see a controversy emerging within the critical discourse itself— copying directly from reality was deemed naturalism that inhibited the expression of the realistic essence of the image. In this discussion, Disney's image was associated with naturalism, and was especially criticized for a naturalistic rendering of the characters. All in all, the question of imitating Disney's style became to a large degree a question about the characters in Soviet animation, which requires a special consideration.

4.1.3   Controversies with Soviet Animated Characters

The question of animated characters remained among the most discussed ones throughout the whole period of animation industrialization. At different times of the period, different opinions dominated, and different demands to animated characters were articulated.

Inspired by success of such serial characters as Felix the Cat, Bonzo, Adamson,[46] and above all, Mickey Mouse, Soviet animators made several attempts to create a Soviet serial animated character. However, the Soviet serial characters did not gain a lot of popularity, and their lives did not extend beyond several shorts. Contrary to anthropomorphized Felix the Cat and Mickey Mouse, the first Soviet serial characters were human; in contrast to Adamson, they were young. The character of Tip-Top (1928)—a black boy who came to Moscow as a member of a foreign delegation—was created by the animation director Alexandr Ivanov at Sovkino. The idea behind Tip-Top was to create a series of entertaining and educational films for children with "geographical, industrial and popular scientific content."[47] The series was a combination of live-action footage with a drawn character of Tip-Top. On the basis of the description of the series, it is possible to come to a conclusion that the function of Tip-Top was to make documentary footage of otherwise not particularly child-oriented content more attractive for children.

Another attempt to create a serial character was also undertaken at Sovkino by Alexandr Ptushko. His puppet Bratishkin was to become a character in a series of entertaining and didactic animated films aimed not only for children but also for adults, especially from the rural areas, who had to be included into the State program of enlightenment. As the author of an article on

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[46] Several publications in *Sovetskii ekran* [The Soviet Screen] dedicated to serial characters explain who they are, and why they are important for animation. Thus, a publication by Lizaveta Kol'tz, "Felix, Bonzo, Adamson, and…?" from January 17, 1928 (no. 3), focuses on two anthropomorphized animation character—Felix the Cat (created in 1919 by Otto Messmer, produced by Pat Sullivan in the USA) and Bonzo (created in 1924 by George Ernest Studdy in Great Britain), and a human character Adamson (created in 1920 as a comic character by a Swedish cartoonist Oscar Jacobsson). The description of Adamson in this article is particularly interesting because he is presented as a German animated character, whereas there is no other evidence of such animation existing. Comics with Adamson, however, were popular in many countries, including the United States under the name Silent Sam where they were produced by other artists. Additionally, Adamson's appearance that is very similar to that of Homer Simpson, which allows for suspicions in image borrowing, itself "has an uncanny resemblance to the cigarsmoking Gyllenbom in George McManus's "Bringing up Father" (from 1912) and Fredrik Burr Oppen's figures in "Happy Hooligan" (from 1899)" ("Silent Sam Adamson," *Swedish Press* 4, Vancouver, Vol. 67 [Apr 30, 1996]: 22). Thus, even if the author of the article is mistaken as to existence of Adamson as a serial animation character at the time when the article was written, the history of animation eventually corrected this mistake.
[47] "Sovetskii mul'ttipazh" [Soviet Animated Typical Character], *Sovetskii ekran*, no. 10 (March 6, 1928): 10.

Bratishkin, Natalia Kovalenskaia wrote, "The standard agitation materials from the Ministry of Health about cleaning teeth and nails are useless for the peasant audiences. Mischievous Bratishkin will reach far better results in a couple of adventures."[48] After a short period of time, however, the puppet of Bratishkin started being used predominantly in advertising, and the second life of Bratishkin in a drawn form was started by one of the pioneers of animation, Iurii Merkulov.[49] Similarly to Tip-Top, animated shorts with Bratishkin covered a number of topics and locations, including, for instance, serving in the Red Army where he was helping soldiers with their everyday problems.

An attempt to create a serial human character in a fully-animated drawn film was also undertaken at Mezhrabpomfilm in 1934, where Lev Atamanov and Vladimir Suteev worked on the character of Kliaksa [Blot]. Kliaksa was supposed to be a break-through in terms of creation of a serial character: he was expected to become a truly national hero, comparable to Mickey Mouse. In a double-page article dedicated to Kliaksa in a Mezhrobpom newspaper *Rot-Front*, [50] we can find a complete background and characteristics of Kliaksa, a tentative list of themes of the animated shorts, and cartoon drawings with Kliaksa as the main character, as well as a description the general format of the series. From Kliaksa's descriptions and the themes of the films, it becomes clear that the series was going to employ a Mickey-Mouse type of a series animation format. The films were gag-based, putting Kliaksa in a variety of situations from "Soviet reality, everyday [*byt*]" in which his appearance, characterized as ridiculous, his hyper-flexible body that "did not have a skeleton," as well as his professional versatility ("Jack of all

[48] Natalia Kovalenskaia, "'Bratishkin': ob ob'emnoi mul'tiplikatsii," ['Bratishkin': about Stop-Motion animation], *Sovetskii ekran*, no. 10 (March 6, 1928): 10.

[49] Iurii Merkulov, "Koe-chto o Bratishkne," [Something about Bratishkin] *Sovetskii ekran*, no. 49 (December 4, 1928): 7.

[50] "Kto takoi Kliaksa," *Rot-Front,* no. 11(19) (25 April 1934).

trades") were supposed to play out in a comical way. In Kliaksa's description, the only concrete and unchangeable characteristics seem to be his social background—"a son of working class"—and his motives—to fight "everything that prevents from building socialism" with the "scary weapons that he possesses—animation." Kliaksa's social background and motives were consistent with the general idea of a non-medium specific positive Soviet character; many animators, however, considered implementation of such a character in a non-anthropomorphized image to be problematic.[51]

Viktor Smirnov himself attempted to realize the project of a serial character that would be "national in form and proletarian in content,"[52] and created at the Experimental Studio at the Scientific-Research Sector of State Institute of Cinema, of which he was Head and the sole director, a serial character of Hedgehog. Hedgehog was conceived as a Soviet version of Mickey Mouse, and, as his predecessors, was supposed to address the issues with the Soviet everyday life in a satirical form. As the *New York Times*, an animator working at Smirnov's Studio, Iurii Popov, "loves Mickey Mouse, whom he considers laconic and full of expression, but Walt Disney, he says, 'is not sufficiently independent. He takes his characters from fairy tales and books. We intend to take our characters from real life, which means a never-ending source of inspiration.'"[53] The films that the studio produced were widely criticized. Among the critics of the films was Boris Shumiatski who himself was highly invested in the idea of adapting Disneyan style, but for different reasons. Criticizing one of Smirnov's shorts, *Rails are Murmuring* [Rel'sy bormochut] (1934), Shumiatski points out its logical inconsistency, a too-

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[51] See the discussion of a positive character late in this chapter.
[52] Ibid., 90.
[53] "Russian Mickey," *New York Times* (10 June 1934): 4.

"dense" plot and thus, unclear message.[54] For Shumiatskii, the main merit of Disney's films was clarity of the image—in his opinion, in Disney's image, there was nothing that complicated or was even slightly ambiguous, and nothing that could create complications in its reading. Shumiatskii believed that such transparency and clarity of the image led to transparency and clarity of the message.

Thus, the four early attempts to create a serial character failed and for a considerable time, up to the late 1960s, Soviet animation did not even attempt to take again the route of seriality. A suggested explanation for this failure can be found in Semen Ginsburg's monograph on Soviet animation. He points out that though the attempts to find a serial character were influenced by American animation, the mistake was not only in Soviet animators' imitating the foreign models of serial characters, but also in "a wrong understanding of the nature of the mask."[55] He writes, "The mask of a serial animated character (i.e., a character from a fairy-tale or a fable), has a right to exist if it contains the features of a folk hero, if it exists or can exist in other arts. And, at the same time, such a mask that contains typical, essential characteristics of a human character, can exist only in the conditions that are specific for it—in fairy-tale or fable environments. The mistake of our animators who in the 1920s were searching for the masks of serial characters was that they did not use in their search the masks that existed in the folk art, but were artificially inventing them and placing them in the environment that was inorganic for

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[54] Boris Shumiatskii, *Kinematografiia Millionov* [Cinema of the Millions] (Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1935), 336.
[55] Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 94. The terms "mask" is often used in discussions of animated characters similarly to the way the terms type [*tipazh*] was used in discussions of actors' type-casting. The term can be traced back to the use of masks in ancient Greek theater, where masks denoted a specific type of a character, as well as to *commedia dell'arte* (the latter is exactly the connection that is made by playwright Bragin ("2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 127) and Ivanov-Vano (*Kadr za kadrom*, 85). As in ancient Greek theater or *commedia dell'arte*, there is no expectation from animated characters that they will develop as a result of the events taking place in the narrative of the animated film, and will transform by the end of it. Thus the term mask points to the unchangeably and consistency of the characters which allowed them to reappear anew in new episodes and be instantly recognized by audiences.

them. … All these characters did not have its place in the unanimated environment, in the photographically copied reality to which they were artificially attached."[56] Ginsburg's explanation of the problem is important not only because it attempts to clarify what went wrong with the serial animated characters, but also because it articulates the position of the Soviet culture of the Stalin period on the pre-socialist realism tendencies that existed in animation. By pointing out to the lack of organicism between the drawn serial character and the realistic environment in which he was placed, by stating the importance of folk roots and equating animation with the genres of fairy-tales and fables, it articulates the discourse about animation that started developing in the 1930s, and dominated in the post-war period up to the 1960s.[57]

Ginsburg's explanation does not take into account the situation in which the first attempts to produce the serial animated characters were made: aspiring to create a Soviet Mickey Mouse, Soviet animators worked with the everyday material reality. It was either documented photographically—as in the cases of Tip-Top and Bratishkin—or represented by the means of drawing—as with Kliaksa and Hedgehog—but in both cases it attempted to deal with the Soviet everyday. These were attempts to merge the reality and fantasy by placing animated characters in the midst of real situations. By attempting to be realistic, such films were oriented towards the current issues. They strove to perform a function of newspaper cartoons, which contradicted the specificity of the animation production process—because of the amount of work involved into production, animated films could not be made quickly enough to be topical; their topicality often expired before they could be completed. However, such attempts that animation was undertaking

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[56] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 94.
[57] See more about the genre of fairy-tale later in this chapter.

were intrinsic to the historical development of animation in the Soviet Union, where it initially performed supplementary functions to the medium of cinema.[58]

The early functions of animation fixed for some time its association with the figure of Petrushka—a puppet, a marketplace performance character who through short comical numbers is capable of raising topical issues and reacting to current events, a character who comments on the contemporary political issues, or explains rather than leads and develops the plot of an artistic work.[59] Already in 1925, *Kino-Gazeta* writes about a project called "Kino-Pertushka"—"a topical satirical periodical based on caricature [periodicheskii satirichesko-zlobodnevnyi sharzh] that will be performed in a hybrid type of shooting—animated and live."[60] Even when later, in the early 1930s, the cultural politics of animation changed, and the animation administration started looking for the type of character that would be close to the one produced by early Disney, they still persued the idea of animation performing the functions of Petrushka. For instance, during the Second All-Union Meeting on thematic planning in animation, Viktor Smirnov, the chair of the meeting, and Head of Experimental Studio at the Scientific-Research Sector of State Institute of Cinema [Eksperementalnaya mul'tmasterskaya pri Nauchno-issledovatel'skom sektore GIKa], maintained that "Always and everywhere, and in all cultures, there has been a necessity to have such a Petrushka. Petrushka has never aspired for too much. He did not aspire to create a tragic comedy of a big and deep scale, he did not aspire to create tragedy. He, at most,

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[58] More on the historical development of animation alongside the medium of cinema see Chapter 2, in particular, pp. 58-59.

[59] See, for instance, interpretation of the functions of Petrushka in A. Lacis and E. Keilina, *Deti i kino* [*Children and Cinema*] (Moscow: Teatr-Kino-Pechat', 1928) 76, where they describe a possible role of Petrushka in relationship to cinema as that of advertisement, illustration, and commentary. Additionally, mentioning of Petrushka by Maxim Gorkii in his list of positive folklore characters as a character defeating the representatives of power, such as "the doctor, priest, and policemen," as well as the negative mythological—the devil—and natural—the death—forces (Maxim Gorkii's speech, *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd Sovetskikh Pisatelei, 1934, Stenographicheskii otchet.* [First All-Union Meeting of the Union of Writers, 1934, Shorthand Report] [Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1934], 8), makes him an important figure of people's folklore resistance and thus carrier of a revolutionary spirit.

[60] "Kino-Pertushka," *Gazeta Kino*, no 7.87 (May, 5, 1925).

has been expressive in a good joke. According to the circumstances, this joke was of a political character, sometimes of an every-day character, and so on."[61] Thus, even though by 1933 Soviet animation has considerably increased its repertoire, the same metaphor of Petrushka seemed appropriate for understanding the tasks that animation had to fulfil, and ultimately its niche as a medium.

Ginsburg's criticism of the serial characters also did not take into consideration that in early Soviet animation, partially as a result of the influence of American animation, hyperbole and the grotesque were considered by many animators to be the main expressive means of the medium of animation.[62] However, both hyperbole and the grotesque were deemed to be satirical devices, and thus not appropriate for positive characters. Such an approach required a limitation of the potential scope of the animated characters: in a purely Aristotelian fashion, a grotesque depiction of a character corresponded exclusively to negative or laughable characters, and left out positive or heroic ones, those that Aristotle associated with the tragedy.[63] Combination of the grotesque with more realistic imagery was also considered problematic. As Smirnov put it, "For the positive character, we are not using hyperbolization, because if you express something positive in some hyperboles, this positive will turn into its opposite and will become unrealistic [nepravdopodobnui]. Then we would have to toss away the formula of hyperbole, but if we toss away the formula of hyperbole, then we leave it only for the negative characters, and stop using it for the positive characters. Then we will get a mixture of styles, of approaches, and as a result,

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[61] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god", 81. It is important to keep in mind that Smirnov himself considered that he represented the position of the State Administration of Cinematography (see p. 73 of the same archival item).

[62] As any other opinion on animation, this one was not shared by all of the animators. For instance, in his speech at the Second All-Union Thematic Meeting at GUFK, Khrisanf Khersonskii, the Soviet critic and script writer who was also the art director at the Experimental animation studio at GUFK, stated his disagreement with tying animation to the comical: "I am convinced that animation is capable of dealing with lyrics." "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 10.

[63] See Aristotle, *Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

the whole film will be unrealistic [nepravdopodobnyi]."[64] Thus Smirnov raised the issue of compatibility of hyperboly and the grotesque with a realistic style, and the potential of such a combination to result in creating unrealistic positive animated character.

Additionally to the fear of the animated character being unrealistic, there was another concern—whether it was at all possible to create a positive animated character by means of animation. This issue was, in particular, widely discussed at the Meeting on the Issue of Thematic of Animation of the Creative Workers Engaged in Animation [Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii].[65] The main problem here seems to be the internal contradiction between the fluidity, plasmaticness of the animated image, and the idea of a positive, moral character, a hero whose whole idea and ideal are to be stable, reliable and unchangeable in their positivity. Additionally, the concern for a positive character was his or her embodiment: with the increased use of animals as animated characters, the concern was the possibility of rendering the idea of a positive character through an anthropomorphized character. At the same Meeting, Ivan Ivanov-Vano, for instance, argued that creation of a positive character in animation is possible, but it inevitably means the use of non-human images, whereas creation of positive human images in animation is not possible. As he puts it,

> The problem of a positive character. How do we solve it? It is very difficult, but possible to do. However, this is not simple. If you take all of the cartoons in our satirical magazines, [you will see that] a positive drawn image, an image of a worker, or a pioneer, has not been found. [The ones that exist] look poster-like and defective [*nepolnotsennyi*]. And in animation it is even more difficult. [However,] it does not mean

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[64] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 85.
[65] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii."

that this is impossible to overcome. We can do it. I know it from my experience at the studio, I see how this task is being solved in Ivanov's film, and I take into account the experience of the previous years: we can make a positive character. [...However,] when we try to show the frontier guards in a reflected way [*otrazhenno*], we are being told: What are you doing? How can you let the animals guard the border? Etc. But this is different, and we cannot do it otherwise. In animation, we cannot create an image of a shock worker [*udarnik*] and depict him as a human, we cannot do it. And this would not be appropriate for animation.[66]

In this quote from his speech, Ivanov-Vano simultaneously addresses several issues that were characteristic of Soviet animation at the time. First, the animators were still learning the cel technique, and many of the possibilities of it, including those connected with creation of positive characters, were in the process of discovery; second, there were differences among animators as to their approach to animated character—Ivanov-Vano mentions the name of animation director Alexandr Ivanov[67] as a model for creating animalistic characters, but there were many others whose animated characters were considered less successful; and third, there was a discord between animators and the censorship, and for the censorship, the use of animated characters was one of the frequent points of criticism.

The use of anthropomorphized characters in Soviet animation was always a delicate and problematic topic since it was considered that anthropomorphized characters were a result of the influence of American animation, and were regarded as imitation of American, in particular,

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[66] Ibid., 70-71.

[67] Alexandr Ivanov was one of the pioneers of Soviet animation, who was famous for such films as *Tarakanishche* [Cockroach] (1927), *Tip-top v Moskve* [Tip-top in Moscow] (1928), *Lisa-stroitel'* [Fox the Builder] (1936), and many others.

Disneyan animation style.[68] As we have seen from the discussion of serial characters, the only anthropomorphized serial character, Hedgehog, was created by Viktor Smirnov during the period of mastering celluloid as a new technology. However, at that time, despite the criticism that Smirnov's animated films raised, using anthropomorphized animals was justified at least by the novelty of the technique of celluloid, and by the necessity to master it using already existing visual models. By the end of the 1930s, when Soiuzmul'tfil'm had already been founded and now was in the process of developing a general and a more consistent approach to animation in line with the Soviet aesthetic demands, the question of anthropomorphized characters became especially acute and polarizing. According to the position in favor of using anthropomorphized characters, as the one articulated by Ivanov-Vano above, anthropomorphized characters allowed for economic and efficient creation of typical characters and did not jeopardize the positivity of characters by distortion and the grotesque. Yet, the choice of characters for specific tasks (as, for instance, the choice of rabbits for guarding the country borders as in the animated film that Ivanov-Vano was discussing at the meeting) was problematic, and was not always met with general approval. It is also important to note that Ivanov-Vano himself was not quite consistent in his position on anthropomorphized animals: for instance, at the beginning of his 1947 article, he criticizes a vast use of "Americanized" animals; by the end of it, praising *Bambi* as a model for depicting human emotions, he points out that "[Only in animation] birds and animals can act as people with particular character features."[69]

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[68] Apparently, the fact that Wladislaw Starevich's films that were using anthropomorphized figures of insects considerably preceded the Fleischers and Disney was not taken into consideration because of the difference in technique: stop-motion vs. drawn animation. Among Starevich's earliest films were *Rozhdyestvo Obitatelei Lyesa* [The Insects' Christmas] (1911); *Strekoza I Muravei* [The Ant and the Grasshopper] (1911); *Aviacionnaya Nedelya Nasekomykh* [Insects' Aviation Week] (1912); *Miest Kinomatograficheskovo Operatora* [The Cameraman's Revenge] (1912).

[69] Ivan Ivanov-Vano, "Iskusstvo Multiplikatsii," *Iskusstvo Kino* (June 1947): 22.

An aesthetic position, marginal to the main ones, but still important to take into consideration, was articulated by Lev Kuleshov. For Kuleshov, animation was, first of all, an art that had its own aesthetic tasks, which were supposed to be constantly set, developed, and challenged. The search for the animation character was one of them. He stated that the animated character ought to be constantly searched for in the process of creation rather than found and reproduced continuously. In his lectures at Soiuzmul'tfil'm, when discussing the problem of animated character, Kuleshov asserted, "Let us say that little animals come out well in animation, that they are, without any doubt, a material for animation. And let us say that positive human characters do not come out well. But art does not start when animals that come out well are being filmed—art will never start there because it is something that is already known. Art starts there where you approach a deeper solution of human positive characters which do not come out well now, you have to spend your energy and inventiveness on solving what has not been solved yet, not on perfecting what has already been resolved."[70] On the one hand, Kuleshov's position is rather detached from the reality of the animation production process and, despite his concern with the political meaning of art which shows in other parts of the lectures, does not take into consideration the specificity of the political demands behind Soviet animation. On the other hand, it allows for seeing the aesthetic perspective of animation, and approaching animation not simply as a craft that is implied by his criticism of perfecting what is already known, but as art that is capable of thinking about images, and expanding itself.

The most critical position against anthropomorphized characters was articulated along two lines: the first blended anthropomorphization with borrowing of American imagery, and the second questioned possibility of using anthropomorphized characters without consideration of

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[70] L.V. Kuleshov, Lectures on film directing for studio "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" ##1, 2. Shorthand record, Lecture #1, October 19, 1938. RGALI, fund 2679, inventory 1, item 381: 28-29.

the specificity of genres in which they were used. The first called for the end of "mice-goat-pig thematic in Soviet animation."[71] According to the second one, the appropriateness of animated characters depended on the genre. Fables, folk, and fairy-tales were the genres in which use of anthropomorphized characters was seen as suitable, whereas in political genres or genres oriented to adults, suitability of anthropomorphized characters was heavily contested. As one of the discussants put it, "in the genre of fairy-tales, animals can be our friends, however, if we move to the development of the topical thematic, animals can play a dirty trick on us since they will raise wrong, cheap and banal analogies."[72]

Thus, the question of the animated character is directly connected with the genre, and the tendency demonstrated by many animation directors to categorize genres along the lines of their topicality, i.e., their ability to raise the topical issues and correspond to the current political or social situation. Below, I will discuss how the system of genres was developed in Soviet animation, and how the genre that called for anthropomorphized animals, i.e. the genre of the fairy-tale, came into being.

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[71] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 1.
[72] Pudalov (the first name is not stated in the records). "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 52.

4.1.4 The Battle of Genres[73]: the Rise of the Fairy-Tale

The concept of genre in animation is highly problematic, even more problematic than when the live film is considered. Consideration of the concept exposes the multiple challenges with defining the genre and its existence between the poles of industrial production with involvement of a collective of workers and conveyer-like labor, and the artists' creative activities and their control over the final product. In animation, this discrepancy is particularly prominent due to the variety of existing methods of animation production and, connected with them, the differing amounts of influence that animation directors and artists can exercise in their influencing their animated film. As Paul Wells points out, "on the one hand, it [animation] echoes and imitates the terms and conditions of large-scale industrial film production processes, while on the other, offers the possibility for a film-maker to operate almost entirely alone."[74] These opposing modes of animation production can and do exist simultaneously, especially now, with advancement of digital animation; they also coexisted in the past. However, with the conditions of production being dependent on the financial sources and the relationship with the governmental institutions of censorship, especially in the situation of the Soviet Union and Germany, when sponsorship

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[73] The question of genres in animation is complex and ambiguous. Problems arise at a very basic level of defining animation as a medium itself as there is a particular tendency that was especially popular in the past with film scholars, to view animation as a genre of cinema. Considering that the present project deals with a specific period in the history of animation, and considering that during this period, animation production was using specific technology and specific method different from that of cinema, I will not be dealing with the issues connected with delineating animation and cinema. Animation here is considered as a specific medium that possesses specific media qualities, and participates in the discussions on genre in its own right, i.e., animation has genres of its own. A helpful attempt to categorize genres in animation can be found in Andrew Selby's *Animation* (Laurence King, May 6, 2013) e-book, http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/book/animation-and-3d/9781780670973). According to his categorization, there are seven genre categories or "deep structures": abstract, deconstructive, formal, political, paradigmatic, primal, and re-narration. (http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/book/animation-and-3d/9781780670973/1dot-preproduction-lanning-and-scriptwriting/toca14_html).

[74] Paul Wells, *Animation: Genre and Authorship* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2002), 73.

and censorship were supervised by the same organs, directors' influence on animated films was rather limited.[75]

The industrial mode of cultural production is inevitably based on products of certain categories or kinds that possess a set of specific qualities and are distinguishable from one another according to these sets. Such are genres. However, in order for genres to individuate, there should be a particular level of saturation of the cultural and professional media space with a certain amount of media products that become produced not only as single entities, but as belonging to a specific medium and being different from this medium's other products.[76] Genres emerge only when the quantity of a product is sufficient for a qualitative categorization. Historically, once the latter was possible, "[g]enres emerged with the development of film form itself."[77] However, as the situation with Soviet and German animation demonstrates, the specificity of genres and their development is not only a matter and result of a formal development of a medium, but also of its place in the political and ideological discourses, and its technological evolution.

During the first decade of the existence of Soviet animation, from 1924 to 1936, only a few films were produced. That is why it only makes sense when Nikolai Khodataiev in his chapter "Iskusstvo Multiplikatsii" [The Art of Animation] in an edited volume on Soviet animation *Mul'tiplikatsionnyi Film* [*The Animated Film*] states that the question of genres emerged at the conference of animators in March 1933.[78] Indeed, it is possible to see a

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[75] This situation was not unique in these countries, but was rather typical cinema in general, especially for Hollywood studios, where, despite existence of authors with a distinguishable style, the majority of authors' cinematographic work could hardly be categorized as original.

[76] Here I am drawing on Simondon's idea of individuation as discussed in Mikhail Iampolskii. *Prostanstvennaia istoriia: Tri teksta ob istorii* [Spacial History: Three Texts about History] (St. Petersburg: Seans, 2013).

[77] Paul Wells, *Animation: Genre and Authorship*, 42.

[78] Nikolai Khodataev "Iskusstvo Multiplikatsii" [The Art of Animation], in *Multiplikatsionnyi Fil'm*, Grigorii Roshal' Moscow: Kinofotoizdat, 1936), 15-100, qt. on 66. According to the short article "Konferentsiia

considerable increase in this discussion on genres in animated films in the press and in the archival documentation on animation around 1933.[79] However, understanding of what genres entailed or how they had to be interpreted in the medium of animation was not consistent from author to author, from classification to classification, and at times their statements were of an idiosyncratic character. For instance, the Soviet film director Lev Kuleshov, singling out the directions of animation development specific to the Soviet Union that he called genres, wrote in his 1933 article about: 1) animation as technical (cultural) cinema; 2) animation as a supplementary means for live-action films; 3) animation as an independent art.[80]

Yet, the questions of genre in animation, though the term genre was not initially used, can be traced back to articles published during the late 1920s-early 1930s. For instance, in a 1930 article, "Tip Top – veselyi geroi" [Tip Top, a Funny Character], its author, T. Andreeva, develops a taxonomy of animation genres. She creates such genre categories as "animation as a part of scientific films," "animation as a part of feature films," "funny shorts of usually propagandistic (agitational) content," and "political satire." The article ends with a suggestion to produce films oriented towards children, "for instance, fables."[81] Andreeva's article

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Multiplikatorov" [Conference of Animators] in *Kino-Gazeta* 3.534 (January 16, 1933), the production conference of animators of Moscow factories organized by Mosoblastkom Rabis, was supposed to start on February 1, 1933.

[79] There can be pointed out several reasons for this particular year to be a turning point for Soviet animation—1) on February 1, a Conference on animation production of Moscow animation shops took place which raised the questions of the role and tasks of animation, as well as "use of animation in live-action, military, and scientific films as well as chronicles" ("Konferentsiia mul'tiplikatorov"). Following the conference, there was an unprecedented amount of publications on animation all of which addresses the questions of its importance. For instance, more than half of the articles published on the first page of *Kino Gazeta* of February 10, 1933, were dedicated to animation in the Soviet Union (M. Cheremykh, "Sila Mul'tiplikatsii," K. Eliseev, "Byvshaia 'chernaia magia," K. Rotov, "Bogatstvo tem," Iu. Ganf, "Nash opyt—mul'tfil'me," A. Ptushko, "V poriadke dnia."). 2) This year Viktor Smirnov was delegated to research the organization of Disney and Fleischer studios in the USA, 3) This is the year when Smirnov's experimental studio was founded, the studio that laid the foundation of Soviet industrial animation thus radically changing the process of animation production and other aspects of Soviet animation.

[80] Lev Kuleshov, "Ochen' nuzhnoe iskusstvo" [Very Important Art], *Kino Gazeta,* 7.538 (February 10, 1933).

[81] *Kino-Gazeta* 24.353 (April 30, 1930). Considering the fact that animated films for children, though not numerous, had already been produced by the time the article had been written, the article demonstrates a marginal position of animation in Soviet cinema, and a low level of exposure that animation had during the period.

demonstrates that as of 1930, animation occupies an in-between position: on the one hand, it still functions as a medium supplementary to cinema, the one that is capable of production of those parts of films that are difficult or impossible to produce by means of live cinema,[82] and on the other hand, it is viewed as an independent medium capable of producing individual works specific to its media qualities. These blurry functional borders of animation production were a result of institutional confusion: animation studios (or shops) were a part of bigger film studios and their main work lay in precisely producing parts of films (such as credits, intertitles, drawn inserts, etc.) for cultural and feature films; such animation shops would produce not more than one or two separate animated films a year, which was insignificant comparing to the scope of live film production.[83]

The taxonomy of genres specific to animation discussed by Andreeva is not compatible with those developed in, for instance, the Hollywood system, which reflects the specificity of the historical situation and the ideology that was behind animation genres in the Soviet Union. Paul Wells points out observantly that "[film genres] inevitably drew upon previous sources in other

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[82] This situation when animation was considered as performing a supplementary function to live action cinema was not at all unique to the Soviet Union. See, for instance, Kristin Thompson's "Implications of the Cel Animation Technique" (in *The Cinematic Apparatus*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath [London: Macmillan, 1980]: 106–119) by considering animation as a part of Hollywood film industry, situates it as the Hollywood cinema's other, as performing functions other than live-action cinema. Though Thompson's discussion of the supplementary function of animation is built more along the lines of understanding animation as secondary to the live action film because of the Hollywood politics of realism, which resulted in restricting animation to supplementary genres and types of images (animation was supposed to do what live action film could not), and does not include considerations of animation performing technical supplementary functions for live action cinema, the article's criticism of limitations imposed on animation, and animation reduction to specific roles vis-a-vis live action cinema is important for general understanding of the role of animation in the motion picture industry.

[83] The problem with such an institutional position of animation is passionately described by the Soviet animation director Tsekhanivski who in his article "Ot Murzilki k bol'shomu iskusstvu" [From Murzilka to a big art] writes, "The general position on animation is that it produces secondary and creatively negligible appendix of a big art of cinema, and is not a branch of graphics and fine art, and especially not an independent art of graphic film. […] Film directors have got accustomed to inserting into their live-action films pieces of animation, and together with it got accustomed to look at animation as an activity that is supplementary to their creative work. Every new administrator who comes to a film studio, having discovered, to his great surprise, an animation shop somewhere in the backyard, is used to seeing in animation a production of a third-degree importance, and, in his turn, passes this habit onto his successors." (*Sovetskoe Kino,* no. 10 (1934): 21).

media and arts contexts to establish typical visual and aural codings that defined particular kinds of film in a quasi-branded form, both for aesthetic and commercial purposes."[84] In other words, film and animation, as new media, incorporated (cannibalized), adopted and developed aesthetics of other, already existing, media and their genres. Several factors can be considered as influencing the process of choosing an old media for incorporation, adaptation and development by new media: the popularity of the old media, their topicality from political and ideological standpoint, and their technological appropriateness for adaptation. Considering these factors, it is not surprising that the first animated films that were produced in the Soviet Union were agitational films that were based on graphical drawings and used the style of satirical cartoons. Thus the genres connected with a direct political utterance that drew from the style of posters and political cartoons were the ones that were developed first. However, the political changes discussed in Chapter 1, in particular, the new governmental policies about children's films, nationalization, and the change in propaganda methods employed by the government, led to aesthetic changes, in this particular case—to introduction of new genres.

Another factor, specific to the situation in the Soviet Union, that stipulated development of genres in animation, was the practice of thematic planning that existed in the Soviet industry.[85] The correspondence between genres and themes, as the situation in the Soviet cinema shows, is rather problematic. For instance, according to Maiia Turovskaia, in the Soviet Union, thematic planning substituted the system of genres. She writes: "Thematic orientation [*Tematism*] is a very prominent feature of ideological arts [*ideologizirovannogo iskusstva*], and

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[84] Wells, *Animation*, 42.

[85] The idea behind thematic planning was to represent as many social topics via the means of cinema, and to produce films that would be able to reach as diverse audiences as possible. For animation it meant several things. For more on thematic planning and its purpose, and how it was conducted, and what it meant for animation (animation becomes a part of the theme of "films for children" before becoming a separate medium with a thematic planning of its own, see Chapter 2.

in the Soviet cinema 'thematic planning' completely ousted out genres."[86] She explains that films that were based on the same theme, for instance, the theme of "a young victim," had "very little in common, and could be united only by a theme."[87] However, with animation, at least during the coming-into-being of industrial animation, the situation was different: introduction of new themes into animation production ultimately allowed for exploration of new genres, i.e., themes and genres were closely connected. As Alexandr Ptushko[88] points out in his report on "the conditions and perspectives" of Soiuzmul'tfil'm from August 1944, "by including into the thematic plan some amount of stylistically and qualitatively different items, Soviet animation gains an opportunity to solve the problem of genre diversity."[89] Additionally, calls for sorting out the situation with genres were made in conjunction with calls for including new themes into the repertoire of the animation studios. For instance, in 1938, Vladimir Suteev was calling for establishing the list of genres for animation claiming that it will allow for a better thematic planning.[90]

The question of genres in animated films was among the most popular ones at meetings of the creative workers of animation and in the specialized press. However, the shorthand recordings and protocols of the meetings, as well as articles in press reveal how unstable and fluid were the opinions of the participants in these discussions, including creative workers and representatives of official administrative institutions. To a large extent, this mutability and fluidity was a result of the emergence of new socialist realist aesthetics. As Richard Taylor writes about Soviet cinema of the period, and which is also true for animation, "from the manner

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[86] Maiia Turovskaia, *Zuby Drakona, Moi 30-e gody* (Moscow: Corpus, 2015).
[87] Ibid.
[88] Alexandr Lukich Ptushko (1900-1973), Soviet cinema and animation director. From 1944 to 1946 he was Head of Soiuzmu'ltfil'm studio.
[89] Alexandr Ptushko, "Doclad direktora studii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' po delam kinematografii pri SNK SSSR o sostoianii i perspektivakh kinostudii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm'," August 1944. RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 1, item 4: 26.
[90] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 16-17.

in which the themes and their treatment varied, the way the official attitudes changed to meet

new circumstances, we can see the seeds, the fruits, of the doctrine of the Social Realism."[91]

In order to see the dynamics of changes that were taking place in thematic planning and

genre development in animation, we can compare three recordings of the meetings of

administration and creative workers in the field of animation dedicated to the questions of

thematic planning that took place in 1933[92] and 1938.[93]

The discussions that took place in 1933 were centered on the questions of genre in

conjunction with the questions of film format and the main character. Viktor Smirnov, the head

of the meeting, and who was, according to his own words, articulating the position of the Main

Administration of the Cinema- and Photo-industry (GUFK),[94] was suggesting the development

of Soviet animation along the following lines: animation should first of all work with the

political joke, satire, and fable[95]; animated films should be short;[96] animation should not use

positive characters, but on the contrary, focus on negative or comic ones.[97] These three aspects

of animation are interconnected, and go back to the ideas of animation performing a function of a

political statement and political cartoon, and caricature, or, as the animation director Vladimir

Suteev put it, "Soviet drawn sound animation is a highly efficient artistic form for reflecting the

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[91] Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1998), 51.
[92] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god."
[93] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii."
[94] Though Smirnov claimed that his position was consistent with that of GUFK, Kkristofan Khersonski, during his speech at Second All-Union Meeting of GUFK on Thematic Planning, Division of Animation (Ibid.) cited an excerpt from Boris Shumiatskii decree of September 27, 1933 which, according to Khersonskii, stated the following: "[t]o comrades Iukov, Kotiev and Metallov. Pay attention to the types and genres of animation, by any means not reducing this type of cinema to a superficial satire. We should embark on the question of realistic style of animation with all seriousness, choosing the creative workers and the thematics of films accordingly. The problem of a comic character should be specifically singled out" ("2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 13-14). This citation demonstrates a position different from the one articulated by Smirnov.
[95] Ibid., 84.
[96] "We have to point out a current tendency—a tendency towards films made of several parts. We think that for now it is a mistake. The animated film should be short. It should be maximum 1000 feet, 300 meters, including the title and everything, multiple parts, according to our research, tire the audiences" (ibid., 86).
[97] Ibid., 84-85. For more on characters in animated films, see below.

social-political thematic in a cinematic small form."[98] The short length of the film would ensure

shorter time necessary for its production, which would make it possible to engage topical

political stories; this engagement was expected to be pursued along the lines of the comical.

Smirnov's pushing animation towards satirical genres was a reaction of animation to the general

tendency in Soviet cinema towards the development of the genre of comedy.

Smirnov's opinion was not the only one present at the meeting. Different speakers voiced

different opinions with a different degree of criticism regarding Smirnov's position. Thus, Suteev

cautiously pointed out that Smirnov "narrowed the genre possibilities of animation,"

simultaneously urging animators to approach the genre issue more efficiently, while not

embarking upon genres that "can wait under our circumstances."[99] A more radical position was

taken by the writer and playwright Vladimir Bragin[100] who asserted that it was a mistake to limit

the genres of animation to a joke or satire, that it is capable of dealing with "passions, tragedy

and limitlessness of gestures."[101]

Nevertheless, the leading genre for animation that most participants of the meeting

agreed upon was a comical short. As Ptushko put it, "In general, today animation has proven to

be the best in the genre of comical. The best examples, such as Mickey Mouse, have

demonstrated that animation can do here something that no other genre can do. It is its main field

of action. Neither the Theater of Satire, nor specialized theater can do what Mickey Mouse

can."[102] For many critics, pursuit of the comical genre for Soviet animation starts with

Shumiatskii and his project of Soviet Hollywood. Yet, calls for animated comedy were made

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[98] Ibid., 110.
[99] Ibid., 111.
[100] Vladimir Bragin was a children's writer and playwright who took part in creating scripts for animated films, in particular, collaborating with Nikolai Khodataev.
[101] Ibid., 127.
[102] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 132.

prior to Shumiatskii coming into power. In 1929, for instance, Nikolai Khodataev was writing about comedy, in particular, comedy of the everyday [*bytovaia komedia*] as the genre that can be expressed well through the means of animation. Comparing comedy in the West and in the Soviet Union, he writes, "Cinematic comedy in the West is either a set of funny situations that are not connected with any idea or, on the contrary, is extremely psychologically sophisticated, in which case its content is based on a love plot. Animation already deals with the first version of comedy in its advertising comedies, whereas the second one is impossible for it since psychology, especially theatrical psychology, especially romantic psychology is foreign to the artistic means of animation. However, social, every day [*bytovaia*], and political comedy are very rare in the West. Nevertheless, this is exactly the type of comedy that can be especially acutely and prominently reflected in animation. It is here that we have to deal with generalization, singling out everyday and social characteristic types in the spirit of old classical comedies."[103] Yet, the development of Soviet animated comedy which was caught up between the political and the everyday, on the one hand, and grappling with the technological specificity of animation and American influence, on the other, was hampered and never came into being. As Ginsburg was writing in the 1950s, the "satirical thematic now, as well as in the 1930s and 1940s, is presented poorly and insufficiently."[104] Attempts at creating serial animation did not work, and were not sufficient for development of animated comedy.

The Meeting on Thematic planning in 1938 raised different issues, and the focus of the discussion shifted considerably.[105] The question central to the discussion at this meeting was that

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[103] Nikolai Khadataiev, "Ot kino-triuka k mul'tiplikatsionnoi komedii" [From cinematic gag to animated comedy] *Sovetskii ekran*, no. 3 (January 15, 1929): 8-9.
[104] Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 136.
[105] It is important to keep in mind that the meeting was called as a reaction to the State thematic plan for live-action films that was announced on April 3, 1938, and was a cause of multiple discussions and reorganizations in thematic

animation should return to dealing with genres of animated films oriented to adults and not only to children, which entailed that, as the head of the meeting, A.Ia. Linov[106] put it, "without refuting the fairy-tale thematic of animation that is oriented towards children and young adults' age, we have to produce films that would interest adults, and that would be politically oriented. I have in mind political caricature and satire."[107] Thus, if in 1933, five years before the meeting, fairy-tales were not even mentioned as a genre, by 1938 they were already spoken about as a genre that should not be the only one that animation deals with. In Part II we have already discussed the events that resulted in establishment of fairy-tales (as well as folk tales and fables) as a mainstream genre in Soviet animation. However, it is important to trace its development in and of itself.

Folk and fairy-tales did not appear in Soviet animation till the late 1920s, and even the films that had references to folk tales reinterpreted them from a contemporary position, or films that had characteristics of tales were not always referred to as such. For instance, *Samoedskii Mal'chik* [Samoyed Boy] (1928, Sovkino, directors: Nikolai Khodataiev, Olga Khodataieva, Valentina Brumberg and Zinaida Brumberg) that was based on Northern ethnic epos, was a contemporary story with a clear ideological message promoting education and enlightenment versus religion and traditional ways of living. The earliest films closest to the fairy-tale genre

planning at film studios. The specificity of the plan was that it urged creative workers in cinema to develop such topics as: "defense, about the lives of Red Army, Navy and frontier guards, about anti-fascism, about fighting the agents of international fascism, about the Stakhanovite movement, about socialist construction in the city and in the villages, about socialist construction in union and autonomous republics, about the friendship between nations, on ethnographic topics, about women, the family, on comical genres, and others" ("O tematicheskom plane proizvodstva polnometrazhnykh kinokartin na 1938," *Poliarnaia pravda*, no. 77 [April 4, 1938]: 2) The plan demonstrates an increase of attention to the topics connected with warfare and the international political situation. It had a direct relationship to animation, since, as the head of the meeting Linov put it, "We want animated films to make footprints in the consciousness of not only children of a particular age, but also adults, that is the tasks set for live-action films are the same as the ones for animated films" ("Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 2)

[106] According to Georgiii Borodin, Linov at the time was Head of GUFK; in 1938, he was appointed Head of "Soiuztorgkino," Sergei Kudriavtsev, "Kinokhronika," http://m.kinopoisk.ru/blog/3438/).

[107] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 3.

were adaptations of the poems by the famous children's poet Korney Chukovski: *Tarakanische* [Huge Cockroach][108] and *Sen'ka Afrikanets* [Sen'ka the African Boy].[109] Another film, *Prikliuchenia Münchhausena* [Münchhausen's Adventures],[110] was loosely based on Rudolf Erich Raspe's satirical work *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1781). These films were made with children's audiences in mind, however, they were not interpreted in the terms of fantastic or tales that did not have connection to the reality. For instance, in a short article "Pervaia Zvukovaia Multiplikatsiia" [First Sound Animated Film] published in *Kino-Gazeta* in 1929, the animated film *Tarakanische* is referred to as "scenes from animals' life" despite its fantastic plot and anthropomorphized animal characters. However, already in 1931, in an article, "Multiplikatsionnyi Politsharzh Dolzhen Zhit'" [Animated Political Satire Should Live],[111] animator Peter Sazonov criticizes the situation that developed in one of the Moscow film factories, Soiuzkino, where, according to the article, the administration issued an order to stop production of political satirical animated shorts. The article is interesting for two reasons. First, Sazonov writes: "The Studio Head thinks that fairy-tales for children in a form of animated films are more important now than political satire."[112] Second, the article criticizes a rapid move to conveyer production style that was introduced in the animation department of the factory by department Head Burstein, which, from the author's point of view was a mistake considering the lack of qualified personnel who would be capable of working in the conditions animation production by the conveyer method. This article is the only piece of evidence that refers to fairy-tales as a dominant genre in animation studios, so such evaluation can be seen as an

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[108] Studio Sovkino, director Alexandr Ivanov, released in 1927, sound added in 1929, based on an eponymous poem.
[109] Studio Mezhrabpom-Film, directors Daniil Cherkes, Iurii Merkulov, and Ivan Ivanov-Vano, 1928, based on Kornei Tshchukivski's poem *Krokodil* [The Crocodile].
[110] Studio Mezhrabpom-Film, director Daniil Cherkes, 1929.
[111] *Gazeta Kino*, no. 9(410) (February 11, 1931).
[112] Ibid.

exaggeration. As for the criticism of the conveyer method, it allows for making a conclusion that the idea of a conveyer method of animation production preceded the actual technical conditions that were insured by introduction of celluloid. By 1933, however, with the development of discussions about animation genres, fables, folk and fairy-tales come into the focus of animation producers, and such concepts as fantastic and fairy-tale-like start appearing in the discourse about animation. The connection of animation to the fantastic and, by association, to fairy-tales, was drawn in the discourse on animation already in the discussions of Mickey Mouse who was viewed as a "fantastic character, fairy-tale-like little mouse."[113] However, it was starting from early 1930s, as a response to the State's demand to create more films for children, and with the rise of socialist realism with its inclusion and promotion of folklore, that fairy-tales and fables became increasingly important as a genre,[114] and that the tendency that eventually led to almost equating animation with the genre of fairy-tale emerged. It resulted in development of a position among Soviet animation critics that the fairy-tale is the genre that best of all reveals medium potentiality of animation.[115]

It is no coincidence that one of the first films produced by Soiuzmul'tfil'm was *Little Red Riding Hood* (1936, Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg). Being heavily influenced by the Fleischer's aesthetics of a musical animated film with human characters (in fact, Little Red

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[113] Khrisanf Khersonski "Priem Povtory v Prikliucheniiakh Miki Maus," [The device of repetition in Mikey Mouse's adventures] (*Sovetskoe Kino*, 8-9 [1934]: 71).

[114] The specificity of each of the genre of fable and tale, and sub-genres, such, as, for instance, folk tale, fairy-tale, author's tale, etc., are not going to be discussed here for it would be far beyond the tasks of the present study. However, it is necessary to acknowledge importance of such a distinction, especially considering a rather broad interpretation of the notion of "tale material" used in animation in the 1930s and 1940s. For instance, for Ginsburg, introduction of even a minor character with fantastic qualities classified animated film as a tale. (See Ginsburg's discussion of "Okhotnik Fedor," in *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 141-142)

[115] Probably one of the first Soviet animation critics and scholars who articulated this position was Semen Ginsburg. He wrote, "The art of animation is predominantly the art of cinematic fairy-tale. Animation is much less capable of showing directly our real environment than live-action cinema." (*Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 141) Without any exception, all the following animation scholars and/or critics repeated this formula one way or another.

Riding Hood herself looks very much like a cloaked Betty Boop) the film was the first Soviet industrial attempt to work with the genre of fairy-tale.

The first industrial animation adaptation of a Russian folk tale, *Ivashshko i Baba Iaga* (Studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm, directors: Valentina and Zinaida Brumberg) took place in 1938. Despite being criticized for using American-inspired imagery,[116] it was an important step on the way to turning to production of animated fairy-tales for children based on ethnic (national) material. By turning to folk and fairy tales, a new animation form was found, which also corresponded to the folkloric dimension of socialist realism. Though Soviet animators started producing fairy-tale adaptations before Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), its release also influenced the move of the Soviet animation towards folk and fairy-tale production—the Disney film's international acclaim became a prooof of viability of this genre for Soviet animators.

Birgit Beumers in her discussion of the genre of fairy-tales in Soviet animation points out that "[f]airy-tales were a suitable material for propaganda purposes for two reasons: on the one hand, by drawing on the national heritage, and on the other because of the inherent element of moral instruction as considered appropriate over centuries and could therefore hardly contradict socialist principles."[117] Though, as it would seem, such an explanation corresponds to the processes that were taking place in Soviet animation, I believe, it is important not to forget that the meaning of folk and fairy-tales and fables exceeds the function of teaching a universal moral;[118] they were directly related to the myth of overcoming the external to the humankind forces, and ultimately, a myth of a fair social relations. As Maxim Gorkii pointed out in his

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[116] As Ginsburg wrote, "In some of the films the characters of Russian fairy-tales looked like characters from American comics. Indeed, watching such an animated film as 'Ivashko i Baba-Iaga,' it was hard to perceive it in a way other than a parody of American films about gangsters-kidnapers" (*Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 139).

[117] Birgit Beumers, "Comforting Creatures in Children's Cartoons," in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (New York, London: Routledge, 2008), 160.

[118] In and of itself, the idea of a universal moral seems highly problematic and unlikely to exist.

speech at the First All-Union Meeting of the Union of Writers in 1934, "I do not doubt that the ancient tales and legends are familiar to you, but I want you very to understand deeply their main meaning. Their meaning can be reduced to the striving of ancient working people to facilitate their labor, to increase its productivity, to arm themselves against four-legged and two-legged enemies, and also through the power of the word […] to influence the hostile to people forces of nature."[119] Thus, it is first of all the mythological revolutionary spirit that was attractive in the folk and fairy-tale, and this attraction seemed to be shared by the State administration, as well as animation workers.

Additionally, I suggest that the purely ideological position for understanding the meaning of animated Soviet fairy-tale is insufficient. By claiming further that cartoons were "conservative aesthetically,"[120] Beumers, I believe, overlooks the complex relationship of the visual sources that were appropriated by animation, and their functioning in the texture of the animated film. Their multiplicity that will be demonstrated in the case study of *The Humpbacked Horse*, as well as through their ambiguous relationships to the visual sources of other animated genres, call for a detailed analysis rather than generalizations.

Another important aspect in the discussions of genres was the correspondence of the animation directors' interests and inclinations towards specific formats and types of films. On the one hand, raising a question under such angle points to the importance of the role of the director in animation production, and emphasizes the approach of using the cadres the best possible way. For instance, Ptushko in his speech at the Second All-Union Meeting on Thematic Planning for 1934 was addressing the issue with different genres in animation through the lens of the

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[119] Maxim Gorkii's speech, *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd Sovetskikh Pisatelei, 1934, Stenographicheskii otchet.* [First All-Union Meeting of the Union of Writers, 1934, Shorthand Report] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1934), 6.
[120] Ibid., 161.

animation director's potential that they had, and how this potential could be used. For instance, he was saying that "We should make animated shorts, but some of the [creative] workers do not feel any inclination towards this genre. … Suteev can do it, but Khodataev will not because his creative orientation is different and he should be given an opportunity to work in a different genre."[121] On the other hand, what is also implied in this discussion is that different directors had different styles connected to their artistic backgrounds: the animation directors who were developing animation from its inception did not have a special training, and had different backgrounds. To follow directors' artistic inclinations also meant to use their backgrounds to their advantage. Such approach to animation reveals, among other things, that the creative workers engaged in the field of animation production understood the specificity of the medium of animation as such that draws upon the historically preceding arts, and on the role and function of animation as not an entirely new art but rather as such that continues previous arts incorporating their heritage. Below I will look at the visual sources for Soviet animation that were used, discussed and sought after by Soviet animators.

4.1.5 Visual Sources for the Soviet Industrial Animated Image

The idea of continuity of artistic forms and their historical succession and inheritance was a part of the socialist realism approach. The discussions of sources for animation were complicated and fraught with contradictions which were partially introduced previously in this chapter regarding the Disney influence on Soviet animation. However, aesthetically, American animation was not the only, and probably not the most overpowering source of influence, which has been pointed

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[121] "2-e Vsesoiuznoie soveshchanie po tematicheskomu planu na 1934 god," 134.

out by different scholars. As Laura Pontieri, for instance, states, "While American animation had its roots in comic strips and vaudeville acts, most of the early Soviet animated films came out of political manifestos and satirical vignettes; they were primarily caricatures and propaganda works addressed to an adult audience."[122] This is an important yet controversial statement that is worth considering closely.

Caricature and newspaper cartoon as a visual source for Soviet animation was attempted to be used throughout the period of Soviet animation formation, especially when such genres of animated films as film-poster, satirical film, and agitation or propaganda films were considered. Among the inspirations for such films were Viktor Denisov (Deni), Dmitrii Moor, Boris Efimov, artists working as a group called Kukryniksy (Mikhail Kupriianov, Porfirii Krylov and Nikolai Sokolov) and the journal, *Krokodil*.[123] Yet, there were two factors that did not make the satirical cartoons a reliable and steady source of imagery for animation. First, the very use of satirical and overtly propagandistic genres in animation starting from the 1930s, with the exception of the pre-World War II and World War II periods, was constantly contested. Despite the calls for a variety of more overtly propagandistic genres, with animation becoming more of a children's medium, such genres were not a primary concern of the industry. Second, the very possibility to successfully use satirical cartoons in animation was a problematic issue that had opponents claimingthat satirical cartoons are impossible to animate because they do not easily translate into the medium of animation. For instance, Moisei Zats, a film and animation scriptwriter, asserted at the Meeting on the Issue of Thematic of Animation of the Creative Workers Engaged in

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[122] Pontieri, *Not Only for Children*, 6.
[123] See more on the cartoonists and caricature as a source of imagery for animation in Pontieri, Not Only For Children, 7-9; also on the connection of Iurii Merkulov and the use of caricature in animation—*Mir animatsii* [The World of Animaiton], documentary series; no. 13 "Daniil Cherkess, Iurii Merkulov," RGALI, fund 3192, inventory 6, item 1160.

Animation (1938), "I think that Kukryniksy with their form of drawing are impossible to show on the screen. I think that if Kukryniksy themselves were to make a film, they would film a different form, and would not use their broken legs, which is very funny but not cinematographic.[124] […] If Kukryniksy's drawings were shown on the screen the way we see them in the newspaper, it would not be successful."[125]

As for propaganda works that Pontieri cites as a source for Soviet animation, she later points out that Soviet propagandistic posters had affinity with two traditional artistic forms— orthodox icons[126] and popular printing press—*lubok*, [127] both of which were characterized by a narrative developed by means of images with the use of words. This form was very close to a much later form of comics,[128] which prompts the conclusion that both American and Soviet animation had a common visual prototype.

The history of *lubok* or Russian "popular print"[129] goes back to at least sixteenth century and is connected with emergence of printing and popularization of religious literature. The first

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[124] It is important to remark that the World War II animated film Kinotsirk [Cinema Circus] (1942, Soiuzmul'tfil'm, Olga Khodataieva, Leonid Al'marik) was inspired by the Kukryniksy style in depicting Hitler.

[125] "Soveschanie po voprosu temaiki mul'tiplikatsii tvorcheskikh rabotnikiv mul'tiplikatsii," 7.

[126] Pontieri in her book *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children* writes about Russian religious icons, though probably it would be more inclusive to write about Byzantium-originated icons since telling Biblical narratives in a pictorial form was not specific to Russian icons, but rather to icons used by Orthodox Christians.

[127] Here my argument seems to run counter to Evgeny Dobrenko's argument about the Soviet socialist realist culture that developed between the elitist and the mass-culture tendencies without advancing into either of them. He writes, "the Revolution gave birth to a super-elite avant-garde art and in many ways fought against *lubok*, or picture-book literature, eliminating the 'vulgar' (meschanskuiu) picture-book literature with the same resolve as it eliminated antirevolutionary literature" (in *Sotsrealisticheskii Kanon*, eds. Eugeny Dobrenko and Hans Gunther [Sankt-Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proiect, 2000], 158 [translation is mine]). However, there can be several arguments stated in support of my position. First, contrary to Dobrenko, I am considering only the type of *lubok* image, not the literature associated with it. Second, *lubok* imagery comes to Soviet animation only in the second half of 1930s, the time which was much more tolerant to kitsch, of which *lubok* is an instance.

[128] Ginsburg, explaining comics to Soviet readers, describes it as a form of *lubok* story pointing out that it is only inconsiderably different from European graphic story that usually does not use much dialogue, only short captions, whereas in comic dialogue plays an important role (*Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 65).

[129] Though etymologically the term "lubok" goes back to the material—the bark of linden trees—which was used for writing instead of paper or parchment as early as at least fifteenth century, here the terms is used only in reference to the popular print form that became widespread in the Russian empire only in sixteenth century. The scope and

secular examples of printed products that were the closest to Russian lubok in their format, as Ivan Snegirev writes, appeared in the seventeenth century and initially were called "German Funny Sheets" which had "historical, satirical, and generally funny content."[130] According to the content, Snegirev differentiates religious, moral, historical-geographical, and symbolic-poetic *lubok*. The latter included people's satire [narodnye satiry], fables and tales. He suggests a brief classification of tales, distinguishing fairy-tales and historical-epic tales, all of which were based on the traditional characters.

According to Snegirev, secular *lubok* was mostly used for two purposes: decoration and moral and scholarly education. He points out that pictures were widely used for enlightenment in all social strati, including the tsar's family and aristocracy. As for moral education, an important example that Snegirev provides concerns the use of *lubok* for popularization of Aesop's fables by Peter the Great. "Aesop's fables were published in 1712 […] with pictures, executed in a rather sophisticated manner, then were transferred to *lubok* pictures," and became a part of popular culture.[131]

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focus of the dissertation project does not allow for an extended discussion of lubok and its history. The references in the present discussion are mainly made to one of the earliest scholarly studies of lubok by Ivan Snegirev, *O lubochnyh kartinkah russkogo naroda* [On lubok pictures of the Russian people] (Moscow: Tipographiia Avgusta Semena, 1844) and Oleg R. Khromov, *Russkaia lubochnaia kniga XVII-XIX vekov* [Russian lubok book, XVII-XIX centuries] (Moscow: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 1998). The latter is especially useful not only for a history of *lubok*, but also for a detailed overview of scholarship on *lubok* (in particular, see the first chapter "Istoreograficheskie problem izucheniia lubka.)" Among other useful sources for the history of lubok are: *Loubok: Russian Popular Prints from Late 18th—Early 20th Centuries. From the Collection of the State Historical Museum* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1992); on the connection of lubok and modernism, see Nadeshda G. Minjailo, "Der Lubok und die russische Avantgarge," in *Russische Avantgarde* 1910-1934, Mit voller Kraft, ed. Wilhelm Hornbostel, Karlheinz W. Kopanski and Thomas Rudi (Heidelberg: Edition Braus, 2001), 37-40; on lubok as a means of propaganda and construction of Russian national identity in the situation of Napoleon War, see Stephen M. Norris, "Images of 1812: Ivan Terebenev and the Russian Wartime Lubok," *National Identities* 7, no. 1 (2005): 1-21; Neia Zorkaya's book, *Fol'klor, Lubok, Ekran* (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1994), in which she makes a connection between the medium forms of *lubok* and television is useful as an example of interpretation of *lubok* as a format in the contemporary popular culture.

[130] Snegirev, *O lubochnyh kartinkah*, 9.
[131] Snegirev, *O lubochnyh kartinkah*, 6.

The variety of usages for *lubok*, and its embeddedness within popular and folk culture made it an appealing form for propaganda purposes after the October Revolution. As Khromov points out, "*Lubok* as the art of masses in the tradition of thinking of revolutionary democrats and narodniks was viewed as an important means for propaganda, and during the first years of Soviet power it started being used together with posters."[132] He continues citing N.M. Tarabukhin, "If the poster is a means of agitation, *lubok* has in itself the elements of mass propaganda," because the social function of *lubok* was to be "an educational picture," in order to come to a conclusion, "This specificity [of *lubok*] became the initial premise for treating *lubok* as "a weapon of revolutionary propaganda," and "propaganda of socialist way of living [*byt*]."[133] However, it is hard to make a clear distinction between agitational posters and propagandist *lubok* since some of agitational posters were also influenced by *lubok*. For instance, the work of the artists who in the 1920s created so-called *Okna ROSTA*—Vladimir Mayakovsky, Mikhail Cheremykh, and Ivan Maliutin—despite employing modernist imagery, used the same organization that was characteristic of *lubok*. Pontieri's argument that *Okna ROSTA* posters "have many traits in common with the first Soviet animation,"[134] reaffirms the continuity of the use of *lubok* and posters as a visual source for Soviet animation. As a popular print image, *lubok* completely corresponded to the socialist realist principles of people-ness (*narodnost'*) and class-ness (*klassovost'*)—it was a popular form of art that had been appropriated by the masses and rejected by bourgeoisie as primitive and unsophisticated. As for the third basic principle of socialist realism, partiinost' (or *party-ness*)—art was supposed to develop along the lines of the party program which for arts was to educate the masses. As Lunacharsky, the first minister of

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[132] Khromov, *Russkaia lubochnaia*, 29.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Pontieri, *Not Only for Children*, 6-7.

education (or Commissar of Enlightenment) in the Soviet Union summarized Lenin's position on art: "art must be popular, it must elevate the masses, teach them and strengthen them."[135] From the late 1920s on, animation is increasingly regarded as a children's medium, and thus the conversation about education of the new Soviet citizen was especially pertinent to it. And since *lubok* had already been used for purposes of enlightenment and propaganda, it continued to fulfill the same task in animation, creating a simple, clear image that is easy to perceive and understand.

Another source that was specific not only to Soviet animation, but also to American, especially Disney animation, was book illustration. In the Soviet Union the connection between book illustrations and animation became especially discussed since some of the animators were engaged in this field. For instance, the famous animated film, *Pochta* (Post), directed by Mikhail Tsekhanovsky was based on book illustrations to Marshak's poem, "Pochta." The use of book illustrations for animation was, as any other matter with Soviet animation, a controversial one. On the one hand, it was criticized on the grounds that animation was not supposed to become an illustrative medium because of the fear of overcomplicating the image.[136] On the other hand, it was regarded as a source of visual imagery specific to the Soviet situation, a good alternative to the influence of American imagery. Thus, describing the situation of children's book illustrations becoming a more common place for animators' inspiration, Ginsburg writes, "At the end of the 1930s, Moscow animators began to break free from a formalist understanding of specificity of a drawn film and, connected with it, fetishization of animated technics. Our animation could not develop separately from all of the Soviet art for children. It is strengthening connections with

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[135] Cited in James, *Soviet Socialist Realism*, 23.
[136] See, for instance criticism of animated images being close to book illustrations by Dmitrii Babichenko, "Vypiska iz protokola Khudozhestvennogo Soveta kinostudii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' ot 29.04.48." RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory 1, item 1072, 58.

Soviet children's literature, and artists who illustrate literary works helped to establish the realist tendencies in animation. The hero of our fairy-tale is not a conventional mask, but a realistic fairy-tale character [realisticheskii skazochnyi kharakter]. In order to represent such a character, one should master one's own national realist literary and artistic traditions, in particular, not to shy away from the experience that has been accumulated by the children's books artists."[137] Additionally to an obvious proximity of children's book illustrations and animation in terms of topics and artists' engagement, the use of books as a material for animation seems to be consistent with the general orientation of the socialist realist aesthetics to literary sources. And though in case of the book illustrations, it is not the printed word, but the printed image that becomes the point of reference, the method of relating the print culture and the culture of the moving image was reproduced through the relationship between the book illustration and animation.

To conclude, over the 1930s-1940s, Soviet animation was trying to find its ways and adjust to multiple changes, which resulted in the changes in the animated image, development of genres, and transformations in the aesthetics of Soviet animation on the whole. The chapter demonstrates that Disney's influence on Soviet animation was not direct and unambiguous, and that the way to the new genre, fairy-tale, that dominated Soviet animation till the beginning of the 1960s was not a direct and obvious one.

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[137] Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 142.

4.2   CASE STUDY: *THE HUMPBACKED HORSE* (1947)[138]

"For Soviet drawn animation, *The Humpbacked Horse* became a milestone, the
first film that outlined the correct way of mastering artistic traditions and creating
animated adaptations of folk arts and literary classics."[139]

"Based on a Russki folk tale which has been a hit on the Red stage as a ballet and
a play, 'The Magic Horse' should click with both young and old audiences. Yank
film goers who are Disney fans will recognize heavy borrowings from the
American animator's technique and should find it compares favorably with his
product. Like Disney, 'Horse' gives human characteristics to animals and is set in
the same kind of magical world as 'Snow White'"[140]

The Humpbacked Horse is an animated adaptation of a famous fairy-tale in verse written by
Peter Ershov in 1834. The fairy-tale was based on Russian folk-tales that drew on traditional folk
characters such as the Fire-bird and Ivan the Fool.[141] The idea of adapting *Humpbacked Horse*
for animation appeared much earlier than the release of the film: already in the discussion of the
characters appropriate for animating at Soiuzmul'tfil'm that dates back to 1938, the humpbacked

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[138] Due to the film's popularity and technical problems with its copying, there are two versions of the film—the
original 1947 version, and a remake released in 1975. See Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za Kadrom*.
[139] Semion Ginsburg. *Risovannyi i kukol'nyi fil'm*, 168.
[140] "The Magic Horse," review, in *Variety* (Jun 22, 1949): 20. *The Humpbacked Horse* was distributed in the USA in
the 1949 under the title *The Magic Horse*.
[141] For discussion of *The Humpbacked Horse*'s folk roots see, for instance, James Von Geldern and Louise
McReynolds, eds., *Entertaining Tsarist Russia: Tales, Songs, Plays, Movies, Jokes, Ads, and Images from Russian
Urban Life, 1779-1917* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998) 74-75. Antonina P. Babushkina in *Istoria
Russkoi Detskoi Literatury* remarks that the fairy-tale is almost a word-for-word recording of oral tales that Ershov
heard from tale-tellers. She contends that what Ershov did was only to put it in a literary form, and make some
additions (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Uchebno-Pedagogicheskoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Prosveshcheniis
RSPhSR, 1948), 179.

horse was mentioned as a character that would be "easy to render in an animated film."[142] Yet, the animated adaptation was only released at the end of 1947.[143]

In her *Istoria Russkoi Detskoi Literatury* published in 1948 but conceived several years earlier,[144] Antonina Babushkina interprets the folk meaning of *The Humpbacked Horse* along the lines of exposure of the ever-lasting antagonism between the people and the court. She writes, "The very meaning of the fairy-tale is in the juxtaposition of Ivan, on the one hand, and the Tsar and his nobles, on the other. The nobles perform the roles of jesters doing a lot of legwork. The Tsar himself is an ever-yawning nothing. All that he wants—to fetch a Fire-bird or Tsar-Maiden herself—is delivered by Ivan. It is only natural that Ivan has to become Tsar. The goal to exchange a bad tsar for a good tsar, even if he comes from the people, is not very revolutionary. But Ershov posites a feud between the people and the nobles and tsar. One can draw many kinds of conclusions from this."[145] Describing the merits of the fairy-tale, Babushkina writes, "The folk spirit of the tale, the wonderful character of Ivan the Fool, realism, a deep social meaning, easy-flowing verses, and a healthy folk humor—all these qualities secured Ershov's tale's longevity."[146]

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[142] "Stenogramma soveschaniia po voprosu tematiki multiplikatsii tvorchaskikh rabotnikov multiplikatsii."

[143] The archival records show that there were complications with filming *The Humpbacked Horse* because of which the film, though its production started in 1944, was released only in the end of 1947. For technical complications, see "Protokol Obshchestudiinogo proizvodstvennogo soveschaniia po voprosu o merakh po realizatsii Postanovleniia Soveta Ministrov SSSR ot 16.XII.46, 'O krupnykh nedostatkakh v organizatsii proizvodstva kinofil'mov i massovykh factakh razbazaivaniia I hischeniia gosudarstvennykh sredstv v kinostudiiakh,' i prikaza Ministra Kinematografii SSSR ot 28.XII.46. #217/m,"[Minutes of the all-studio production meeting on the questions of the measures to implement the Resolution of the Council of the Ministers of the USSR of 12/16/46, "On large-scale drawbacks in organization of film production and mass facts of squandering and embezzlement of the state funds in the film studious, and the order of the Minister of Cinematography of the USSR of 12/28/46, #217/m], January 9, 1947, RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory 1, item 15. For interruptions in continuous financing which occurred due to a break between the end of the initial pre-production period and its extension, see "Ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska k balansu osnovnoi deiatel'nosti kinostudii 'Soiuzmul'tfil'm' za 1945 god." [Explanation note to the financial report on the main activities of Soiuzmul'tfil'm studio in 1945], RGALI, Fund 2450, inventory 4, item 288.

[144] According to the book's introduction, Babuskina died before the publication of the book.

[145] Ibid., 181.

[146] Ibid., 184.

Babushkina's account, which places the plot of the fairy-tale into the framework of class struggle and emphazes closeness to people and folk roots, is consistent with the tasks of socialist realism to work in the artistic framework that is national in its form, but socialist in its content. The synchronicity of the publication of Babushkina's book, with a positive rendering of folk and fairy tales, and the release of the animated film, *The Humpbacked Horse,* is likely a mere contingency, and yet it shows a cultural tendency of the time to increase publication of folklore and fairy-tales and their visual adaptations.

The plot of the animated film *The Humpbacked Horse* is an abridged version of Ershov's tale, and is also a modified version of the literary script by Nikolai Rozhkov and Evgenii Pomeschikov. Details of some of the events of the plot that are preserved in the film are also changed to a higher or lesser degree, but, even in the abridged version, the story is close to the original tale. The main line of the events of the plot follows Ivan the Fool's journey from his father's peasant home to the Tsar's palace and, eventually, to the Tsar's throne. At the beginning of the story, Ivan the Fool is sent by his father to the fields to guard the corn. In the fields, he encounters the Magic Horse whom he manages to capture. In exchange for her freedom, the Horse gives Ivan two steeds, and a humpbacked horse who, as she says, will become Ivan's best friend. Ivan's brothers steal the steeds and take them to the city where they intend to sell them. Following his brothers, Ivan finds a Fire-bird's feather that he picks up despite the humpbacked horse's protests and warnings. In the city, he finds the steeds when they are being sold to the Tsar, and follows them to the Tsar's palace since nobody else seems to be able to manage them. The Tsar appoints Ivan the main stableman, which arouses the previous main stablekeeper's envy. The latter swears to get Ivan fired or killed and starts looking for evidence that would discredit Ivan. He embarks on the project of inciting the Tsar to give Ivan jobs that would be

impossible to complete: first, after learning that Ivan has a Fire-bird's feather that is capable of lighting space in the dark, he suggests to Tsar to make Ivan catch a Fire-bird; and after overhearing some servants in the palace telling stories about Tsar-Maiden, he persuades Tsar to make Ivan bring Tsar-Maiden to him. However, the former stablekeeper's hopes for Ivan not completing the jobs or perishing while doing them never come true—with the humpbacked horse's help, Ivan brings to the Tsar's palace both a Fire-bird and Tsar-Maiden. The former stablekeeper sees a new opportunity to get rid of Ivan when Tsar Maiden agrees to marry Tsar under a single condition—if the Tsar becomes younger. He suggests to Tsar that he should test the recipe for youth suggested by Tsar-Maiden—bathing in three barrels: one with boiling milk, the other with boiling water, and the last one with freezing water—on Ivan first. With the humpbacked horse's help, Ivan again manages to go through the ordeal, as a result of which he becomes so handsome that Tsar-Maiden falls in love with him. The Tsar follows the same procedure and perishes whereas Ivan marries Tsar-Maiden and becomes the Tsar.

In the history of Soviet animation, the animated film *The Humpbacked Horse* is associated with several firsts. It was the first feature-length animated film produced in the Soviet Union. As Ivanov-Vano, the director of the film wrote in his memoir, to make the first feature-length film was a highly demanding task since a failure could "close the way to the feature-length films directing"[147] not only for Ivanov-Vano, but also for his colleagues. The film turned out to be a great success, and was praised both in the Soviet Union, and abroad.[148]

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[147] Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za kadrom*, 139.

[148] In *Multiplikatsiia Vchera i Segodnia*, Part 3 (Moscow: Kafedra Masterstva Khudozhnika Kino i Televideniia, 1976), Ivanov-Vano cites multiple positive reviews of the film from domestic and foreign newspapers (56-58). Both in *Multiplikatsiia Vchera I Segodnia*, Part 3 (56) and in *Kadr za Kadrom*, (150), he also maintains that a copy of the film was bought by Disney, and was shown to the animators at his studio as an example of a well-done animated film.

It was the first Soviet animated film that received international acclaim, including winning an international prize.[149] It was also the first Soviet animated film[150] that was distributed in many foreign countries, such as France, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, and also in the USA.[151] Probably because of such a high visibility in the West, *The Humpbacked Horse* is the only Soviet film from the 1930s and up to the 1960s mentioned in Stephen Cavalier's *The World History of Animation,[152]* and one of the few Soviet films discussed in Giannalberto Bendazzi's famous encyclopedia of animation, *Cartoons, One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation.*[153]

The original title of the first literary script written by Nikolai Rozhkov and Evgenii Pomeschikov and dated 1944 was *The Tale about Ivanushka, Fire-bird and Tsar-Maiden.*[154] In

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[149] Galina Ivanova-Vano, Ivanov-Vano's daughter, wrote in her memoirs that the film was of a shorter length than the international standards for animated feature-length films at the time, as a result of which it received only one "modest" prize—Diploma of Honor at the 3rd International Film Festival in Mariánské Lázně. Ivanova writes, "My father did not know about these standards, and apparently the people who were making decisions about sending the film to the international film festival were not familiar with them" (Galina Ivanova-Vano, "Otets kak ya ego pomniu," in *Ivan Petrovich Ivanov-Vano: 110 Let so Dnia Rozhdenia*, ed. Stanislav M. Sokolov [Moscow: VGIK, 2010], 36). Ivanov-Vano, however, does not mention Mariánské Lázně, but he writes that the film received the first prize in Karlovy Vary (Ivanov-Vano, *Multiplikatsiia Vchera i Segodnia,* Part 3 [Moscow: Kafedra Masterstva Khudozhnika Kino i Televideniia, 1976], 57)

[150] For instance, the records of the organization that was responsible for distribution of Soviet films on the American continent, AMKINO (starting from 1940 it transformed into an organization with a new name, Artkino Pictures, Inc., that had the same functions) in MoMa (ARTKINO Corporation Collection) and in The New York Public Library (A. Correspondence and Papers of Film Production Companies, Agencies, Producers, Distributors, Executives, Directors, and Actors, 1910 -c1960s; Box 1) show no involvement of this organization with any animated films made prior to *The Humpbacked Horse*, whereas there is a variety of materials connected with *The Humpbacked Horse* distribution, including reviews, press releases, advertisement flyer and materials, and advertising schedules preserved in MoMa.

[151] Slightly different lists of countries where *The Humpbacked Horse* was distributed can be found in Ivanov-Vano (*Multiplikatsiia Vchera i Segodnia* Part 3 [Moscow: Kafedra Masterstva Khudozhnika Kino i Televideniia, 1976], 57, and Ivanova-Vano "Otets," 36).

[152] Stephen Cavalier, *The World History of Animation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 150.

[153] Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Cartoons, One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 177.

[154] V.N. Rozhkov. "Stsenarii Konion-Gorbunok," 1944. RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory number 1, item 293. The appearance of Tsar-Maiden in the original title of the script seems to be reminiscent of the ballet *The Little Humpbacked Horse, or The Tsar-Maiden* produced by Russian Imperial Ballet at the Mariiniksy Theater in Petersburg (choreography and libretto by Arthur Saint-Léon, music – Cesare Pugni). In the correspondence between the Studio and the Government Administration officials, both titles, *Koniok Gorbunok*, and *Skazka pro Ivanushku,*

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the application for writing the script sent to Head of the Main Administration of Feature Films Production by Head of the Script Department at Soiuzmul'tfil'm, Zinovii Kalik, on February 12, 1944,[155] the script writers, Rozhkov and Pomeschikov, emphasize appropriateness of their choice of the material for adaptation by referencing the qualities of the literary fairy-tale: "P. Ershov's fairy-tale is original and is one of the most outstanding Russian fairy-tales; it is structured in such a way as if it was meant to be adapted by the means of the art of animation." A positive response to writing the script from Head of the Main Administration of Feature Films Production was written only five days later with permission to make an agreement with the scriptwriters. The final version of the script was accepted and approved with a short list of reviews on September 19, 1944, with a resolution to start the film production.

There are several sources, however, indicating that the preparation for the film production began much earlier than the dates stated in the official correspondence. Already in the cover letter for the draft of the script sent to the Main Administration of Feature Films Production in May of 1944 signed by Director of Soiuzmul'tfil'm at the time, Viktor Smirnov, and Head of Scrips Department, Zinovii Kalik, there is a mention that "animation directors of Soiuzmul'tfil'm Studio, I.P. Vano and D.I. Babichenko had been working on a feature-length adaptation of P. Ershov's fairy-tale *The Humpbacked Horse* for many years."[156] So far we do not have an explanation why Babichenko ended up not directing the film, but this note demonstrates that Ivanov-Vano participated in preparations for the film from the very beginning of its inception. He himself writes in his memoir that he started working on the visual part of the film already

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Zhar-Ptitsu i Tsar'-Devitsu, are initially used interchangeably in reference to the script and the future animated film (V.N. Rozhkov. "Stsenarii Konion-Gorbunok," 1944. RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory number 1, items 291, 292).
[155] V.N. Rozhkov. "Stsenarii Konion-Gorbunok," 1944. RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory number 1, item 291. The authorization of the agreement for writing the script was issued by the Main Administration of Feature Films Production on February 17, 1944.
[156] V.N. Rozhkov. "Stsenarii Konion-Gorbunok," May, 12, 1944. RGALI, Fund 2469, inventory 1, item 291, 11.

while being in evacuation in Alma-Aty during the World War II, where he was teaching at the Institute of Cinematography.[157]

Ivanon-Vano was one of the pioneers of Soviet drawn animation and one of the most influential animation directors in the history of animation in that country.[158] His influence was three-fold: through his films, through his teaching, and through his writing. He participated in the production of one of the first animated films made in the Soviet Union, *Interplanetary Revolution* (1924), in a group of animators-enthusiasts which he joined right after graduating from VHUTEMAS. Over years, he made a number of influential films, and he was active as an animation director up to his death in 1987.[159] For many years, starting from 1938 and until the end of his life, he taught at VGIK (All-Union State Institute of Cinematography), where he was invited by Lev Kuleshov[160] to found a new department of animation. [161] In addition to a number of articles on animation that he published over years in a variety of books and periodicals, including the All-Soviet film journal *Iskusstvo Kino*, and a course of lectures on the history of animation, *Multiplikatsiia Vchera i Segodnia*,[162] published for the students of VGIK, he wrote an indispensable memoir, *Kadr za Kadrom* (1980), which is a fascinating account of the history of Soviet animation from its inception through the perspective of a person who actually participated in the process of founding Soviet animation, as well as nurturing its development.

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[157] Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za kadrom*, 139-140.

[158] In Bendazzi's famous encyclopedia of animation *Cartoons*, the chapter dedicated to the Soviet animation from the 1940s to the 1970s is titled "Ivanov-Vano's Soviet Union." (177). And though this chapter is rather contentious and incomplete, and does not give a comprehensive picture of the situation of Soviet animation during the period, the very fact that it is named after Ivanov-Vano demonstrates his fame and popularity both at home and abroad, and though Bendazzi's calling Ivanov-Vano "the most influential personality in cultural politics" (177) is probably an exaggeration, it still indicates the position that Ivanov-Vano occupied in the discourse about Soviet animation.

[159] Ivanov-Vano's last project, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* was released in 1984, but he was considering working on other projects up to the end of his life (see Ivanova-Vano, *Kadr za kadrom*, 47).

[160] Stanislav Sokolov, "Professor Vano," in *Ivan Petrovich Ivanov-Vano: 110 Let so Dnia Rozhdenia,* ed. Stanislav M. Sokolov (Moscow: VGIK, 2010), 98.

[161] According to Beumers, it was founded in 1939 ("Comforting Creatures," 159).

[162] Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Multiplikatsiia Vchera i Segodnia* Parts 1-4 (Moscow: Kafedra Masterstva Khudozhnika Kino i Televideniia, 1974-1977).

His speeches at various meetings at the animation studio and other events that involved participation of creative workers indicate that he was an artist with a highly acute understanding of animation as a medium, interested in new approaches, and eager to experiment. An important detail: Ivanov-Vano was highly verbal in terms of his criticism of the studio administration. Considering this fact, it is possible to conclude that he was a highly respected animation director if he was given permission to direct the first animated feature-length film.

According to Ivanova-Vano's memoir, Ivanov-Vano's interest in Ershov's fairy-tale stemmed from his general interest in Russian culture and art. [163] However, regardless of Ivanov-Vano's personal preferences, the timing for choosing the Russian tale for animation adaptation could not have been better: the tendencies towards nationalization that began in the Soviet Union in the pre-war period, strengthened during the war, and the situation after World War II, with the burgeouning anti-cosmopolitanism campaign and the beginning of the Cold War, provided the ideal context for production of an animated film based on a Russian fairy-tale. The choice of a fairy-tale for the first feature-length film also corresponded to the general aesthetic tendencies in the Soviet arts—development of socialist realism—and to the ambitions of the Soviet animation to rival Disney's success in production of feature-length animated films.

After a short period in the Soviet arts, when folk and fairy-tales as well as references to them were considered backward, fairy-tales became a staple genre in Soviet media, and were popular in different media formats, especially as cultural products for children. Ershov's tale fit particularly well into the post-war ideological context since, in Benjamin's terms, it represents a myth, a human utopian dream for a better social future. Considered from this perspective, *The*

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[163] Ivanova-Vano, "Otets." In my conversation with Stanislav Mikhailovich Sokolov (summer 2015, Moscow) , a former student of Ivanov-Vano, and later his colleague at VGIK, Sokolov mentioned that for Ivanov-Vano there was a certain degree of self-identification with the figure of Ivan the Fool—Vano's grandparents were "landless peasants."

Humpbacked Horse contains four utopian motifs that are consistent with the communist ideas of social justice and equality. First, it is the idea of social mobility—the ability of a human to exceed the social constraints imposed on them by their social position, and move' up in the social hierarchy. Ivan the Fool who was born into a peasant family eventually becomes the Tsar thus transgressing his social status while demonstrating that the social status is a social construction rather than a natural condition. Second, it is a tale about a possibility of social justice based on social acknowledgement of personal qualities, or in other words, a story about social reward for hard work and moral qualities such as kindness, braveness, loyalty, etc. Ivan the Fool becomes the Tsar not by pure chance—he had to work hard to achieve that status, and to exhibit his moral features during the course of the tale. Third, Ivan's physical transformation is a realization of a utopian dream about transformation of a human body and a physical embodiment of morality. Ivan's beautiful mind with its advanced moral characteristics acquires a beautiful body.[164] Fourth, the tale depicts a human dream for mastering and overcoming the constraints imposed on humans by nature,[165] for technological advancements such as flying and autonomy from natural constraints of daylight. The humpbacked horse is capable of quickly covering long distances by flying. By picking up Fire-bird's feather, Ivan the Fool obtains an independent source of light

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[164] The idea of correspondence of the beautiful mind to the beautiful body can be traced as far as Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates discusses the moral education of the young men. See, for instance, 402d: "'Now,' I [Socrates] went on, 'imagine a situation where someone combines beautiful mental characteristics with physical features which conform to the same principle and so are consistent and concordant with the beauty of his mind. Could there be a more beautiful sight for anyone capable of seeing it?' 'Hardly'." (Plato, *Republic*, trans. Robin Waterfield [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], 101)

[165] Mastering the nature is one of the central themes of the method of socialist realism. As formulated by Maxim Gorkii at the First All-Union Meeting of Soviet Writers, the meeting at which socialist realism was proclaimed the official artistic method of the Soviet Union, "Socialist realism asserts being as an activity, as a creative act the purpose of which is uninterrupted development of the most valuable individual capacities [nepreryvnoe razvitie tsenneishikh individual'nykh sposobnostei cheloveka] in order for him to overcome the forces of nature, for his health and longevity, for his great happiness to live on Earth which he, according to the constant growth of his demands, wants to cultivate completely, as a beautiful dwelling of the humankind united in one family" ("Doklad A.M. Gor'kogo o Sovetskoi Literature" [A.M. Gorkii's report on Soviet Literature], in *Pervyi vsesoiyznyi s'ezd sovetskikh pisatelei 1934* [Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1934], 17).

and thus gains an ability to work at night, which increases his productivity. Considering the

emphasis put on technology and especially on electrification in the Soviet Union,[166] the fantastic

realization of this dream in the fairy-tale could be read as a reminder of the true direction of the

development of the Soviet Union in its technological pursuits, and of how far the Soviet Union

had gone in its technological development since the revolution.[167] If, according to the French

media philosopher Gilbert Simondon, the social function of technology is to replace the myth,[168]

The Humpbacked Horse, by representing the myth, does not only follow the futuristic ideological

vector of the Soviet Union to "make a fairy-tale come true"[169] but also draws a connection to the

genealogy of the myth, to its deep popular roots.

However, it is not only the fairy-tale's ideological appropriateness that made it a suitable

material for the animated adaptation. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the same tale

became the first in Russian ballet to have Russian themes and to use traditional Russian music.

In 1864, a ballet adaptation of Ershov's fairy-tale called *The Little Humpbacked Horse, or The*

Tsar-Maiden was staged at the Imperial Bolshoi Kamenny Theatre in St. Petersburg to a mixed

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[166] Vladimir Lenin's expression "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country" that appeared in his speech "Our Foreign and Domestic Position and Party Tasks" delivered to the Moscow Gubernia Conference Of The R.C.P.(B.) on November 21, 1920 (see https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/nov/21.htm) shows to which degree electrification and popularization of electrical light was important for Soviet ideology.

[167] As Emma Widdis points out, "it [electrification] would facilitate industrialization on an enormous scale; but it would also—and just as importantly—transform everyday life in every corner of the Soviet territory, providing a network that would integrate centre and periphery. Developed in conjunction with *radiofikatsiia* (radiofication), which sought to provide radio transmission across the territory, electrification was envisaged as part of a communicative infrastructure that would extend across the *prostor*, uniting disparate spaces. In both symbolic and practical terms, it would provide a new structure for the mapping of the Soviet territory— what Krzhizhanovskii called an "electrical skeleton" of power lines" (Emma Widdis. *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003]: 22).

[168] For Simondon's discussion of technology, see, for instance, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Ninian Mellamphy (Windsor: University of Western Ontario (June 1980.) http://monoskop.org/images/2/20/Simondon_Gilbert_On_the_Mode_of_Existence_of_Technical_Objects_Part_I_alt.pdf

[169] "We are born to make fairy-tale come true, to overcome distance and space," is the beginning of a popular Soviet song "Aviamarsh" [Aviamarch] written by Iurii Khait (misic) and Pavel German (lyrics) in 1922. The pick of its popularity was in the 1930s.

critical acclaim and popular success. Using the same fairy-tale, Ivanov-Vano, as Arthur Saint-Léon (libretto and choreography) and Cesare Pugni (music) did it almost a hundred years before him with the ballet, introduced into animation the variety of Russian traditional arts. If Pugni's music was blurring boundaries between high art of ballet and folk music and dance, Ivanov-Vano's film is a good example of the potentiality of animation as a medium to cannibalize and reinterpret other media, including not only folk and popular, as well as fine arts, but also arts of movement, such a ballet itself.

Ivanov-Vano, as well as the Soviet film critic Semen Ginsburg, considered *The Humpbacked Horse* to be a milestone in Soviet animation's quest for its own style,[170] and also "the first film that was made on the basis of a deep creative mastering of the artistic traditions of the adjacent arts."[171] Ivanov-Vano describes the visual sources for the film in the following way, "The plot of the tale saturated with fantastical events, extremely original characters—satirical and lyrical—demanded an acute grotesque, both in the visual form, and in the movement of the drawn characters. First of all, the animation artist Lev Minchin and I studied Russian folk crafts and found the key to the style of the film in folk toys, *lubok*, decorations of old spinning-wheels, clay pottery, fabrics, wood carvings, spice-cakes cutters, and folk architecture. The traditions of ancient Russian miniature played a big role in the shot composition."[172] The traditional Russian aesthetic sources that Ivanov-Vano lists in his memoir weave the complex imagery of the film, appearing throughout the film in various details of the shots. However, the list does not exhaust all of the visual references used in the film—there are at at least four more that it does not mention: Russian icons, Russian modernist art, and Russian pre-revolutionary book illustrations

[170]Semion Ginsburg, *Risovannyi i kukol'nui fil'm* (Moscow: Iskusstvo), 167-68.
[171] Ivan Ivanov-Vano, *Multiplikatsiia vchera i segodnia*, Part 4 (Moscow: Kafedra Masterstva Khudozhnika Kino i Televideniia, 1977), 3.
[172] Ivanov-Vano, *Kadr za kadrom*, 40.

all of which have strong connections with Russian folk and popular art, and, as I have already written above, Disney animation. In my analysis, I will trace these connections. My focus is on the ways animation adapts and reinterprets different media that historically precede it. Viewed from this perspective, *The Humpbacked Horse* is an example of a variety of potentialities of animation as a medium. First, it is capable of rehabilitating different forms of traditional art giving them a new life in a new medium. Second, by entwining various art forms into the fabric of animated image, it blurs the boundaries between high and low arts, fine arts, and popular and folk arts—they all become a part of the animated image as its integral form. Third, by using visual sources from different historical epochs, it is capable of creating a space of historical atemporality, when the chronology of historical development of art becomes irrelevant and the temporality of the artistic sources is replaced by the temporality of the medium of animation and the stage of its technological development: cel technique allows for creating a phantasmagoria of visual sources displayed in the animated image.

It is impossible to do justice to *The Humpbacked Horse* within one chapter of the dissertation project: its visual richness calls for a separate detailed study. I will focus on three scenes which will allow for understanding the aesthetic diversity of the film, and will also allow for complicating the ideas of Disney's influence on Soviet animation. The three scenes include the credits and the opening scene, the scene at the market, and the scene of Ivan the Fool's capture of the Fire Bird. Over the course of working on the film, the script went through a many changes, and many of the ideas that Rozhkov and Pomeschikov elaborated in their script were transformed or left unrealized. The following analysis of the film will be partially set against their script, and will consider not only the visual specificity of the film, but also the transformations that the film went through comparing to the script.

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4.2.1   The Opening Credits and the Opening Scene

Among the parts of the script that went through considerable changes during the process of adaptation, was the credit and opening sequence. In the script for the film, the credits and the opening sequence are described by Rozhkov and Pomeschikov in the following way:

> Against the background of an intricate Russian folk ornament there appear the title of the film and the credits. The names of the studio, the authors, and the participants in the film production come up one after the other via a soft superimposition. The patterns of the ornament replace one another together with the changing credits. The flowers are replaced by fantastical birds, the birds are replaced by intricate patterns of magical animals. Finally, on the brightest and richest ornament there appears a sign, 'Fairytale about Ivanushka, Fire Bird and Tsar-Maiden.'
>
> Superimposition of the first scene.
>
> 1. Establishing shot. From a dissolve. The signs and the ornaments are gradually melting and through them there appear tall mountains with birds soaring over them, thick woods with fallen hundred-year-old trees, and blue seas with white swans flying over them. All this is shot from a high angle circular panning.
>
> 2. From a dissolve. Panning. Crimson sun is disappearing behind a far-away hill covered with forest. In the pinkish dusk, birch trees, aspens, young pine trees and blue fir trees are passing by. Overgrown ravines, birch trees and still rivers. Multi-colored patches of poor peasants' fields… Finally, on a high hill, as if resting against the sky, there is a small village with a colorful bell tower, and black jackdaws on cupper

crosses. Camera zooms in onto the edge of the village, onto a crooked

wooden house that is standing on the slope of a hill.[173]

The credit and opening sequence described in the script follow a particular order enunciated first in the credits and then continued in the opening sequence. The credits sequence, though being a generalized abstraction, through a combination of ornaments with words, follows a particular pattern of evolutionary chronology: from plants to birds, and then to animals. Following the changing ornaments of the credit sequence as conceived in the script, the spectator was supposed to follow the evolutionary model of development of species—from lower to higher ones. The evolutionary development stops in the credits before appearance of humans that we witness in the opening sequence which employs a figurative representational style. The establishing shot of the opening sequence described in the script combines different manifestations of nature presented separately in the credits—in the establishing shot the spectator was supposed to see nature full of vegetation and populated with living creatures, and then gradually, move onto the scenes with cultivated nature: peasants' fields, and then products of human labor: buildings constructed by humans, first social, such as a bell tower, and then individual, such as a personal dwelling. Natural flora and fauna abstracted in the credits' ornaments was supposed to come alive in the establishing sequence by the means of animation and become active, animated elements of the fairy-tale.

Thus the establishing sequence that follows the credits in the script can be seen, on the one hand, as an abstract model brought to life—it allows for seeing the categories of nature abstracted in the ornaments in their interaction, in their habitual form, and on the other—it follows the established hierarchy of the natural evolution. From development of flora to more

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[173] Rozhkov, V.N., "Stsenarii Konion-Gorbunok," 1944. RGALI, fund 2469, inventory 2, item 293: 1.

advanced forms of fauna, the ornaments seem to be preparing the spectator for appearance of the human, since it is the human who occupies the highest place in the evolutionary hierarchy and is supposed to be on the top of the natural evolutionary development. The sequence also places the human labor as an advanced form of labor comparing to the labor of the nature—in the sequence the natural creatures are followed by the creations of the humans: cultivated fields and the bell tower.

However, this building up of the scene results in an ironic antithesis: the scene ends with "a crooked wooden house that is standing on the slope of a hill"—the sequence featuring beauty of the nature and human labor results in a decline to the human metaphorically represented in the dwelling of the main character of the fairy-tale rather than an ascent to the human glory. The interpretation of the evolutionary development in the film script—the evolution of the natural beauty to the beauty of the human creation such as the bell tower goes down to a dwelling that is far from the one that would be appropriate for the king of nature, a human being.[174]

In the actual film, the credits and the opening scene are very different from the ones in the script—the actual credits and opening sequence do not only bring up an ironic rendering of the idea of the evolutionary development, but also shifts the meaning of the setting of the film

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[174] It is probably possible to say that the idea of disruption of the natural hierarchy of creatures, and the problematization of the position of the human being as a highest form of natural development is at the heart of animation in general. Anthropomorphization of inanimate objects and non-human animal characters has a potential to blur distinctions and hierarchies between different animate and inanimate objects—they all become capable of moving and morphing, talking, and expressing themselves. If traditionally anthropomorphization is interpreted as a way to elevate non-human objects to the status of human, some authors consider this move to have the opposite effect. As for instance, Walter Benjamin writes in his short notes on Mickey Mouse shorts, "In these films, mankind makes preparations to survive civilization. Mickey Mouse proves that a creature can still survive even when it has thrown off all resemblance to a human being. He disrupts the entire hierarchy of creatures that is supposed to culminate in mankind" ("Mickey Mouse," in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008]: 338.) Thus for Benjamin such a move from the human to the animal in animated characters is a way for the human to survive in a non-human environment of a civilized (modernized, industrialized, bureaucratized) society in which a simple and straight route of a marathon runner that could be taken before the invention of the technological extensions of transportation is impossible because of all the complications that civilization brings upon the humans.

from the natural to artistic. The background for the credit sequence consists of only three ornamental plates, the first two of which appear only during the first ten seconds of the credit sequence, and then are replaced by the third one that remains until the end of the credits sequence. All of the ornaments provide a background for a rectangular frame that encompasses the credits. The organization of the ornaments also follows the logic of a rectangle: they have two horizontal—top and bottom, and two vertical—left and right—strips of images. The ornament that opens the credit sequence is predominantly vegetal (Fig. 21).[175] It consists of flowers, leaves, and interweaving stems. The elements of the ornament, though being symmetrical, are all different: flowers and leaves of different shapes and colors occupy opposing positions. The two details of the ornament that are different in terms of their subject matter and their size are placed in the middle of the bottom strip of the ornamental frame and constitute a focal point of the frame. These are two bigger-sized flowers whose petals are partially fallen off. In their big round centers, one can see two schematically drawn facial profiles in recorder positions turned towards each other: one of them, rimmed with circular petals, is light, and the other, rimmed with spiky petals, is dark. The drawn faces are reminiscent of symbols of the Sun and the Moon that are central for traditional Russian ornaments. The closed rectangular frame that encompasses the credit—the name of the studio and the year of the film release—introduces a geometric component through its consistent zigzag pattern.

The frame of the second credit with the title of the film[176] neither preserves a rectangular shape nor has a consistent line: it is fragmented, interrupted, curved and, on the top, moves out of the framing into the space of the ornamental plate thus invading the space of the ornament. The vertical parts of the frame are mostly formed by a zigzag, one part of which that is colored

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[175] *The Humpbacked Horse*. Credits, first ornamental plate. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=2
[176] *The Humpbacked Horse*. Credits, second ornamental plate. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=6

inside, is resting on the main line of the frame, and the other is oriented inside the frame producing an image reminiscent of a paling. The bottom line of the frame continues the same zigzag line, only this time it is interrupted by two symmetrical stalks which, by breaking through the frame, make a connection between the ornamental plate and the inner space of the frame with the title. On the top, the zigzag line transforms into a thick curve of the same color. The top horizontal line of the frame is curvy and is connected to six circles that encompass six birds that differ in color and posture: some of them are sitting, some are standing, yet they are of a similar shape, and their distinct feature—long tails—is the same feature that plays a visually and narratively significant role in the film. All in all, the inconsistency of the line of the frame and its visual ambiguity as a means of delineation of the credits from the background ornamental plate, reveals that these spaces are not isolated from each other: they are porous and interdependent. Other faunal elements of the ornamental plates—two steeds that also play a significant narrative role in the film—are featured in the bottom of the plate. The central element of the bottom part is formed by a symmetrical arrangement of leaves that creates a triangular frame in the center of which there is solar symbol which, on the contrary to the previous frame, is drawn with its facial features en-face. Other floral elements of the plate—flowers and leaves—appear along the vertical lines of the frame.

The third plate that provides a background for the credits until the end of the credits sequence demonstrates an expansion of the geometrical component of the ornament while preserving some elements of floral and faunal ornament.[177] However, the faunal elements used in the plate—images of the humpbacked horse and of a Fire-bird that occupy a central place in the top and bottom lines, respectively, seem to be performing not only an ornamental function but

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[177] *The Humpbacked Horse.* Credits, third ornamental plate. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=14

also a function of a prologue—they introduce the central animal characters of the fairy-tale, who are the most significant for the plot development. The geometric ornament occupies a bigger part of the image than in previous plates, and is more integrated with the floral ornament, and, especially in the bottom horizontal line it combines with a pattern of floral ornament.

The porosity of the spaces of the second credit plate, the ease with which the ornamental part invades the space of the frame with the title of the film, and the ambiguity of the frame that, on the one hand, delineates the verbal content of the frame from the ornamental background, and on the other hand, connects them, seems to be not only reminiscent of *lubok*, the Russian popular print, and fairy-tale book illustrations, but also pointing to a complex relationship between the animated image and its literary source, or, broadly speaking, the relationship between the pictorial and the verbal. Here the verbal and the pictorial create a united image, in which the verbal component is integrated into the image and performs both informative and decorative functions, while the pictorial component, likewise, can be interpreted as both informative—it introduces important narrative elements of the fairy-tale,—and decorative.

Such blurring the boundaries between informative and decorative functions of art, and questioning the pictorial and verbal relationships of an image is a part of the bigger discussion of the relationship of the word and image reflected in the works of modernist artists, including the Russian avant-gardist El Lissitzky and the Belgian surrealist Rene Magritte, as well as theoreticians of visual studies, such as W.T.J. Mitchell. Considering relationships between the word and image, their existence or co-existence, and mutual influence, Mitchell comes to a conclusion that "the interaction of pictures and texts is constitutive of representation as such: all media are mixed media, and all representations are heterogeneous; there are no "purely" visual

or verbal arts." [178] As a result, he introduces the term "imagetext" that is supposed to "wedge to pry open the heterogeneity of media and of specific representations and demonstrate suturing of visual and verbal."[179] However, the imagetext created in the credit sequence of *The Humpbacked Horse* is only one of the constituents of the film's complex imagery that integrates components from different media. Basing on the case of *The Humpbacked Horse*, we can interpret animation in general, and especially animation created in the 1930-40s in the Soviet Union, with its heavy dependence on literary sources, not only as a means for literary sources' adaptations, but as a medium that *a priori* has a potentiality to integrate and reinterpret a literary source, in which case the literary source becomes an integral part of the animated film, but not its sole foundation. It seems that it was this quality of animation—to dissolve and integrate the literary source, and make it an integral part rather than a basis—was the ultimate obstacle for a faster development of animation in the Soviet Union.

After the credits, there is a high-angle shot of the landscape, which presents a combination of nature and culture. The landscape is framed by rocky hills in the distance, and woods in the front. We see a bank of the river with a church and several buildings scattered on the hills covered by farmed plots, ships on the water, and a big rainbow that stretches from the lower left angle to the right upper angle with an implication that it extends beyond the frame that, on the one hand, unites the image, but on the other, suggests that there is something that lies outside of it, that what is in the image is not everything that we are going to see. Next, we see a tracking shot that follows a flight first of one bird, and then of several other birds that gives us a side view of the bank of the river from the water. Following the birds' flight, we see a rocky

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[178] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 5.
[179] Ibid., 100.

river bank first straight on, and then at high angle when the "camera," following the birds, moves into the fields. Through the fields it reaches a little crooked village house on a hill with a road passing by it, and stops.

The transformation of the ornament and the scenery in the first introductory shots of the animated film are quite different from the way they were conceived in the script. Instead of tracing an evolutionary development of species with a grotesque introduction of the human as a dubious highest stage of the natural development, the actual film avoids any possible referencing of the evolution theory. Instead, the ornamental plates and their sequential change seem to be making intermedia references, among which—references to the book as a medium and, consequentially, to the original tale written by Ershov, and, to the Russian traditional arts and crafts.

The first frame with the name of the studio and the year of the film production, and the background ornamental plate are a much too obvious reference to a book layout, even despite their landscape orientation, which is unusual in book publication. To indicate the year of the film production in the first credit frame is a feature characteristic of Stalin cinema in general, which can be connected to a general heavy literary base of the artistic culture of the period. However, the framing style of the credits in *The Humpbacked Horse* on the one hand references, but on the other, complicates the book illustration style established by such famous Russian fairy-tale book illustrators as Ivan Bilibin[180] (1876-1942). Bilibin's illustration style was deeply rooted in Russian traditional folk art that evolved as a result of his involvement into the

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[180] The references in the animated film *The Humpbacked Horse* to Bilibin's illustrations are not limited to the visual style, but also include some narrative connections. For instance, the interpretation of the episode in which Ivan catches a Fire-bird in the animated film is closer to the fairy-tale *The Story of Tsarevich Ivan, The Firebird, and the the Grey Wolf* illustrated by Bilibin in 1899 than to Ershov's tale, and is consonant with the way Bilibin depicts this episode (See, for instance, https://artchive.ru/artists/2164~Ivan_Jakovlevich_Bilibin/works/16617~Ivantsarevich_i_Zharptitsa_Illjustratsija_k_ Skazke_ob_Ivanetsareviche_Zharptitse_i_o_Serom_volke).

association *Mir Iskusstva,*[181] his research expeditions to Moscow and Novgorod, as well as to Russian provinces.[182] Specificity of Bilibin's style resulted in creation of books that were a "total design entity, a work of art rather than an object that merely contained works of art."[183] The emphasis he put on the use of ornament with integrated ornamental lettering[184] became highly influential not only in Russian book design,[185] but also, as we can see it in *The Humpbacked Horse* and other animated fairy-tales produced at the end of the 1940s-1950s in the Soviet Union, in animation.

In her analysis of *The Humpbacked Horse*, Birgit Beumers writes that "Ivanov-Vano creates an ideal world of the Russian village, which stands in sharp contrast with the city, placing rural lifestyle and simplicity over urban social life."[186] However, it is hard to find support for this claim in the film itself—after a sequence of scenes that do represent natural beauty, the camera stops at a village house that is similar to the one described in the script—it is far from being an

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[181] *Mir Iskusstva* [World of Art], an association of Russian artists, poets and writers that published an eponymous journal, was following neo-romantic, anti-realist philosophy in art. Despite eclectic tendencies that the group exhibited, from interests in Russian to Western art, artists involved with *Mir Iskusstva* "helped to revive interest in Russian art of the past, including icons" (Ronald E. Peterson, *Linguistic and Literary Studies in Eastern Europe, Volume 29: A History of Russian Symbolism* [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993], 4).

[182] For instance, in 1903, Bilibin was involved in an expedition organized by the Ethnographic Department of Russian Museum, the purpose of which was to collect folk artefacts and photographic documentation of ancient wooden architecture. David Jackson, "Out of their Minds: The Phantasy Worlds of Viktor Vasnetsov and Ivan Bilibin," in *Russian Legends, Folk Tales and Fairy Tales*, ed., Patty Wageman (Groningen: Groninger Museum, Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007): 45.

[183] Ibid., 45.

[184] Here's how Sergei Golunets describes the specificity of Bilibin's ornamental lettering, "Like many graphic artists at the turn of the century, Bilibin was greatly interested in ornamental lettering. He was quite familiar with the scripts and type faces of different epochs and employed them skillfully, but he was particularly attracted by the uncials and semiuncials of Old Russia. From manuscripts and old printed books he borrowed the overall character of the type of face and some individual details of the lettering, emphasizing and modifying them to suit his purpose and manner. Frequently in his work whole lines acquire ornamental character (see, for example, the poster advertising the Historical Exhibition of Works of Art, 1904). Unlike some representatives of Art Nouveau who turned the lettering into an intricate ornamental pattern, Bilibin was always careful to see that the inscription was easily legible: no matter how decorative the letters, classical clarity is always retained. The type face became, in fact, an integral part of Bilibin's style, of that system of graphic techniques which allowed him to work successfully in various spheres of typographical design" (Sergei Golynets *Ivan Bilibin* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981], 14-15.)

[185] As Sergei Golynets points out, Bilibin's style influenced a "galaxy of such professional book illustrators as Georgy Narbut, Sergei Chekhonin, Dmitry Mitrokhin and Vladimir Levitsky" (ibid., 15).

[186] Beumers, "Comforting Creatures," 162.

idealized rural dwelling: it is shabby and dull. In fact, apart from the nature, there is very little that is visually attractive in the village. The city, on the contrary, as we can see from the following scene, is full of life and vibrant colors that are a part of the environment as well as the characters' imagery. From the visual sources that are used for creating the city environment, it is clear that it is the fairy-tale city that preserves the traditional Russian culture, it is the city that becomes the space where the traditional Russian imagery can find its place.

4.2.2   The Opening of the Market Scene

The second scene is the scene of the market in the city where the humpbacked horse brings Ivan the Fool in search of the steeds that were given to Ivan the Fool by the Magic Horse in exchange for her freedom. The steeds were stolen by Ivan's brothers, and the humpbacked horse promises Ivan to help him find them.

The scene starts with an establishing frame of a distant city which is rapidly approaches the spectator in a zoom-in. The city emerges amongst a natural landscape and is framed by the natural elements—a river in the front, and pale green fields in the back. The dominant colors of the city—the white and terracotta bricks of the buildings with the inserts of the saturated green of the roofs and vegetation, on the one hand, provide a contrast with the natural frame, whereas on the other, establish a ground for rhyming elements: the white of the churches rhymes with the white of the clouds, the saturated green of the city rhymes with the pale green of the fields, the

terracotta of the bricks rhymes with the pale pink of the sky. Thus, the city does not contrast to the natural background but rather merges into it.[187]

According to the organization of the image, the spectator occupies a distant high-angle position that is supposedly located somewhere on a hill since the city is seen in what seems to be its entirety, and in the woods as in the foreground we can see branches of trees that rapidly disappear as the camera zooms in on the city and its houses. However, the high-angle perspective is absent—the perspective of the image is organized more along the lines of the horizon, thus the image of the city is flattened, the city looks as if it is reclining towards the field on which it is standing. The initial sense of three-dimensionality is rendered through the line of the horizon and the contrast of colors—pale green fields versus subdued pink of the sky with white clouds partially disappearing behind the horizon. Yet, the more the camera zooms in, the flatter the image of the city becomes, and right before the image of the city is superimposed by a frame with a merchant at a market, it turns into a flat image with geometrical shapes of the buildings. Direct perspective disappears together with the fixed spectator's position. The rapid flattening of the image and the zooming in of the camera that indicates the reduction of the image to an arrangement of colored shapes brings the image of the city close to three interconnected sources: icons or, more precisely, icon hills, a city image used in the popular print *lubok*, for instance in the anti-war one that is ascribed to Kazemir Malevich, and to modernist rendering of the cityscape as, for instance, in Aristarkh Lentulov's painting *Moscow* (1913).

Icon hills is a term that is used in reference to a specific way of creating a landscape, most often cityscape in paintings, icons among them, that used inverted perspective.[188]

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[187] *The Humpbacked Horse.* Establishing shot of the market scene. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=696
[188] According to Zhegiv, icon hills are not specific to ancient Russian icons, he finds the same approach to painting the landscapes in various art traditions, including those in the West, and in the East. He points out that one of the

According to the Russian semiotician Boris Uspenskii, "icon hills" are "a result of a perspective distortion of the horizon in the system of active space,"[189] i.e., a space that does not presuppose a particular fixed position of a spectator—it is a dynamic space, in which the spectator's gaze is actively working through the painting, finding its own trajectory of studying it. Lev Zhegiv, the Russian painter and theoretician of art, described the landscape composed of icon hills as "a petrified stone wave that has risen up to the top edge of the composition."[190] What is especially consonant in the traditional icon hills with the animated depiction of the city in *The Humpbacked Horse* is that, as Zhegin points out, in the landscape composed of icon hills, the size of icon hills "grows towards the center of the composition," explaining this phenomenon by the process of creating such a landscape: the artist, after drafting the composition, worked on it from the periphery then gradually moving towards the center thus creating a cone-shaped image.[191] In the animated film, additionally to the pictorial movement of the city towards the center, the city also grows through the zooming in of the camera, as a result of which the central part of the image is literally growing bigger and the elements of the landscape are rapidly turning into abstracted geometric sahpes.

Icon hills as a part of traditional Russian culture were used in popular art as well as in modernist art that in Russia was highly influenced by Russian popular and traditional art. Interpretations of the use of icon hills can be found in the series of anti-war *lubok*s ascribed to Kazimir Malevich. In Aristarkh Lentulov's painting *Moscow* (1913) ,we can see the same move

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most interesting icon hills can be found, for instance, in Indian art of VI-VII AD. (Lev Fedorovich Zhegin, *Iazyk Zhivopisnogo Proizvedenia* [Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1970], 97).

[189] Boris Uspenskii, "Semiotika ikony," in *Semiotika Iskusstva* (Moscow: Shkola "Iazyki Russkoi Kul'tury," 1995), 285.

[190] Ibid., 87.

[191] Ibid.

that the camera was making in the animated film on the way to abstracting the icon hills to geometric forms only performed through the medium of painting.

The musical score of the market scene incorporates the sound of church bells announcing the beginning of the service that is characteristic of Sunday services—a feature that is also consonant with icons as a part of the church interior, as well as Lentulov's work and his emphasis on the Eastern Orthodox churches in his paintings. In the context of the film, however, the bells become an indication of Sunday as a market day, which is supported by the following scene.

The opening of the market scene consists of seven animated portraits of merchants selling goods at the market place. A remarkable feature of these images is that most of them follow the style of portraits characteristic of such Russian modernist artists such as Kuz'ma Petrov-Vodkin, Boris Kustodiev,[192] and the abovementioned Lentulov. The basic organization of these portraits is characterized by an enlarged and flattened human (male) figure, sometimes with slightly cropped top, that dominates the frame. In the background, there are various elements of the environment, such as, for instance, architectural structures, that are disproportionally smaller comparing to the figure. A play with the three colors of the flag of the Russian Empire and the dominance of the red color in the market scene also links these animated portraits to the modernist style of Russian portraits.

What unites these portraits stylistically,[193] is the emphasis on the whole human figure that dominates the frame—the figure not only becomes the main focus of the frame, but it also occupies the largest amount of space. A technologically specific argument can be made in

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[192] See, for instance, Boris Kustodiev. *Bol'shevik* (1920).
[193] *The Humpbacked Horse*, fabric seller, market scene. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=711

support of the choice of this particular portrait style for the animated film: a portrait that focuses on the whole figure has advantages for animating—it allows for creation of movement and bringing the portrait to live. Yet, the movement is already is a part of the modernist portrait—it is the potentiality of movement that is especially characteristic of figure construction in Russian avant-garde which was not only highly influenced by photography on the plane of technology, but also concerned itself with rendering the idea of social mobility and movement.

4.2.3   Catching the Fire-bird

The scene of catching the Fire-bird is considerably changed from Ershov's version of the fairy-tale: if in Ershov's tale Ivan simply catches one of the Fire-birds that gather around his bait,[194] in the animated film, the catching takes place in three moves, and the scene is complicated by a series of dances performed by Ivan and Fire-birds.

In the animated film, the scene of catching the Fire-bird is transformed into a spectacle of movement, light and color. The mise-en-scene is created as a theater stage with sets depicting exotic trees and flowers. When approaching the scene where the capture of the Fire-bird takes place, Ivan rides down a vegetation-covered hill reminiscent of the designs of Persian rugs,[195] which marks the scene as taking place in a far-away, exotic, dream-like space. Ivan prepares the

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[194] Here's Ershov's description of the scene: "Suddenly, at dead of night, / All the hill-side blazed with light, / And it seemed as though 'twere day—/ "Twas a flock of Fire-Birds—they / Swooped upon the wine-soaked wheat, / Screamed and hopped on drunken feet. / While Ivan, from them well hidden, / In his trough, as he was bidden, / Gazed on them in wonder and, / Waving wildly with his hand, / Murmured: "Oh good gracious me! / What strange creatures do I see! / Now, if I could catch them all, / It would make a lovely haul! / Quit a half a hundred there! / They are beauties, I declare!/Feet all red, upon my word! / But their tails—they're just absurd!/ Surely chickens never had/ Tails like that, Ivan my lad./ Then again—this blinding light! / Father's stove is not so bright!/ Our Ivan his long speech ended / And his heavy trough up-ended, / Grunting softly from the strain; / Crawled until he reached the grain. / Then the nearest bird he seized […]." P.Yershov, *The Little Humpbacked Horse,* trans. Louis Zellikof (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960): 49-50.
[195] *The Humpbacked Horse.* Ivan's trip for a Fire-bird. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=4918

bait—corn mixed with wine—when the light is still natural and the scene is colored in blue and gray colors. Soon the sun disappears, the space becomes dark for a moment, and then Fire-birds appear turning the scene into almost an abstract play of a red background, shadows of exotic vegetation, sparkles, and shapes of light.[196] The Fire-birds in the film, similarly to Bilibin's illustrations, have peacock-styled glowing tails with ornaments, which becomes an important detail in the development of the scene. Ivan does not catch a fire bird at once, as it happens in Ershov's tale. After witnessing a mating dance of two fire birds,[197] he manages to snatch three feathers from the tail of one of them, and by sticking them to his coat imitating a tail, and performing a dance, he deceives the remaining drunken Fire-bird who takes him for one of his own. They perform a dance together,[198] at the end of which, Ivan catches it.

The scene of the dance performs several functions in the animated film. On the one hand, it creates a spectacle of light and color that brings the visual image of the scene close to an abstraction. The scene of the dance, though being logically incorporated into the plot, does not have much of a narrative value—it neither develops the plot nor the characters. Instead, it becomes a locus for demonstrating the potentialities of animation which in this scene are not limited to figurative movement, but incorporate the movement of light and color.

Siegfried Kracauer considered dance to be one of the most essentially cinematic movements.[199] Writing about the changes in the meaning of dance that occurred during modernity, Kracauer points out that "[i]f in the earliest eras dance was a cult practice, today it

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[196] *The Humpbacked Horse*. Arrival of Fire-birds. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=4958
[197] *The Humpbacked Horse*. Fire-birds' dance. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=4997
[198] *The Humpbacked Horse*. Ivan's dance with a Fire-bird. https://youtu.be/T3-y9ssdt2o?t=5073
[199] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997): 42.

has become a cult of movement; if rhythm used to be a manifestation of eros and spirit, today it is a self-referential phenomenon that wants to rid itself of meaning."[200]

Ranciere's analysis of Loie Fuller's serpentine dance that became a popular attraction in the last decade of the nineteenth century and, not accidentally, became the content of one of the earliest films by the Lumiere brothers, also points to the transformation in dance that were initiated in Fuller's performance and were taken on by Isadora Duncan ultimately leading to development of modern dance. One of the most important differences that characterized this dance was its break from the narrative—the dance consisted of narratively disjoined representations of natural objects, such as flowers and butterflies, etc. As Ranciere puts it, "[o]n a deeper level, she [Fuller] signalled a break [with more traditional types of dances] by dismissing stories and sets, by fragmenting the dancing body, redistributing its forces and making it engender forms outside of itself. She thus participated in the rupture through which the new art of dance dismisses the representative art of ballet, which subordinated the force of the body to the illustration of stories."[201] Moreover, by imitating natural objects, Fuller's dance did not create their representation. Rather, through mimesis of the natural forms via the medium of dance, it created a new type and form of movement that involved color and light, a combination of visual effects that produced a new type of a spectacle. As Ranciere, following Mallarme, states, this new type of a spectacle was the representation of the idea on stage.[202] He writes,

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[200] Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, ed. and trans.Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1995) 66. Such considerations of rhythm are consonant with Hans Richter's attempts to find the fundamental characteristics of film. Being interested in the fundamental form of an artistic expression, Richter ascertains that if an abstracted object reveals a pure form (in the basis of the leaf, for instance, there is an oval), abstraction of a film leads to revealing the "orchestration of time" or rhythm. In Richter's words, "Time, the fast the slow, the backwards the forwards—in space—al the articulation which you read in music—that was what really seemed the elementary problem." Hans Richter. *Hans Richter* (New York, Holt: Rinehart and Winston, 1971): 131.
[201] Jacques Ranciere. *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (London: Verso Books, 2013): 104.
[202] Ibid., 102.

"what the art of the serpentine dance illustrates, for Mallarme, is no longer a deviation in relation to a fictional norm, it is a new idea of fiction: this substitutes the plot with the construction of a play of aspects, elementary forms that offer an analogy to the play of the world. The lily or the butterfly have little importance in fact: the lily does not represent any flower, but presents the elementary form of the chalice through which everything is given in an apparition that is also an elevation towards the sole divinity of light; and the butterfly stands for the relation between fluttering and iridescence."[203] Fuller created a pure form rather than a representation of imagery, her dance was an abstraction and represented movement, the idea of dance.

The characteristics of Fuller's dance that Ranciere points out in his analysis are consonant with the dance of Fire-birds. Due to the shape of Fire Birds, due to their disproportional figures, and due to the color scheme of the scene, the elegant moves of their thin legs performing ballet pas are overpowered by the brightness and prominence of their tails: it is the fuzzy line of the tails, their ornament, and their movement that create the fantastical dance.

However, in the film, the dance is more than a spectacle of light and color. The whole dance has a tripartite structure. It starts with a dance of two fire birds witnessed by Ivan. After Ivan snatches three feathers, he performs a traditional folk dance by himself, being watched by an intoxicated fire bird. The third part of the dance: a dance of fire bird and Ivan finishes with Ivan's capturing the Fire-bird. The Fire-birds dance as a ballet pair—their movements create a harmonious composition in which both dancers perform simultaneous synchronized moves; their tales create a variety of patterns and interrelated moves. Ivan's dance is a stylized representation of a traditional Russian folk dance. He performs dance squatting, fast arm and leg moves that are characteristic of traditional Russian dance. The paradox here is that by imitating the Fire-bird

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[203] Ibid., 100.

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using the Fire-bird's feathers and intending to pass for a Fire-bird, Ivan does not imitate the Fire-bird's dance. Ivan's dance is a representation of a traditional folk dance which was often performed as a competition between dancers—the dancers were supposed to imitate each other's moves and demonstrate their ability to repeat them. The dancer who was able to perform the most complex sequence of moves would win the competition. The intoxicated Fire-bird follows the rules of the dance competition—it attempts to perform Ivan's moves, but because of its build, the dance looks like a hectic mess—the moves are too fast for it, the wings cannot imitate arms, and the thin legs are not strong enough for performing dance squatting. The Fire-bird is defeated twice: first in the dance competition, and second, when being absorbed in the dance it is captured by Ivan.

The dance scene creates a complex relationship of mimesis—using fire bird feathers, Ivan imitates, rather poorly, the appearance of Fire-birds, but performs a traditional Russian folk dance that could be considered representative of his background, whereas the Fire-bird, preserving its appearance, attempts to imitate Ivan, and thus imitates the traditional Russian dance. In other words, in the competition of imitation, nature represented by the Fire-bird fails to perform a mimetic act, whereas Ivan, a human and a representative of a traditional culture succeeds in winning over nature despite poor imitation. Gaining power over nature through mimesis is one of the practices discussed by Michael Taussig[204]—in this sense mimesis is interpreted as a magical practice of gaining power over nature. By coming into contact with nature, i.e., by using a Fire-bird's feathers, Ivan is capable of gaining his power over Fire-birds: he draws the other Fire-bird into the dance, and makes it perform his dance, which is for Fire-

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[204] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Sense*s (New York: Routledge, 1993). For discussion of relationship between the magic and mimesis, see, in particular, Chapter 4, "The Golden Bough: The Magic of Mimesis."

bird is the dance of the other. Yet, Ivan's success and defeat of the Fire-bird would not have been possible without Fire-bird's intoxication: Fire-bird falls for the competition only because it is incapable of recognizing Ivan as the other, as a human, it competes with him as if he were a Fire-bird.[205]

There is another level of mimesis in the dance scene: imitation of ballet choreography that the scene itself creates, which is reminiscent of the ballet *The Little Humpbacked Horse.* The scene of fire birds' dance is absent from the *Little Humpbacked Horse* ballet by Pugni,[206]

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[205] This dance can be interpreted as a social commentary on colonialism and the relationship of the titular nation in the Soviet Union with the other ethnicities in the Soviet Union, however, this topic considerably exceeds the frames of this project.

[206] St-Leon's libretto was considerably different in terms of the plot development from Ershov's tale. Among those differences was an earlier introduction of Tsar-Maiden. In Ershov's tale Tsar Maiden does not play a significant role in the narrative and does not appear frequently. She is introduced only in the second part of the poem, when Ivan captures her and brings to Tsar's palace, and then, once Ivan is off to fulfill her wishes, she is absent from the plot again till Ivan returns back from his last trip. Since the ballet was planned as a benefit performance of one of the leading ballet dancers at the time, Marfa Muravieva, the plot was changed so that it would allow an earlier appearance and more significant presence of the leading ballet dancer. Cf. Roland John Wiley. *A Century of Russian Ballet: Documents and Accounts, 1810-1910* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1999), 238-77. In the literary script by Rozhkov and Pomeschikov, the Tsar Maiden is also a more prominent character who does not only appear earlier in the plot, but also herself goes through a transformation as a part of the plot development, changing the moral of the tale. Here is what Rozhkov and Pomeschikov write about the role of Tsar Maiden in the animated version of the fairy-tale.

"Introduction of Tsar Maiden into [Ershov's] fairy-tale is especially poor. Despite the denouement being structured as the end of a particular line of relationships between Ivan and Tsar Maiden, these relationships are absent from the first part of the fairy-tale, because the Maiden is absent from it, too. Developing the plot, it is impossible to do without the introduction of Tsar Maiden somewhat earlier than it was done by Ershov [..] How can we do it? Tsar maiden is not a character created by Ershov. It is a character from *lubok* fairy-tales, such as *Bova the Prince* or *Ruslan Lazorevich.*" *Stories about the Glorious Eruslan Lazorevich* and *Tales about Glorious Bova the Prince* were among the most popular *lubok* publications that were reprinted in Moscow in the first half of nineteenth century eleven and eight times, respectively. See R.N. Kleimenova, *Knizhnaia Moskva* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 51. Rozhkov and Pomeschikov continue: "It was she that was drawn by artists as a model and ideal of female beauty in cheap books popular with people. Such books were everywhere. It could be in Ivan the Fool's house who lived not far from the 'capital city.' In the first episode Ivan is reading the book as some kind of a revelation and evidence that somewhere else there is a different world where everything is beautiful, and there lives a beautiful maiden. What does she look like? How does Ivan see her? Being a poet and a dreamer (and, naturally, not a fool at all) he, through the popular art beauty that is depicted on the cover of Tsar Maiden sees a different beauty, a different girl, maybe like in [Alexei] Venetsianov['s paintings]. In the first episode he loses this beautiful and fantastic world only as a book. The wind raised by a running horse picks it up and tears into pieces. However, the image of a 'glittering world' and a dream about it sticks with Ivan and this will be the thematic force that will be moving Ivan along the tricky ways of Ershov's tale. […] Having started working at Tsar's palace, he will miss it, lighting with Fire Bird's feather the same book cover, the only thing that got left from the book. He leaves to get a Fire-bird hoping to find a trace of the 'glittering world,' and will finally hear about it in the kitchen where the servants are reading the same book, *Tsar Maiden*. And finally his dream comes true. He is on his way to find Tsar Maiden. They meet. But his dream is crushed. Tsar Maiden is the same as on the book cover, but she is very thin: "[…] She is not the least bit

together with the character of the Fire-bird itself. The ballet performance *The Little Humpbacked Horse* was the first in the history of Russian ballet that used folk dance, which provoked a lot of criticism for mixing the higher art of ballet with the lower art of folk dance. In the scene of the dance, however, the two dances are literally superimposed in the eyes of the intoxicated Fire-bird who when watching Ivan's dance sees instead a compound image of two dances—the ballet dance of the Fire Bird, and the folk dance of Ivan, the dance of light created by Fire-birds' tails, and the dance of movement created by Ivan's body. Or, in other words, through the superimposition, Ivan's body becomes the site of meeting of the traditional, material, folk,

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pretty—/ Pale and skinny, more's the pity; / And her chicken legs, so thin! / Why—it really is a sin! / Let who wills, take her to wife—/ I would not, to save my life." [Translation of the verses is by Louis Zellikof, 62.] Ivan loses his dream for the second time. This is a disaster. […] The fate pushes him into the boiling kettle. Ivan becomes handsome, and here a miracle happens. Having fallen in love with him, Tsar Maiden turns into the one that was in the 'glittering world,' a Russian girl from Venetsianov's paintings" (RGALI, Fund 2469, Inventory 1, Item 291). There are two points from this account that are important for further consideration but are considerably outside of the focus of this work, and cannot be elaborated further. First, in the script of the animated film, as well as in the ballet, but for a different reason, Tsar Maiden occupies a much more prominent position, even more prominent than in Ershov's fairy-tale. On the contrary, the role of Tsar Maiden in the actual animated film is minimized even comparing to her role in the original fairy-tale. Tsar Maiden does not have any agency of her own, she occupies the same position as an object of Tsar's desire, and becomes a trophy that Ivan gains when he becomes Tsar. Her narrative status is similar to the one of the Fire-bird—an exotic object that is "fetched" by Ivan for Tsar, and that, because of its rarity, can belong to only those who are in the position of power. If in Ershov's fairy-tale, Tsar Maiden's royal background, her kinship to the Sun and the Moon is what defines her, together with her beauty. In the film, it is only the appearances that remain as a reason for Tsar's attraction to her. Thus, if in Ershov's fairy-tale, it is Tsar Maiden who becomes Tsarina after Tsar's death, and Ivan becomes Tsar only by marrying her, in the film, Ivan becomes Tsar himself despite having no royal blood. By eliminating such kinship lineage, the film radicalizes the idea of social mobility comparing to its rendering in the fairy-tale, but simultaneously it deprives the only female character of her agency and of her influence on the plot development.

The second point worth noting is the transformation of Tsar Maiden in the film script which is absent from both Ershov's tale and the film. Traditionally, transformation as a result of the events taking place in a fairy-tale is possible only for main characters. The fact that in the script Tsar Maiden changes her appearance unambiguously marks her as central for the plot development. Additionally, the quality of transformation is important, too. She transforms from an exotic, foreign character of a higher social status—from Tsar Maiden—into a girl from paintings by Venetsianov's, a Russian artist who made his name by depicting Russian ordinary people, especially peasant women. Thus, it is she who abandons her social status, not Ivan. It is not accidental that in the script, the couple leaves the city rather than goes into it as new rulers. The parallels that can be drawn here with such animated films as *Shrek* (2001) are rather obvious—as well as in *Shrek,* the female character of a royal origin abandons her social status and does this by acquiring the appearance of her male partner. However, if in *Shrek* the idea of a revolutionary abandonment of the characters' priority for upward social movement is motivated by romantic intentions and results in achieving matrimonial goals, in the script of *The Humpbacked Horse*, love is only a prerequisite for the change, but its goal is achievement of a better future. As Rozhkov and Pomeschikov put it, "[…] of course, the world of the merchant's city is too small for this couple. Ivan and Tsar Maiden leave it. They leave in order to find a 'glittering world.'" Thus, in the script, Ivan and Tsar Maiden are united by the common desire for a better world, and are leaving their comfortable social situations in order to fulfill it.

ethnic, and the new, fantastical, transforming, and electric. Ranciere finds such double meaning of the dancing body in the concept of "figure." As he puts it, "This is what the word 'figure' sums up: the figure is two things in one. It is the literal, material presence of a body, and it is the poetic operation of metaphoric condensation and metonymic displacement: the body outside itself condensing the late evening, the body in movement writing the latent poem of the dreamer 'without the apparatus of a scribe'."[207] Such doubling of the dancer's body is the basis for production of the idea which Ranciere connects with creation of fiction. "The active conjunction of two forms, literal and metaphoric, in the 'figure' thus produces a new idea: the figure is the act that institutes a place, a singular theatre of operations. What is produced in this theatre is called 'fiction'."[208] For Ranciere, fiction does not mean detachment from reality, but a new way of considering the reality which is based on the idea and thus construction of an image rather than its imitation. Ivan's dancing body, by locating and combining two opposing images, becomes the site of a utopian power, a representation of a creative coexistence of the old and the new, of the traditional and the progressive.

However, if the dance of Fire-birds had a connection to Fuller's dance, most possible, this connection was not direct, but rather already mediated by the medium of animation: the flashes of moving light created by Fire-birds' feathers are reminiscent of the flashes of light created by Mickey, the Sorcerer's Apprentice, in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (1940). The electric light that fills the sky in *Fantasia*, bringing together the spectacle of the natural and artificial that manifests itself in an animated movement of light ("meeting of the fantastic and electricity,"[209] as Ranciere puts it describing Fuller's dance), moves down to the ground in *The Humpbacked*

[207] Ibid., 99.
[208] Ibid., 99.
[209] Ibid., 107.

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Horse, and becomes not only the essence of the spectacle but also a utilitarian technology of electricity. On the one hand, this scene can be read as such that demonstrates Disney's influence on Soviet animation. Yet, the complexity of the scene, the use of a variety of visual sources and contexts, the connection and contamination of the new electric art of animation and the old, traditional art of folk dance, prevents from such a simplistic reading. The medium of animation, being created as a complex creative intertwining of a variety of other media inevitably superimposes them. Similarly to Fuller's dance which, by imitating objects of the nature, does not create their copies but rather creates an idea of line and movement, *The Humpbacked Horse* by referencing Disney's animation explores the potentiality of animation and demonstrates a wide spectrum of its possibilities.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the changes in aesthetics in Soviet animation that occurred during the 1930-1940s. The main causes of these changes included the official adoption of socialist realism as a method and aesthetics, the change in the technological process of animation production, and the political changes discussed in Chapter 2. Since there were no aesthetic models or standards that animation could follow, it had to find its own aesthetic form. The change in animation technology that happened concomitantly with the artistic changes was the adaptation of the Disney/Fleischers' technological and production method, which initially prompted the use of imagery inspired by Disney and the Fleischers. This tendency was especially prominent in the films produced by the so-called Smirnov's animation studio—the experimental studio headed by Victor Smirnov—which for the first time in the Soviet Union used the celluloid technique and

the industrial (conveyer) method of animation production. However, with the founding of the animation studio Soiuzmul'tfil'm, even though the studio animators and trainees were studying animation production using Disney's films, and even though the studio was constantly in a state of imaginary competition with Disney, new aesthetic directions became more dominant. These aesthetic directions developed in active discussions among animators, script-writers, and Soviet governmental officials, which created a vibrant discourse about animation.

A considerable part of this discourse on animation aesthetics was connected with questions concerning animated characters. After several unsuccessful attempts to produce a serial character, animators stopped pursuing production of serial animation and focused on exploring the genre of the fairy-tale. The shift towards fairy-tales raised a new issue in Soviet animation—the issue of a positive character. Due to its medium specificity, animation allowed for creating generalized and grotesque imagery, and because of Disney's influence, animation was endowed with a task to create anthropomorphized animal characters. Neither of those images weas considered appropriate for representation of positive Soviet characters.

The rise of Soviet nationalism instigated production of animated Russian fairy-tales that also called for human characters. It also created a new aesthetic approach to animation—animators increasingly started appropriating different Russian art forms, including *lubok*, Russian traditional architecture, book illustrations, and others, for animation imagery.

For a case study, the Chapter analyses the first feature-length Soviet animated film *Humpbacked Horse* [*Koniok-Gorbunok*] (1947, dir. Ivan Ivanov-Vano). The Chapter follows the history of its production and does a close reading of its imagery. It demonstrates how the visual text of the animated film is rooted in intermediality. Being based on the eponymous fairy-tale in verse by Petr Ershov, it also alludes to the ballet based on the same fairy-tale, as well as various

traditional Russian imagery. The analysis also shows how *Konyok-Gorbunok* uses not only traditional Russian imagery, but also modernist Russian and Soviet art that by the time of the film production was deemed formalist and was expelled from the Soviet artistic cannon, as well as such artistic form as dance, and its early cinematographic recording. Moreover, in some parts of the film the animated imagery tilts towards abstraction, which explores the horizons of animation as a medium, and broadens the boundaries of socialist realism as an artistic method. Thus, the Chapter unearths the complexity and intermediality of Soviet animated imagery and comes to a conclusion that though Soviet animation imagery of the 1930-1940s was inspired by the Disney and the Fleischers' animation, Soviet animators created original and unique animated texts deeply rooted in traditional and modernist art.

5.0 THE AESTHETICS OF NAZI ANIMATION: A POLITICAL ENTERPRISE

"The arts are for the National Socialist State a public exercise; they are not only aesthetic but also moral in nature and the public interest demands not only police supervision but also guidance."[1]

"The people are hungry for art and culture, for joy and success."[2]

In June 1933, Hitler issued a Decree for the *Gleichschaltung*—the coordination of all activities in the Third Reich—that was to be performed by the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda led by Joseph Goebbels. The Ministry was "responsible for all tasks of mental [*geistigen*] influence on the nation,"[3] and the Decree appointed it to supervise and control all state matters, including media, culture, arts, economics, legislation, education, and all "the remaining national matters."[4] This document gave legal grounds for the specific situation characteristic of Nazi society—every aspect of its life was considered to be political. Thus any

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[1] From the Theater Law of 15 May 1934, cited in David Welch, "Nazi Film Policy: Control, Ideology, and Propaganda," in *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, ed. Glen R. Cuomo (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995) 96.
[2] From Goebbel's speech summarized in "Zum Gründungstag von KdF: Dr. Goebbels dankte den Männern der Wochenschau," *Film-Kurier* 278 (28 November 1939).
[3] Cited in Hildergard Brenner, "Die Kunst im Politischen Machtkampf der Jahre 1933/34," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 10:1 (January 1962): 17.
[4] "Hitler's Decree for the *Gleichschaltung* (Coordination) of All Activities in the Third Reich, 30 June, 1933," in *Hitler's Third Reich: A Documentary History*, ed. Louis L. Snyder (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 129-130.

cultural production in Nazi Germany, including that of cinema and animation, was intrinsically political, and was perceived as such by the Nazi government.

The political dimension of all German social activities became the basis on which they were coordinated. Such an organization of the social was not unique to Nazi Germany—in particular, the political was of primary importance for the Soviet Union, as well. However, what was unique for Nazi Germany was the role that the aesthetic played in the social political organization—according to many authors, Nazi politics were rooted in an aesthetic foundation, and the political battle of National Socialism for its ideals manifested itself in aesthetic notions and aesthetic phenomena. If the political was the ground of organization for all spheres of the country's life, art provided the main principles—the aesthetic ones—according to which this organizing took place.

5.1   POLITICS OF NAZI AESTHETICS

5.1.1   Nazi Battle for Artistic Ideals

In an article in *Film-Kurier*, Alfred Rosenberg, one of the most important ideologists of the Third Reich, who was also an editor of the influential Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* as well as of a monthly magazine *Die Kunst im Dritten Reich* [Art in the Third Reich, starting from 1939--*Die Kunst im Deutschen Reich*], outlined the principles of Nazi art through naming its main antagonists and asserting its priorities. What is particularly important about this publication is the fact that Rosenberg writes about art as an integral part of the Nazi political agenda, or rather about art and politics functioning according to the same aesthetic principles. In his words,

From the very beginning, the National Socialist movement was in a political battle on two fronts. On the one hand, it had to exert all the forces to overcome Marxism and its fellow-travelers, but on the other hand, it had to fight against a world which was stuck in petrified traditions and could no longer produce any creative forces able to respond to the demands of our time with the necessities of the German people. This position, however, was not only a political necessity, it was characteristic of the disputes in all areas of life. Thus, in the area of arts, National Socialism stood in a clear defense against the entire Bolshevik art movement as the accompaniment of political Marxism, but it also had to be careful not to accept as binding outdated forms of mindless imitations of the past. …

For painting and sculpture, the ideals of beauty, which now constitute the idea of the German man, are once again brought to dominance. It is not the degenerate, the sick, and the tormented who will be at the center of the Nazi state, but the strong, the healthy, the whole, in whom creative will is paired with inner force and external, characteristic harmony. This aspect of beauty does not in any way exclude the variety of personal temperament; they will have a strong will to avoid any pettiness. The German feeling for nature, as has repeatedly been shown in the love of animals and landscapes, has in recent years been strongly marked: the National Socialist care for art will promote this development by all means; it is only an expression of the general German nature, which found its clearest manifestation of all times in the world-view of the biological racial legislation of the Third Reich.[5]

This citation is helpful for understanding the cultural processes that took place in Germany during Nazi times, as well as the central categories around which the discourse of Nazi German

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[5] "Linien neuer Kunstpolitik: Afred Rosenberg Herausgeber von 'Kunst im Dritten Reich,'" *Film-Kurier* 28 (3 February 1938).

aesthetics developed. The cultural processes were defined by the Nazi ideologue as a cultural war, both against the enemies who could potentially undermine the values of German culture and in support of Nazi ideas of creativity and progress. Rosenberg, not unlike other Nazi officials, saw enemies of the German culture everywhere—in different political ideologies, such as Marxism, as well as in economic systems different from Nazism, such as capitalism. If in his writing Rosenberg called only for a cultural war, such an adversarial cultural position provided a strong foundation for the actual war that was initiated by Germany a little bit more than a year after the publication of the article. But even at the time of publication, the war against everybody who was culturally different was already in full swing. It was seen by the Nazi Party officials as necessary for clearing space for German culture, for its unequivocal and steady establishment. At their heart, the cultural and actual wars had aesthetic principles—they were organized around the Nazi ideals of beauty and nature that were intrinsically connected with the conceptualization of the Germans and Germanness. The Nazi understanding of the connections between the beautiful and Germanness was twofold—on the one hand, the Germans were seen as possessing advanced abilities of sensuous perception, and thus as the only race that was capable of creating true culture; on the other hand, the Germans, as a nation, possessed specific characteristics of beauty—for the Nazis, the Aryans[6] were the epitome of the beautiful, the human aesthetic ideal.

Thus the Nazi political agenda was informed by and rooted in a struggle for aesthetic and cultural ideals. As Eric Michaud points out, the Nazi political agenda was a backlash against what they saw as a cultural crisis in Germany. He writes, "We should remember that in *Mein Kampf* Hitler insidiously linked 'the political collapse' with the 'cultural collapse' that preceded and prefigured it, and he perceived an equally close association between National Socialism's

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[6] On the Aryan race in the Nazi interpretation of the terms, see, for instance, Christopher M. Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich*, in particular chapter "The Myth of an Aryan Race" (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 80-100.

'years of struggle' and the rebirth of an authentically German art."[7] The ideas about culture and art that Hitler developed in *Mein Kampf* apparently stayed with him throughout his political career. Thus, in his speech at the opening of the House of Art in Munich, Hitler aligned the economic decline that Germany saw after World War I with its political and cultural denigration, and called for a renaissance of the German culture and arts.[8]

For Nazi Germany, and personally for Hitler, culture and art were not just a part of the social and political situation or an outcome of the economic situation, but rather, as Frederic Spotts maintains, both "the end to which power should aspire" and "a means of achieving and keeping it [power]."[9] Hitler saw the war as a temporary situation that was supposed to come to a swift end, and then a true creative process would follow. Writing about Hitler's relationship with architecture, Spotts points out that "Once he [Hitler] had won his war and established an Aryan state that was a dominant world power, he intended to devote himself to creation of cultural monuments that would change the face of Germany and immortalize himself. Destruction was to be the way to construction."[10] Thus, for Hitler, the war was a temporary but necessary state of affairs that would prepare the conditions for creating a new nation united by the new cultural and aesthetic ideals. In other words, construction of the new German nation-state was a dialectical process which involved both destruction and construction, or construction through destruction.

For Nazi cultural and aesthetic politics, such a dialectic of destruction and creation meant purification, which presupposed two integral processes: purification of the artists' cadres from non-Aryan elements, since only Aryan artists could be custodians of culture and thus were

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[7] Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004) 13.
[8] See, for instance, George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Life in the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 11-13. What is of a particular interest in Hitler's conception of culture and arts is that he uses them interchangeably, thus not differentiating between the two phenomena.
[9] Frederic Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press), xii.
[10] Ibid.

legally allowed to create Aryan art, and purification of the art itself from any foreign or cosmopolitan, which in Nazi lingo often meant Jewish, elements that would distort the German ideals of beauty.[11]

As for the purification of the artists' cadres, considering that arts were entrusted with both "legitimation as well as […] the maintenance of public morale,"[12] the figure of the artist was of particular importance for the Nazi regime.[13] All artists were considered to directly serve the Fuehrer, and all their artistic work, regardless of the types of art, the personal stance of the artist, or their intention, was deemed political. In the words of Hans Hinkel, the General Secretary of the Reich Chamber of Culture (Reichskulturkammer, RKK), "Exactly like the German worker and the German farmer, the German artist has also proven himself to be Adolf Hitler's artist during these decisive years. He has become political, perhaps in the majority of cases without being conscious of it. Mere participation in the cultural life of the nation… constituted a positive political act, regardless of the subjective motivation behind the activity of the artist."[14]

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[11] On purges of non-Aryan artists see, for instance, Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology and Economics*, in *Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially 103-120.

[12] Alan E. Steinweis, "The Professional, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Nazi Cultural Policy: The Case of the Reich Theater Chamber," in *German Studies Review* 13.31 (October 1990): 441.

[13] It is interesting to compare the Soviet requirements for the artists under Socialist Realism and the ones articulated by the Nazis. See, for instance, Goebbels's speech published as a part of an article in *Licht Bild Bühne* ("Staat, Volk und Künstler: Goebbels grosse Rede in Danzig Festkundgebund im Staatstheater," *Licht Bild Bühne* 148 [27 June 1938]), in which he outlines the criteria for the proper cultural production that were very similar to those of the Soviet Union. "Four tasks were laid out when we assumed responsibility for the cultural reconstruction. Firstly, we had to unite the German cultural workers in a tightly-knit organization in order to use them in a united and disciplined way for the good of the people and the state. Secondly, we had to establish in German culture the inner connection with the new values and contents of German politics and to fill it with the profound ideological clarity of the National Socialism. Thirdly, we had to delineate precisely and clearly the role that the State should play in this: by itself, the State could neither create art, nor restrict its spiritual growth and development, the State is only the arts' generous and benevolent patron, promoter and sponsor; and, fourthly, and lastly, we politicians had to give that heated and passionate impulse to artistic creation which has always been at the beginning of the major periods of cultural achievements, initiating and driving cultural development by indicating the direction and the goal."

[14] Alan E. Steinweis, "The Professional, Social, and Economic Dimensions of Nazi Cultural Policy: The Case of the Reich Theater Chamber," ibid.

In the 1930s-1940s, the high social status of artists was not unique for Nazi Germany. As Eric Michaud maintains, "if in the course of the first half of the twentieth century the artist was deemed worthy to exercise the power of a head of state, it was because progressively and over a long period he had been invested with the role of guardian and guarantor of a national memory that the nineteenth century had elevated to the rank of a sovereign and divine power."[15] Yet, in Nazi Germany, the artist's position was of special significance because of Hitler's personal artistic aspirations and because he considered his role as a statesperson to be equal to that of a demiurge. Already in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler fully identified the political with the aesthetic, equating the role of the politician with that of the artist: "I am convinced that the work of great statesmen and military leaders always lies in the field of art."[16] Similarly to artists, statesmen and military leaders have the means to create new worlds though reconfiguring countries' borders and introducing new laws that change societies, as well as through warfare that dramatically changes every aspect of the social life. Thus, the land and the society of a country become the canvas on which statesmen and military leaders produce new artistic designs. For Hitler, who was an aspiring but failed artist who was not officially accepted into the artistic society—he failed his entrance examinations to Vienna Academy of Fine Arts twice—the role of both a statesman and a military leader provided another chance to fulfil his artistic ambitions.

Many scholars have written on Hitler's self-identification as an artist in a form of a politician. For instance, Sartwell, connecting Hitler's artistic and military ambitions, pointed out that "It [Hitler's statement from *Mein Kampf* cited above] identifies the work of the politician or the general as the work of an artist, and the destruction implicit in the inclusion of military leadership is represented as a form of creation, a theme we might term Nietzschean. And it

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[15] Michaud, *The Cult of Art,* 12.
[16] Quoted in Spotts, p. 28

suggests that leadership brings with it aesthetic obligations: the true statesman remakes the culture by remaking the arts."[17] This statement is in accord with Spott's reading of Hitler's political activities as essentially aesthetic and cultural. He writes, "since he [Hitler] further believed that the ultimate worth of a society and an era was to be judged by its cultural achievements in the arts, his mission was plain. By his accomplishment in the arts, he believed, would history judge him. Such was the lesson of the ancient world."[18] Thus, to be an artist in Nazi Germany meant to be close to the highest hierarchical level of the Nazi state, to Hitler himself, in aspirations and activities, provided, of course, that these aspirations and activities corresponded to the ideology of the Party.

The idea of the purification of artistic cadres had a biological premise, which on a larger scale also formed the foundation for racial cleansing. As Sartwell maintains, "Hitler dealt with the bureaucratic structure, or with military planning, or with genocide, from the point of view of an aesthetic sensibility and for the sake of an aesthetic effect. What Hitler hated about the Jews, above all, was their supposed influence on German culture and the German arts: as much as any crime, he held them responsible for modernism, and specifically expressionism."[19] Thus as Sartwell contends, Nazi racial politics had first and foremost an aesthetic origin—through racial cleansing, the Nazis, led by the Führer who assumed the role of the demiurge, were creating an ideal German nation, the Volk.

The latter aspect of purification, purification of art, can be illustrated by Hitler's own words at the opening of the annual German Art Exhibition in July 1937, which was held simultaneously with and across the street from the infamous Degenerate Art Exhibition. The

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[17] Crispin Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2010), 23.
[18] Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 28.
[19] Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics*, 17.

purpose of the annual German Art Exhibition was to demonstrate the artistic achievements of the Third Reich, and to contrast them with the anathemized Modernists brought together in the Degenerate Art Exhibition. As Hitler stated, "When people pass through these galleries, they will recognize in me their own spokesman and counselor. They will draw a sigh of relief and express their joyous agreement with this purification of art."[20] Apparently, Hitler did not have any doubts as to what kind of art the visitors would prefer—for him, pure German art was at an undisputable advantage in comparison to cosmopolitan, and thus polluted, modernism.

The emphasis that Hitler put on people and their perception of the exhibition is not accidental—the people, or the Volk, was always the focal point for Nazi culture. As Hitler maintained elsewhere, "The people in the flux of the phenomena is the one constant point. It is that which is abiding and permanent, and therefore art as the expression of the essential character of the abiding people must be an eternal monument, itself abiding and permanent; there can be therefore no standard of yesterday and today, of modern and unmodern: there can be only the standard of 'valueless' or 'valuable,' of 'eternal' or 'transitory.' … And therefore in speaking of German art I shall see the standard for that art in the German people, in its character and life, in its feelings, its emotions, and its development."[21] As this quotation from Hitler's speech demonstrates, the imaginary community of the German Volk, being conceived in essentialist racial terms, simultaneously becomes the source of inspiration for German culture and art, as well as the main audience for its consumption. If in the search for German Volk origins, German artists turned to Romanticism, in order to cater to the public's tastes, they had to create culture and art that was popular. As a result, Nazi culture and art was for the people and about the

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[20] Cited in Spotts, *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics*, 169.
[21] George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Life in the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 12.

people. As Sartwell points out, "The art of the Third Reich was of necessity a popular art, both for its propagandistic function and in its origin in nationalism, a (reified) "art of the people."[22] Contrary to rootless, and thus, according to Nazis, empty modernist art, Nazi policies emphasized the type of art that had a profound relationship to the people's past and that was meaningful to the people through their sharing of the past. This longing for a shared past is conceptually important, considering that Germany as a country did not have a historically and politically shared past. Thus the concept of "people's art" had to be elastic and fluid enough to create an entity that would be meaningful for the German people at large, which called for the necessity to find a common ground for the popular arts that could be shared by all Germans and to invent a people's spirit that would unite all Germans. As Goebbels formulated the essential qualities of the true people's art, "Art is not supposed to be just good, it must also appear in correspondence to the conditions of the people; or, rather, only an art that stems from people's spirit [Volkstrum], can in the end be good and mean something to the people for whom it is created. Art in the absolute sense, as liberal democracy knows it, must not exist. An attempt to create such art would ultimately lead to the fact that the people no longer have an inner relation to art, and that the artist would isolate and close himself in an airless space of the *l'art pour l'art*, away from the driving forces of the time. Art must be good, and it must also be responsible, skillful, close to the people, and combative."[23]

The critique of art for art's sake was not unique to the Nazis. What is particularly interesting about Hitler's position, however, is that he rhetorically equates "art for art's sake" with any kind of non-realist (modernist) art, and on the basis of this conflation, he ascribes to any non-realist art qualities of "art for art's sake"—detachment from the social and closedness on

[22] Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics*, 21.
[23] "Dr. Goebbels über Kunst," *Film-Kurier* 180 (5 August 1939).

itself. However, such rhetoric does not only criticize art for not tending to the needs of a society, but also disregards any social needs that are not directly connected to the ideas of the Volk, i.e. are not rooted in the interests of a specific nation which for Hitler is, of course, was the Aryan nation. From this perspective, any art that addresses social and cultural issues other than the nationalistic ones would be considered art for art's sake.

In the search for art that would provide common cultural and aesthetic grounds, Nazi officials turned to the ideas of the purity of the artistic imagery. Analogously to how "to be German" meant "to be clear,"[24] only a clear and unambiguous image would be considered truly German. This quality of clearness bordered on transparency in the sense that it aimed to create such imagery as would present rather than represent reality. In this regard, the Greek arts, in particular, with their emphasis on an ideal and at the same time pure form provided a source for Nazi artistic and cultural inspirations.[25]

Among the contemporary media, in particular cinema, the closest to the pure imagery for which German culture strove was Hollywood classical cinema—through its natural-looking editing and realistic representations, Hollywood classical cinema managed to create an illusion of reality that, coupled with classic narratives, proved to be popular with the broadest audiences.

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[24] Mosse, *Nazi Culture*, 13.

[25] See, for instance, Speer's writings in his memoirs on attraction of Greek architecture, "Because of my fondness for the Doric, when I went on my first trip abroad in May 1935, I did not go to Italy to see the Renaissance palaces and the colossal buildings of Rome, although these might have served me better as prototypes for what I wanted. Instead, I turned to Greece— a sign of where I considered my architectural allegiance to lie. . . . In Delphi I thought I discerned how the purity of Greek artistic creativeness was speedily contaminated by the wealth won in the Ionian colonies in Asia. Didn't this prove how sensitive a high artistic consciousness was and how little it took to distort the ideal conception to the point of unrecognizability? I happily played with such theories; it never occurred to me that my own works might be subject to these same laws" (quoted in Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics*, 26).

Thus, one of the key arts of the Nazis—cinema—developed in Nazi Germany at the intersection of popular culture, national traditions, and classical forms.[26]

The tight interweaving of the German national, cultural, and aesthetic ideals, which resulted in the German romantic revival combined with the classicist style, was characteristic not only of cinema but of German arts in general—the combination of Romanticism and Classicism informed the general framework of German aesthetics during the Nazi period. As Sartwell puts it, "At its height I would emphasize two elements that were apparently in tension, but in the best Nazi art reconciled coherently: German romantic nationalism (which we should associate with the thought of Herder, the work of the Grimm brothers, and the music of Wagner, for example), and the neoclassicism from which romanticism emerged and to which it provided a response."[27] This aesthetic model was used in different media, including architecture, fine arts, and animation, and in each medium it had different meaning. If for cinema it meant classical style in the form of Hollywood cinema, in architecture, the classical component of this combination was informed by the classical architectural style.[28] For animation, as we shall see, such a combination meant borrowing the Disney aesthetic, or simple, easy-to-produce imagery, and using it for the plots imbedded either in German cultural heritage or in contexts that are seemingly universal, but actually deeply grounded in the contemporary German culture. What is particularly interesting about this modal is that, broadly speaking, it worked as a reversal of the Soviet formula "national in form, socialist in content"—the Nazi approach to aesthetics was

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[26] For a discussion about the relationship between the classical and popular in Nazi cinema, see Patrice Petro, "Nazi Cinema at the Intersection of the Classical and Popular," *New German Critique* 74 (Spring-Summer 1998), 41-55.
[27] Sartwell *Political Aesthetics*, 16.
[28] On an application of the term "classic" to Nazi cinema see, Patrice Petro, "Nazi Cinema at the Intersection of the Classical and Popular."

classical in form, and romantic (which in the Nazi interpretation of the concept was always nationalist) in content.

Nazis saw their aesthetic ideal not only as aesthetically appropriate but also as morally adequate. As Sartwell contends, "One way to formulate the effect of a Nazi romantic classicism is that it articulates German national culture— its language, its arts, and its 'Aryan' bodies— as the particular repository of universal values: an aesthetics of German world conquest."[29] Sartwell's formulation points to the moral grounds of Nazi aesthetics that eventually became the grounds for the racial "purification" or Holocaust, which worked on two levels: aesthetic and moral. On the aesthetic level, by getting rid of non-Aryan bodies, the German nation was approaching the Aryan ideal of beauty; on the moral level, since the nation was "contaminated" by non-Aryan elements, it had a moral obligation for and justification of such a purification.

However, though the Nazi cultural politics presupposed homogenization of culture, in actuality, Nazi culture and aesthetics were far from unified. Discussing Italian and German culture of the period, Sartwell outlines the eclectic tendencies characteristic of artistic practices in both countries: "First of all, the aesthetics of Italian fascism and German National Socialism was eclectic, encompassing everything from the avant-garde art of the Italian futurists to Speer's imperial, neoclassical architecture."[30]

Among the first scholars to point out the eclecticism of Nazi aesthetics was Barbara Miller Lane, whose focus of attention was German architecture during the Weimar Republic and the Nazi period. In her book *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945*, she writes, "despite the party's claim to have substituted for the new architecture a uniform new 'national socialist' style, the rivalries of these factions permitted almost every type of architecture to be

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[29] Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics*, 16.
[30] Ibid.

constructed, including buildings which closely resembled the work of the radical architects whom the Nazis had opposed. The regime did, for sure, establish the legal mechanisms with which to exert centralized control over architecture; but this control was far less effective than has usually been supposed. Behind a façade of intensive architectural propaganda, the new state permitted German architecture to develop in relative freedom, under the personal patronage of high party and government officials. Nazi architectural policy was not the product of a monolithic totalitarian system, but of feuds and power struggles. The Nazi building program reflected not a new totalitarian ideology, but a series of conflicting ideas which were themselves rooted in and conditioned by the architectural controversies of the Weimar period."[31] Thus Lane points out the lack of homogeneity in the field of architecture, and the diversity of styles and approaches that continued developing through the Nazi period that were a result of different personal interests.

5.1.2 Nazi Animation after Disney and the Fleischers

Animation production was also characterized by a high level of eclecticism. Though several influential animators left the country within several years after Hitler's ascent to power,[32] and despite condemnation of modernism and the avant-garde as degenerate art, individual artists continued to produce avant-garde animation. Thus, Hans Fischinger, Oskar Fischinger's younger brother, released his *Tanz der Farben*, a seven-minute abstract film featuring the movement of two colors—red and green—in 1937. The film ran in Hamburg Waterloo Theater for two weeks

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[31] Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 9.
[32] See Chapter 3.

in February-March 1939, and was well received by audiences and reviewers.[33] Herbert Seggelke's short *Strich-Punkt-Ballett* (*Dash-Point Ballet*, 1943) is another example of avant-garde animation produced in Germany during the Nazi period. It is a non-camera animation, in which the paint is applied directly onto the film strip—the technique later used by other famous animators/film directors, such as Norman McLaren and Stan Brakhage.[34]

Eclecticism and inconsistencies of priorities and tastes in animation were seen not only in single examples of marginal avant-garde animation, but also in the mainstream popular animation. Such was the case with American animation, whose popularity in Germany was instigated by Disney and his Mickey Mouse.

Mickey Mouse was not exactly an ideal Nazi character. Already in 1931, a Nazi journal, *The Dictatorship,* emphasized that a mouse can never become "an ideal animal type," calling Mickey Mouse a representative of "the vile and dirty vermin, which import bacteria into the animal kingdom" and a "dirty animal"; the journal called for "kicking him out."[35] However, that was not the common attitude towards Mickey Mouse. The same year, *Film-Kurier* called Mickey Mouse a "popular and well-known symbol of time" that "conquered the hearts of laughing humanity by storm."[36] This attitude towards Mickey Mouse did not change after the Nazis came to power. The popularity of Mickey Mouse points to the paradox of Nazi aesthetics—being far from a creature who corresponds to the classic ideals of beauty, and, as Esther Leslie contends, representing Aryan youth's antithesis,[37] Mickey Mouse was truly popular with various social

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[33] Giannalberto Bendazzi, "Germany in Nazi Times," in Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History, Volume 1: Foundations—The Golden Age* (Boca Raton, FL: Focal Press, 2016), 55, 152.

[34] Seggelke remains largely unknown, see his short biography in Giesen, Storm, *Animation*, 166.

[35] Esther Leslie, *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-garde* (London, New York: Verso, 2002), 80.

[36] "Mickey Mouse auch auf der Kinobühne," *Film-Kurier*, 21 (26 January 1931).

[37] Leslie, 80.

strata from the Party leaders to young children who never failed to fill the cinemas to watch new episodes of their favorite character.

The impact of Mickey Mouse cartoons was so immense that they became of interest to the contemporaneous intellectuals in Germany. Probably the most widely-cited reflection on the phenomenon of Mickey Mouse comes from Walter Benjamin. In 1931, he wrote his famous "fragment" on Mickey Mouse that was posthumously published under the title "Zu Micky-Maus." He also returned to Mickey Mouse in his other projects,[38] referring to his popularity, calling him a "globe-encircling" "figure of collective dream."[39] Benjamin's writing on Mickey Mouse has been discussed along the lines of the merging of nature and technology, Mickey Mouse's modern character and hybridity, and so on.[40] Here, however, I would like to focus on one of Benjamin's most paradoxical claims about Mickey Mouse, which I suggest is worth revisiting, especially in light of its popularity with the Nazis. It is Benjamin's cryptic first thesis on Mickey-Mouse that he drafted as a result of his conversation with his friends Gustav Gluck and Kurt Weil: "Property relations in Mickey Mouse cartoons: here we see for the first time that it is possible to have one's own arm, even one's own body, stolen."[41] Esther Leslie, who presents an exhaustive analysis of Benjamin's writings on Mickey Mouse, interprets this thesis in the following way: "For Walter Benjamin and friends, the cartoons depict a realist—though not

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[38] For a comprehensive account of Benjamin's mentioning of Mickey Mouse in his different projects and their outstanding analysis, see Esther Leslie, "Mickey Mouse, Utopia and Walter Benjamin," in her *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-garde* (London: Verso, 2002) 80-122. Also see Miriam Bratu Hansen, "Micky-Maus," *Cinema and experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 163-82.
[39] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, Second Version," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, eds Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al., (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 2008), 38.
[40] For this discussions, see Leslie, Hansen, and Stéphane Symons, "The creature that can still survive?: Walter Benjamin on Mickey Mouse and Rhythmic Movement," *Telos* 176 (September 2016), 165-86.
[41] Walter Benjamin, "Mickey Mouse," in Benjamin, *The Work of Art,* 338.

naturalist—expression of the circumstances of modern daily life; the cartoons make clear that even our bodies do not belong to us—we have alienated them in exchange for money, or have given parts of them in war."[42] She connects the loss of the self that a human experiences in modernity with the Marxian concept of alienation—modernity and in particular, capitalist relationships strip the human of whatever has been called humanity, and leaves only the animalistic functionality, "while in his human functions he is nothing more than an animal."[43] Such a "realist" depiction of humans in the age of capitalism and modernity—when a human body is always already alienated, when it can be fragmented, distorted, rearranged, and presented in a multiplicity of possible ways—is also a sign of the cultural dominance of the visual and the primacy of the spectacle. Such a human body, in and of itself becomes an unlimited source of spectacle, an attraction capable of selling itself to different audiences. Even though Nazism positioned itself as an anti-capitalist system, as the history of industrial animation reveals, potential profits from animation distribution were the main factor that persuaded the Nazi government to invest in animation development. However, the spectacle for the Nazis was not only of economic, but also, and most importantly, of political import. As many scholars, including Bill Kinser and Neil Kleinman,[44] point out, during the Nazi period, the country was going through aesthetic reformation and recreation; the type of culture created in Germany in the thirties was based on the spectacle. Nazi Party rallies, torch processions, and book burnings were political spectacles designed to generate support for the Nazi Party, or, in other words, artistic manipulations of reality that evoke in their spectators an ecstatic reaction, similar to the one

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[42] Leslie, 83.
[43] Leslie, 84.
[44] Bill Kinser and Neil Kleinmann, *The Dream That Was No More a Dream: A Search for Aesthetic Reality in Germany 1890-1945* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

described by Sergei Eisenstein as a reaction to watching Mickey-Mouse films.[45] The out-of-body experience of Mickey Mouse creates a spectacle that results in the audience's ecstatic identification with that body. Thus, the modern conditions of the human that, according to Leslie interpreting Benjamin, the audiences recognize in Mickey Mouse are mediated by and through the spectacle.

Mickey Mouse's popularity in Germany caused critics' to start raising questions about German animation. As the film newspaper *Kinematograph* wrote as early as July 1934, "The world success of Mickey Mouse films has proven that there is always an audience for such films in every country in which movie theaters are located. And every theater owner in Germany will confirm that audiences love these films. Only the films themselves are missing. Why in the world does Germany not produce such films?"[46] The author of the article found the answer to the question in insufficient animation studio resources, which included simple equipment and very few people working in them—a stark contrast to the way the Disney Studio functioned.[47]

For German audiences as well as the press, Mickey Mouse became the epitome of what animation was and what animation could do, and very often Mickey Mouse's name was not only used metonymically for American animation, but also for animation in general. Thus, when Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH was established, one of the German newspapers pondered about the potentiality of animation as evidenced by Mickey Mouse's ubiquity: "Although up to now, in addition to the large production companies, about half a dozen independent film producers have also been involved with the drawn animated, the great possibilities of drawn film, as they have

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[45] Sergei Eisenstein, *On Disney* (London; New York: Methuen in association with Seagull Books, 1988), 42.
[46] Cited in Laqua *Wie Micky unter die Nazis*, 109.
[47] Ibid.

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become known all over the world through the Mickey Mouse, cannot yet be considered exhausted."[48]

Disney films, however, were not the only American animated shorts famous in Germany. The Fleischer brothers' films, though less popular, were still known, screened in theaters, and even praised for their humor. For instance, in 1934, *Film-Kurier* wrote, "With his doll Betty Boop, Max Fleischer has introduced a new creature to the beloved world of drawn animation. This funny quirky doll, indeed delights the whole world with imaginative animated drawn films not only because it is so efficacious and so witty, but it also presents a cheerful world of friendly self-mockery: the demonstration-milieu-feature films, in which Americans cinematically present their army, air forces, and their fleet to other peoples in a seemingly harmless manner, the horror films, above all King Kong, and especially the sweet women's doll cult in the USA—they all find themselves in these films parodied in a charming and mischievous way."[49]

Not all the writers in the German press who wrote about American animation could recognize the aesthetic differences between Disney and the Fleischer brothers' animation. For instance, in a short article "Betty und Henry," the anonymous author wrote, about the short *Betty Boop with Henry, the Funniest Living American* (Fleischer Studios, 1935), that though the funny animated film was not made in Disney's studio, it was "completely in its style" [ganz in seinem Stil].[50] To some extent such a confusion could be caused because of the way the screenings of animated films were organized—often animated films produced by both Disney and the Fleischers were screened in the same add-on programs [Beiprogramm].[51]

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[48] "Neue Wege des Deutschen Filmwirtschaft," Aus: *Lepziger Neueste Nachrichten* 303 (10 October `1941), Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R/3102/1474.
[49] Schu. "Kurzfilm Puppenparade," *Film-Kurier* 33 (7 February 1934).
[50] "Betty und Henry," *Film Kurier* 34 (10 February 1936).
[51] See, for instance, "Die Noten-Quetsche," *Film Kurier* 178 (30 July 1932).

By the end of the 1930s, the audiences would not even be able to identify the Fleischers'

films, which were advertised without mentioning the names of the directors. For instance, a short

Film-Kurier article, "Pop als Orgelmann" [Popeye as an Organist], in the column "Im

Beiprogram" [Additional program], reviewed a Popeye, the Sailor cartoon that at the time ran in

German cinemas before several feature films, without indicating the names of the directors, and

referencing only the distribution studio—Paramount.[52] Thus, by the end of the 1930s, even

though the Fleischers' films were distributed in German theaters, the names of the Fleischers

were not brought up.

However, there is much evidence that films of Fleischer Studios were known to and

highly valued by German animators and animation experts. For instance, in a note written to

Heinrich Röllenbleg, Head of Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH, its author, a certain Mr. Pfister,[53]

draws Röllenbleg's attention to the fact that an animator was seeking investments to organize a

company that would produce animated advertisements "using the American 'Pop-I the

Sailorman' as a model."[54] This project, apparently, did not go through, but the intention to use

the Fleischers' characters as a point of reference for creating animation demonstrates a certain

level of interest in the Fleischers' aesthetics.

Additionally, the Fleischers' films were screened privately, even after nationalization of

German cinema and deterioration of the relationship with Hollywood. In the documents

addressed to presumably Goebbels, dated 23 November 1944 and 20 December 1944 and called

"Lending of films which are not admitted to the public screening" [Ausleihung von Filmen, die

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[52] "Pop als Orgelmann," *Film-Kurier* 267 (16 November 1937). The review was exceptionally positive and encouraged the audience to see the short.

[53] Apparently—Josef Pfister, animator, later worked for AFIT (a studio for animated films based in Prague).

[54] "Aktenvermerk für Herr Röllenbleg, Betr.: Private Finanzierung Pfister/ Dillenz," 25 July 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/III/15.

zur öffentlichen Vorführung nicht zugelassen sind], there is only one animated film on the list, the Fleischers' *Gulliver's Travels* (1939), that was borrowed by Gaufilmstelle Wien and UFA-Filmkunst GmbH, respectively, for private screenings. Another document with the same title, dated 15 January 1945, lists *Gulliver's Travels* together with another animated film—Disney's *Snow White*—for a private screening at Reichpropagandaamt Oberschlesien.[55] Unfortunately, these are only two documents of the kind that I found, which does not allow me to say how regularly the Fleischers' films were borrowed for private screenings and how much unofficial circulation the Fleischers' films had on the whole, but they allow me to maintain that they were of interest to different types of organizations, including a major film studio and a local propaganda department.

Interest in the Fleischers' films did not only come from animators and propagandists, but also from academics. In 1939, Reinhold Johann Holtz submitted for publication his doctoral thesis, written at the Department of Arts at Hansische University (now University of Hamburg), titled *Phenomenology and Psychology of Animated Films: Analytical Investigations of the Phenomenological, Psychological and Artistic Structures of Animated Films* [*Die Phänomenologie und Psychologie des Trickfilms: Analytische Untersuchungen über die phänomenologischen, psychologischen und künstlerischen Strukturen der Trickfilmgruppe*].[56] In the dissertation, Holtz discusses animation produced in different countries, including the US. For the US, he discusses the animation of three production studios: the Disney Studios, Terry-Toons

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[55] "Herrn Reichminister, Ausleihung von Filmen, die zur öffentlichen Vorführung nicht zugelassen sind." 23 November 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/II/14; "Herrn Reichminister, Ausleihung von Filmen, die zur öffentlichen Vorführung nicht zugelassen sind." 20 December 1944, 15 January 1945, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/II/15.

[56] Reinhold Johann Holtz, *Die Phänomenologie und Psychologie des Trickfilms: Analytische Untersuchungen über die phänomenologischen, psychologischen und künstlerischen Strukturen der Trickfilmgruppe*, Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades der Philosophischen Fakultät der Hansischen Universität, Hamburg (Hamburg: Niemann & Moschinski Graphische Betriebe, 1940).

and Fleischer Studio. In the chapter "Der amerikanische Zeichentrickfilm als künstlerisches Werk: Disney-Films, Terry-Toons,[57] Fleischer-Filme" [American Animation as a Work of Art], he evaluates American animation from an aesthetic perspective. Such an evaluation is particularly interesting for the time because animation was officially recognized as an art form in Nazi Germany only in 1943,[58] and thus Holtz's dissertation was written in a cultural environment that did not recognize the aesthetic merits of animation. Answering one of the questions that he poses in his dissertation, whether American animation can be called art, Holtz comes to a conclusion that it can be evaluated according to aesthetic criteria. In particular, he writes, "We can come to a conclusion as to the American cartoon and its relationship to performing the work of art: they can be considered works of art, sometimes of considerable intrinsic value, according to standard aesthetic evaluations and points of view, when we consider in our assessment their artistic design and refrain from applying the standards of a 'great art.'"[59] What is particularly interesting in Holtz's conclusion is how he assesses the three studios from the aesthetic perspective. He concludes that "it [adherence to the aesthetic criteria] is true for some Terry-Toons films, many Disney films, and, especially for all of the Fleischers' films known in Germany."[60] Because such prioritizing of the Fleischers' films in terms of their aesthetic value was not common, it deserves a more detailed explanation.

Starting his aesthetic analysis of American animated films, Holtz up front dismisses the significance of their content, as he states, "the content seem quite irrelevant," which brings him to dealing only with their "formal character." Holtz acutely points out that there are differences

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[57] Here, I am not discussing Terry-Toons for the following reasons: first, though Terry-Toons' animations were screened in Germany at the period, there is no evidence that they were of any significant influence on the development of German animation; second, contrary to the aesthetic influence of Disney's and Fleischers' on the production of Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, there are no such traces of influence coming from Terry-Toons.

[58] Carsten Laqua, *Wie Micky unter die Nazis fiel: Walt Disney und Deutschland* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1992), 116.

[59] Holtz, *Die Phänomenologie,* 35.

[60] Ibid.

among productions of the three studios, as well as among different films by the same artist. As an illustration for this thesis he uses Disney:

> Strikingly it can be seen at Disney, how much and to what extent the formation of the figures and backgrounds varies. His black and white films, especially the Mickey Mouse silent films, are still very simple, almost primitive. One notices clearly that their origin is rooted in newspaper cartoons: The contours are predominantly flat and conventional, and only after time do ornamental elements start to appear. [Die Konturen sind vorwiegend flächig behandelt und erfahren eine geringe Erweiterung der ornamentalen Zeichnung erst im Laufe der Jahre.] After the introduction of sound in the Mickey Mouse films, the changes are obvious. After the introduction and technical mastery of color, the big new trend in this direction is the Silly Symphonies. The primitiveness of the contour slowly gives way to color. Early films of this genre, such as *Three Little Pigs* [1933] and *Old King Cole* [1933] are to be regarded as simply colored films; however, later works, such as *Water Babies* [1935] and especially *Peculiar Penguins* [1934] and *Sunshine Suppliers*,[61] show the actual discovery of color, its superior position in the film and, moreover, the ingenious play with hues. It is as if the color as a new dimension gave the artists another chance to exploit the artistic space in the animated film. We believe that these films are at the forefront of Disney's artistic creation; his *Snow White* feature is far from achieving that individual level of artistic expression due to the multiplicity of performing forces and the mechanistic factors inevitably associated with them [wegen der

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[61] Holtz uses the title "Sonnenscheinlieferanten," that can be translated as *Sunshine Suppliers* but there is no Disney *Silly Simphony* film with this or similar name.

Vielzahl der ausführenden Kräfte und der damit zwangsläufig verbundenen mechanisierenden Faktoren, dieses individuelle künstlerische Formniveau].[62]

Thus, for Holtz, it is Disney's *Silly Symphonies*, and neither Mickey Mouse films nor *Snow White*, that become the pinnacle of the art of animation because of their masterful use of color. However, color is not the only criterion for Holtz. His praise of the Fleischers' films is less technical. He writes, "The Fleischers' films are the absolute peak of American films in both artistic and psychological-cathartic respects. The unusually good precision of the dramatic events, the high pictorial form of the images, and the characteristic figure of the character Popeye, together with the richly-relevant, tonal-musical background, give the impression of a complete and self-contained work."[63]

Despite Holtz's praise, which, probably was not his singular opinion, the popularity of Disney's cartoons filled with anthropomorphic animals, to a large degree, informed the way German critics and Party officials understood the tasks of animation. This is because German industrial animation was officially modeled on Disney's animation production method, and on Disney's choice of characters.

The success of Disney animation was also pivotal for the decision made by the Nazi officials not to invest into development of puppet animation. In one of his letters, former mayor Max Winkler of Cautio Treuhand GmbH[64] wrote that all the efforts of animation development were aimed at the drawn animation that he also considered aesthetically superior to puppet stop-

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[62] Holtz, *Die Phänomenologie,* 34.

[63] Holtz, *Die Phänomenologie,* 35.

[64] Cautio Treuhand GmbH was a trust company established by Max Winkler that acted as a majority shareholders and administered the assets of various companies, in particular, all film production companies. It was a key instrument of the Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, in the preparation for monopolisation on cinema production by the National Socialist state. For more on the activities of Cautio Treuhand GmbH, see David Welch and Roel Vande Winkel, "Europe's New Hollywood? The German Film Industry under Nazi Rule, 1933-35," in *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema,* ed. Roel Vande Winkel and David Welch (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6-24.

motion animation. Winkler writes, "It seems to me doubtful that puppet animation can be as valuable an artistic method of expression as a successful and perfect drawn film. Contrary to the opinion of Mr. Clausen, I agree with Mr. Neumann that this is not the case. Puppet animation, which works with dolls and models, must necessarily be one-sided. I am convinced that if we develop the German drawn animation, once the war is over, we will be capable of competing with American animation." The German official[65] was convinced that if development of drawn animation and training in it would continue despite the predicaments of the war, the German drawn film would become "a valuable weapon for the preeminence of German cinema in Europe,"[66] which would not be the case of puppet stop-motion animation. Winkler cites Karl Neumann, managing director of DZF, according to whom, the investments that had to be made in puppet animation for it to develop, would be comparable with those made into drawn animation, but the outcome of them was much less certain, and thus could potentially bring much less profit.[67] Perceiving animation as an enterprise with a big future in the newly emerging—as a result of the warfare—German market, the Nazi officials did not want to lose time, and wanted to invest into the type of animation that promised the most profits.

Thus, development of German animation sponsored by the German government went along the lines of drawn animation—this was the type of animation approved by the Party officials, and which starting from 1941 started receiving unprecedented governmental financial support.

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[65] Max Winkler to Goebbels, 19 March 1942, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, Berlin, R 109/I/1734.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

5.1.3 Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH: the Dream for Drawn Animation

Despite the popularity of Mickey Mouse, it was not him, but Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* that was responsible for establishment of German industrial animation. On 7 August 1941, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH (DZF), the first German studio that specialized in production of non-commercial [künstlerisch] animation was founded in accordance with Goebbels's order as a subsidiary of UFA. According to the founding and statutory documents of the studio, "The goal of the company is the production and distribution of artistically high-quality drawn animations [Zeichfilmschöpfungen] of all kind."[68] However, for Karl Neumann, the managing director of DZF who spearheaded its foundation, from the very beginning the main goal of the studio was to produce feature-length [*abendfüllende*, or *lang*] animated fairy-tales based on German material. [69] There were several reasons to pursue this particular type of animation production. The first reason—the financial one—was connected with the obvious popularity of Disney's animation. However, if Disney shorts, also incredibly popular with the audiences, required additional organizational work for screenings, full-length feature films provided already prepared material to fill a full screening. As Neumann wrote in one of his reports, "only feature-length animated films bring about a real profit. As you know, the first American feature-length

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[68] "Notarized copy of DZF founding and statutory documents signed by Bruno Pfennig, Fritz Kuhnert, and Fritz Dannehl," Berlin, 9 August 1941, gez. Dr. Günther Donner, Notar. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505.

[69] "Betrifft: Gechaltspolitik der Deutschen Zeichenfilm GmbH," 8 February 1945, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R230/I/7019. Two other accounts of the history of DZF can be found in Laqua, *Wie Micky unter die Nazis*, 109-118 and Giesen and Storm, *Amation under Swastika*, 74-109. In the chapter on DZF, Giesen and Storm also touch upon the history of the production of *Armer Hansi*. In my discussion of the work of the studio and of the film *Armer Hansi*, I mainly rely on archival materials that do not overlap with the primary sources presented in these two accounts. The purpose of this discussion is to unearth the archival materials that have not yet become known, as well as to further the investigation into the issues connected with DZF and the animated short, and raise the questions that have not yet become a part of the discourse on Nazi animation.

animated films *Snow White* and *Pinocchio* were the most successful films ever."[70] German

government made several attempts to purchase *Snow White* for mass screening. The attempts

were unsuccessful—initially due to the high costs of the animated film, and later for political

reasons.[71] However, the success of *Snow White* stimulated the Nazi government to pursue

production of feature-length animated films in Germany.

The second reason, connected with the first one, was the growing market for German

films ensured by the beginning of the war. With the beginning of World War II, the influx of

American films to occupied Europe considerably decreased, and Germany was eager to step into

the newly available position of the main film producer and distributor in Europe, the position that

Germany occupied at the end of the 1920. In the area of animation, Germany wanted to establish

animation production that would be able to compete with Walt Disney Productions. The urgency

of such an endeavor was felt by those in animation production as extremely high. As Neumann

wrote in his proposal to the Ministry of Propaganda, "Regarding Disney's large-scale planning,

there is evidence that he intends to release in the future several animated feature films per year. If

the German Reich will approach the establishment of its animation film production with less

initiative than private entrepreneur Disney, we will fall behind even more than we already are."[72]

The orientation of animation production at DZF towards an international market is also probably

the reason why the very first film that was produced there—*Armer Hansi* (1943)— contrary to

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[70] "Betrifft: Gechaltspolitik der Deutschen Zeichenfilm GmbH," 8 February 1945, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R2301/7019. It is important to mention, however, that this position was not shared by everybody responsible for establishment and functioning of ZDF. For instance, one of the reports points out difficulties with such a striving for production of feature-length animated films due to lack of skilled workers, and suggests to focus on shorts until the end of the war. The report also suggests that during the war, DZF should engage in production of cultural, educational and advertising films rather than feature films (see "R.M.V.P., Sachb.: Min. Rat. Dr. Getzlaff, Vermerk," Berlin, 30 September, 1944. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505.)

[71] For the story behind purchase of *Snow White* for wide distribution, see Giesen and Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, Chapter 4, "How Walt Disney Became Walter Distler: Snow White for Greater Germany," 12-25.

[72] Giesen, Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, 83.

the animated films produced previously at smaller studios (like, for instance, *Der Störenfried*),

does not have any dialogue or voice overs. Produced for a market of the multi-lingual Third

Reich, *Armer Hansi* did not require any additional expenses, like dubbing, to reach its audiences.

Third, seeing animation as "German cultural propaganda,"[73] the German government was

eager to produce the type of animation that would spread Nazi ideas in an entertaining and

appealing form. Even though there was no direct ideological propaganda in the animated films

produced in Germany during this time, they operated from the cultural, social, and political

standpoint of Nazi ideology. Thus, the paradox of the Nazi animation industry, though not

entirely,[74] was that the very inclination to develop "artistic" animation in Germany was

stipulated by financial and political pursuits. The Walt Disney Productions, whose animated

films were highly successful commercially, provided an excellent model for German animation

development.

The foundation of DZF was also a part of the Nazi government's attempt to consolidate

and further the film industry. Around the same time, two other new film production companies

were founded. One of them, Berlin-Film GmbH, was supposed to become a new producer of

feature films that would combine "numerous small manufacturers." The other one, Deutschen

Schmalfilm-Vertrieb GmbH, was given the task to supply Europe, i.e., newly occupied

territories, with 16-mm films [Schmalfilm] and projecting devices—an initiative that would

result in the production of a more mobile cinema and ensure that cinema would reach locations

where projection of 35-mm films would be impossible due to the lack of necessary, more

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[73] Ibid., 84.
[74] See Chapter 3.

expensive, equipment.[75] However, if the foundation of these two studios was a result of a long process of development of the feature and 16-mm film industries, the foundation of DZF was seen as a way to develop a less advanced area of animation.[76] A year prior to these events, another organization that consolidated production of newsreels, Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH, was founded under the supervision of Heinrich Röllenbleg. Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH screened shorts, including animated shorts, and its foundation was also an important factor for animation advancement because it provided a market for animated films, and thus contributed to an increase in the demand for them.

The event of the studio opening did not attract much public attention, and the press reports on it did not come out until much later.[77] The press also demonstrated some uncertainty as to how to evaluate such an event. Thus, *Film Kurier* published two short articles about the foundation of DZF. One from 23 October 1941 was published inconspicuously on the fourth page and gave general official information about the new studio: date of foundation, address, goals, the name of the director, and so on.[78] The other one, from 10 November 1941, was published on the first page and, in addition to providing basic information about the animation studio, discussed current animation production in Germany, its predominant connection with advertising, and how DZF would change this situation by producing feature animation. [79]

The person behind the organization of DZF, who envisioned it to become "the first [animation studio] in Europe to produce feature-length animated artistic [künslerische] films"

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[75] "Neue Wege des Deutschen Filmwirtschaft," Aus: Lepziger Neueste Nachrichten Nr. 303 vom 30.10.41, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R3102/1474.

[76] Ibid.

[77] See, for instance,"Deutsche Zeichenfilm G.m.b.H.," *Deutsche Filmzeitung* 44 (2 November 1941);"Deutsche Zeichenfilm-Geselschaft mit beschränker Haftung, Berlin," *Film Kurier* 249 (23 October 1941).

[78] "Deutsche Zeichenfilm-Geselschaft."

[79] "Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH. Gegründet," *Film Kurier* 264 (10 November 1941).

and saw it as the future of the European animation,[80] was senior government official [Oberregierungsrat] Karl Neumann, Head of the German Cultural Film Headquarters [Deutsche Kulturfilm-Zentrale] and the Head of Cultural Film Dramaturgy [Kulturfilmdramaturgie] in the Film Department of the Reich Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda.[81] Officially, he became general head of DZF from its inception, but starting from January 1, 1942, his responsibilities were limited to the general management of the studio, whereas Frank Leberecht was appointed artistic director. However, according to Neumann's own letter, the very idea of the studio was conceived in collaboration with Leberecht. Neumann claimed that they together wrote an exposé dated May 12, 1941, to Goebbels, in which they proposed to establish the German animation industry by founding a studio that would focus exclusively on production of drawn animated films.[82] On May 15, 1941, according to Giesen and Storm, Goebbels noted in his diary that he had examined Neumann's memo about German cartoon film production: "I will support this because it is a good and useful matter."[83]

Neither Neumann, nor Leberecht had any previous experience with animation. Neumann came from a background of accounting and management,[84] whereas Leberecht was a journalist who, as Giesen and Storm write, "had been involved in cultural films"[85]—at the time of appointment, he was the Chief Dramaturge of the German Cultural Film Headquarters.[86] However, the third person in charge of the studio, the studio technical head Werner Kruse, was

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[80] Anon. "Filmzeichner berichten über ihre Arbeit" [Animators Tell about their Work], *Film Kurier* 151 (24 December 1943).
[81] "An Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Winkler," 20 December 1941, Berlin Lichterfeltder, R55/505.
[82] ORR. Neumann, "An Herrn Staatssekretür Gutterer über Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Hippler," Berlin, 18 December, 1941, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505. Giesen and Storm publish an English translation of the whole letter together with the exposé (77-85).
[83] Giesen, Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, 75-76.
[84] Ibid., 74-75.
[85] Ibid., 76.
[86] "An Herrn Bürgermeister Dr. Winkler," 20 December 1941, Berlin Lichterfeltder, R55/505.

knowledgeable in animation production as well as in music, which meant, according to Neumann, that he had "the necessary qualifications for his task as a specialist."[87] Already in 1934, Kruse had his own animation studio in Berlin, and he successfully studied Disney characters' "rubber hose and circle" method of production.[88] The four main animators—Gerhard Fieber, Heinz Tischmeyer, Jan Coolen, and Sergei Sesin[89]—were also former animation directors and were experienced in animation production.[90] The studio started working with forty "skilled workers acquired from Ufa and Tobis."[91] As one of the studio reports explained, "In order to catch up on the 15 to 20 years of the time that the Americans have in the technical and artistic development of animation, the animated film productions of Ufa and Tobis, and other scattered specialists were brought together."[92]

The description of the organization of the studio, and the way the workers of the studio were supposed to specialize in various types of labor, corresponded to the necessities of the conveyer method of animation production. The list of the professions that, as the studio claimed, were necessary for its functioning, and which they advertised, included animators [Hauptzeichner], inbetweeners [Phasenzeichner], inker [Folienzeichner], colorist [Folienmaler],

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[87] ORR. Neumann "An Herrn Staatssekretür Gutterer über Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Hippler," Berlin, 18 December, 1941. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55-505.

[88] See more on Kruse in Giesen and Storm, 76-77.

[89] This description of the studio hierarchy is based on "Filmzeichner berichten über ihre Arbeit" [Animators Tell about their Work], *Film Kurier* 151 (24 December 1943) and "Die preisgekrönten Filme: Die Reichswoche für den Deutschen Kulturfilm," *Film Kurier* 142 (15 November 1943), and reflects the distribution of power in terms of the production of animated films, in particular, *Armer Hansi*. For the administrative structure of the studio, see Giesen and Storm, 94.

[90] Wolfgang Kaskeliene, another famous animation director, joined the studio later. In Neumann's letter with the subject line "Financial Politics of DZF," from February 8, 1945, Kaskeliene is listed as one of the main animators together with Gerhard Fieber, Heinz Tischmeyer, and Sergei Sesin, with an honorarium that was the highest of them all (2.500RM, vs. Fieber and Tischmeyer's 1.200RM, and Senin's 1.000RM), and even higher than that of Leberecht's (2.400RM). The reasons for such a remarkable discrepancy are explained in the same letter: "This honorarium was discussed with the Reich Commissioner for the German Film Industry and it was approved by him. Earlier, Kaskeline had a contract with Universum-Film AG, according to which, in addition to the monthly fee of RM 2,500, he had a monthly profit share of RM 250')." ("Betrifft: Gehaltspolitik der Deutschen Zeichenfilm GmbH," Berlin, 8 February 1945, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505).

[91] "Merkblatt zu Berufswahl, " 1 November 1943, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R2301/7019.

[92] Ibid.

story board artists [Zeichenfilmbilder], and animation cameraperson [Zeichenfilm-Kameramänner].[93]

The studio planned to gradually expand the initial number of workers to 500, since Neumann considered this size of animation labor force to be necessary for production of full-length animated films,[94] because he believed that that was the number of animation workers that Disney had when he produced his first animated feature *Snow White*. Due to the lack of qualified animators, however, such an increase in workforce was impossible, and the studio saw a solution in recruiting trainees. As of 30 September 1943, there were 119 trainees at the studio,[95] who, together with permanent employees, performed multiple operations in conveyer animation production. The importance of the training part of the studio's activities is evident from the studio reports in which descriptions of the achievements in training methods occupy the dominant part.[96] In addition to training animators during work hours, the studio organized evening classes "for further training of the animation personnel."[97]

The goals of animator training, however, were somewhat paradoxical considering the studio's technological premise and overall goals to utilize the conveyer method of animation production. The conveyer method presupposed a narrow specialization of the animation workers, yet the articulated goal of the studio was to train broad specialists in animation production. Thus, one of the studio reports described the tasks of animators in the following way: "The animated film as a creative synthesis of visual art, cinema, music, as well as representational and narrative arts, requires from the creator a correspondingly versatile talent, above all great skills in

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[93]"Merkblatt zur Berufswahl," 1 November 1943, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R2301/7019.

[94] "Bericht über die Prüfung der Reichsbeteiligung der Deutschen Zeichenfilm GmbH für die Geschäftsjahre 1941 und 1942, " 17 November 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R109/I/1709.

[95] Ibid.

[96] See, for instance, "Vermerk [Report], Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH." Berlin, 5 October 1943, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R2301/7019.

[97] Giesen, Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, 80.

figurative drawing, musical rhythm, and a pronounced sense for movement, humor, and facial expressions, and a concomitant careful attention to the execution of individual drawings. The animated film is a collaborative work in which many hands must work together, but in which also many kinds of talent find their place."[98] A similar sentiment can be found in Neumann's descriptions of his plans for the studio, "Instead of a trickfilm proletariat of technical supporting forces that, without any passion, stolidly draws its lines, a special professional type of responsible and creative artistic craftsmen of German animation must develop."[99] Implementation of the approach to training declared in this report, which was supposed to produce versatile animation workers, was a time-consuming project. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the rate of the training process was slow, and that the studio experienced a permanent lack of skilled cadres.

The press also emphasized the necessity to train qualified animators and pointed out that in order to do so, DZF would initially engage in the production of only shorts from "German animal and fable worlds."[100] The press also emphasized that with DZF, animation obtained a stable space, which resulted in an increase in demand for animators, and animation workers received a stable place of work and training.[101] Thus, though DZF was founded for the purpose of producing feature-length animated films, the initial plan was to train the animators by producing shorts.

Multiple reports, including auditing ones, demonstrate that production of shorts was seen by the administration of the studio as a temporary measure, and an unprofitable one. As one of

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[98] "Merkblatt zu Berufswahl," 1 November 1943, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R230/1/7019.
[99] ORR. Neumann "An Herrn Staatssekretür Gutterer über Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Hippler," Berlin, 18 December, 1941, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505. Translation by Giesen and Storm.
[100] "Deutsche Zeidienfilm GmbH. Gegrründet, " *Film Kurier* 224 (10 November 1941).
[101] "Der Zeichenlilm in der Ufa-Lehrschau, " *Der Film* 38 (19 September 1942). The article also explains that DZF worked together with Ufa-Lehrschau, the first German film institute, to prepare future workers to work there.

the reports put it, "Although the short films are also to bring money, the income from this will hardly be enough to carry the company alone, considering the costliness of the film production."[102] It was expected that once the necessary number of animators were trained, the studio would start producing full-length feature films, and it would become a profitable enterprise. As the same report states, "The Company [DZF] is founded with the purpose to manage a profitable economic activity. … Since we are not yet particularly trained in production of drawn animated films, the development of the company will take a number of years. … the completion of the first major film is expected by the production year 1947/1948. It can probably be assumed … that the company expects to achieve a balanced budget [ausgeglichene Ertragslage] with this first feature-length film."[103] Transition to the production of feature films was supposed to be achieved gradually, with the increase of skilled animation cadres.

A comparative table for the studio development created by Neumann demonstrates two potential ways or methods of the studio's growth.[104] The main difference in the two methods is the rate at which the studio was supposed to advance in animation production and how the trainees were integrated into this process—method 1 presupposed a more "organic" development with a gradual building of the studio facilities and cadres, whereas method 2, which, according to Neumann "would need considerably more input," presupposed integration of the studio trainees into the production process. However, both methods demonstrate that the studio was established as a long-term project that expected big investments and much preparation work before obtaining profits: according to the planning along the lines of first method, the first feature-long film was

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[102] R.M.V.P., Sachb.: Min. Rat. Dr. Getzlaff, Vermerk, Berlin, 30 September 1944. Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505.
[103] Ibid.
[104] "Vergleichstabelle zu den unter 1) und 2) beschreibenen Aufbaumethoden" [Comparative Table of the Described Methods 1) and 2)], was among the attachments to Neumann's letter to State Secretary Gutter, in which he describes in detail the plans for DZF (18 December 1941).

supposed to be produced only by 1950, and according to the second method, which actually became the actual method for the studio development, the first feature-long film was supposed to be produced by 1947-1948.

These plans, however, were based on the assumption that the transition to production of feature-length films would take place in peacetime. As Neumann put it, "The construction of the Deutsche Zeichfilm GmbH was started at the time when those who ordered for its foundation believed that the war would soon be over."[105] Considering the success of Operation Barbarossa, and the speed with which the Nazi army advanced on the Eastern front by August 1941, it was sensible to plan the work of DZF for peacetime. With the war continuing, the studio started experiencing "great difficulties" already in 1943.[106]

The first and only animated film that DZF managed to complete was released in 1943, under the title *Armer Hansi* [*Poor Hansi*]. Before the end of World War II, the studio also started production on two other shorts, *Purzelbaum ins Leben* and *Walzermärchen*,[107] but they were not released.[108] Continuation of the war, and the dire change in the situation on the front, the bombing of the studio and its subsequent relocation to Dachau in 1944, where the studio was located near the concentration camp,[109] as well as increased rates of drafting of studio workers

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[105] "Betrifft: Gehaltspolitik der Deutschen Zeichenfilm GmbH," Berlin, 8 February 1945, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R55/505.

[106] Ibid.

[107] "Vertraulicher Vermerk, Berlin," 15 May, 1944, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R109/I/1714.

[108] According to the interview with Fieber, who directed *Purzelbaum ins Leben*, he completed the film before 1945, but the film materials "suffered war-induced fire damage" (Giesen and Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, 103). The film, however, was released in 1946. (See, for instance, "Purzelbaum ins Leben. Erster Zeichenfarbfilm der DEFA," *Neues Deutschland* (15 November 1946,) cited on *Deutsche Institut für Animationsfilm*, http://www.diaf.de/de/home/rubriken/Blog_Detailseite.html?b=407).

[109] Giesen and Storm tell an anecdote, the origin of which is unspecified, about a female French artist who got access to the wired territory of the concentration camp through "some SS men," and afterword told her colleagues about what she saw there. No one wanted to believe her (Giesen, Storm, *Animation under Swastika*, 104-105). As a response to this anecdote, it is hard not to think about Hannah Arendt's concept of the banality of evil—everyday production of animation was taking place next door to horrifying, but also routine execution of thousands of people. This anecdote makes literal a metaphor of the role Nazi animated films played in normalization of the evil of

were among the reasons why the studio's projects were not completed. In August 1944, after the announcement of the "total war" policies, the studio production was suspended, making *Armer Hansi* the only product of all the Nazi effort in establishing its animation industry.

5.2   CASE-STUDY: *ARMER HANSI* (1943)

Armer Hansi [Poor Hansi] was eighteen minutes long (about 450 meters), the longest animated film in the history of German drawn animation at the time. It premiered in Munich during the Reich's Week for German Cultural Film, and received an "Artistic Merit" commendation [Prädikat "künstlerich wertvoll"].[110] The short was directed by Frank Leberecht, with Fieber, Tischmeyer, Coolen, and Sesin performing the function of animators.[111] Among other famous personalities who participated in creation of the film was composer Friedrich Schröder, and the pioneer of electronic music Oskar Sala. For special effects, Sala used the electronic instrument the Trautonium, which was a predecessor to the synthesizer. Although the Trautonium was invented by Friedrich Trautwein, Sala participated in its development, as well as wrote music for it from the time of its invention. Trautonium used a unique technology—neon-tube oscillator that produced a sawtooth waveform that was rich in harmonic sidebands, which distinguished it from other electronic instruments existing at the time—Theremin and Ondes Martenot—and which

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Nazism—the artists who worked at the studio literally breathed the air produced by Nazism, filled with the smell of executed people.

[110] *"Traumschmelze," German Drawn Animation Film 1930-1950*: 25.

[111] Giesen and Storm maintain that the director of Armer Hansi was in fact Gerhard Fieber (94). They also write that Fieber was "head of animation" (74). Neither of these claims are supported by such articles as "Filmzeichner berichten über ihre Arbeit" [Animators Tell about their Work], *Film Kurier* 151 (24 December 1943) and "Die preisgekrönten Filme: Die Reichswoche für den Deutschen Kulturfilm," *Film Kurier* 142 (15 November 1943), both which identify Frank Leberecht as the director of the short, as well as by the above mentioned archival documents that list Fieber as one of the main animators among others.

allowed Trautwein, by using filters, to experiment with subtractive synthesis—"the careful reduction of sidebands to produce timbral changes in tone color."[112] In *Armer Hansi,* Trautonium was used to create a whole range of sound effects—from the sound of metal rods in Hansi's cage to Hansi's singing, which gave the film a unique sound palate.

Goebbels's evaluation of *Armer Hansi* was quite positive. He asserted that the film "is not yet a Disney film, but a good start."[113] The film enjoyed critical success and received a state award,[114] despite the fact that the studio general manager Neumann categorized it as "a training film." Apparently justifying the inadequate amount of time and labor that went into its production, Neumann wrote in his report, "In the proposal to the Ministry of 16 September 1943, with which Mr. Mayor Dr. Winkler was also provided, we have called our first film *Armer Hansi* a training film and further pointed out that in order to achieve the best possible image quality, some of the scenes were made four to five times."[115]

Armer Hansi was screened in cinemas together with a popular comedy *Feuerzangenbowle* (*The Punch Bowl*, Terra-production, director Helmut Weiss, 1944)[116] as an add-on program—apparently its mass release was postponed till 1944 due to technical problems with copies,[117] even though it had already been screened in cinema theaters in the fall of 1943.[118]

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[112] Thom Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music: Technology, Music, and Culture* (New York, London: Routledge, 2008), 32.

[113] Vermerk [Report], Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, Berlin, 5 October 1943, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde, R109-I-1709.

[114] "Die preisgekrönten Filme: Die Reichswoche für den Deutschen Kulturfilm," *Film Kurier* 142 (15 November 1943).

[115] "Karl Neumann to Ufa-Film GmbH," 9 November 1943, Berlin-Linterfelde, R109/I/1734.

[116] Karsten Witte classifies *Feuerzangenbowle* as a "comedy of destruction" produced on Goebbels's edict to "reorganize the wartime production around features with 'predominantly entertaining content.'" ("How Fascist is Punch Bowl?" *New German Critique* 74 (Spring-Summer 1998): 31-36).

[117] "Anzug für Akte: F. 23. 18., Vermerk, Betr.: Deutsche Zeichenfilm-Geselschaft, Bewertung des Films „Armer Hansi" und Bilanz vom Mai 1943," signed by Waldraff, Berlin-Linterfelde, R109/I/1734.

[118] J.L."Der deutsche Zeichenfilm," *Film Kurier* 139 (11 November 1943).

In contrast to the opening of DZF, the release of the film was immediately noticed by the press, and widely reported.[119]

The script for the short was written by German writer Herman Krause and initially was called "Die Geschichte vom kleinen Kanarienhahn, der in die Freiheit flog" [The Story of a Little Canary Who Flew to Freedom]. According to the DZF animators, it was chosen for their first film due to its dynamic changes of scenes and its variety of actions. In the animators' own words, "Hermann Krause was just right with his adventurous Hansi, for his story led from sunshine into rain showers, from tender idyll to gloomy horrors of the night, from turbulent to contemplative scenes."[120]

The short is about a male canary who leads a comfortable life in a cage, but is bored—he longs for a female company and social appreciation. He is a stunning singer with a powerful voice, and he feels unappreciated. Upon seeing a beautiful coquettish female chickadee—whose image is patently inspired by Marlene Dietrich—he manages to escape his cage and follows her. At first, he enjoys his freedom—he plays with a kite, engages in a variety of flying styles modeled on different sports, such as swimming, figure skating, and snowboarding, and, of course, sings. Soon, however, his joy gives way to sadness and despair. He is rejected by other birds and cannot find company. The chickadee he followed turns out to be married, and Hansi is thrown out of her bird house by her husband. Soon he also experiences the disadvantages of freedom—the necessity of finding food and shelter in the rain. He is persecuted by other birds, as well as by a huge cat who almost catches him. Additionally, the objects of the outside world are

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[119] Only Film-Kurier published several articles that either focused on Armer Hamsi reported about the film together with other animated or cultural films. Among them: J.L."Der deutsche Zeichenfilm," *Film Kurier* 139 (11 November 1943); "Die preisgekrönten Filme: Die Reichswoche für den Deutschen Kulturfilm," *Film Kurier* 142 (15 November 1943); Felix Henseleit, "Gestaltwandel des Kulturfilms, " *Film Kurier* 145 (2 December 1943).
[120] "Filmzeichner berichten über ihre Arbeit" [Animators Tell about their Work], *Film Kurier* 151 (24 December 1943).

too frightening and foreign, and he grows so scared that even his own reflection in a can frightens him. At the end, he even loses his beautiful voice. Eventually, Hansi manages to get back home where, in his cage, he finds a female canary. Hansi is so happy that he regains his voice and with its power manages to open the lock of the cage. He joins the female canary in the cage and tightly locks the cage behind him. In the visual coda of the film, the cage disappears under a red cover with two hearts pierced by an animated arrow.

According to Giesen, the ending of the film was different from the one initially suggested by Krause. In the script, Hansi never leaves his cage—he only dreams about it. However, on the recommendation of Horst von Möllendorff, who at the time was employed by DZF, [121] the ending was altered, and Hansi's dream adventures became his real experience.[122]

Apparently, due to the fact that it was produced as a film on which future animators were trained, *Armer Hansi* does not demonstrate any attempt to find an original animation style, but rather follows the general formula for animation that was developed by the Disney Studios in their *Silly Symphonies*, and followed by the Fleischer Studios in their series *Color Classics*, which the Fleischers produced for Paramount Pictures from 1934 to 1941. With *Color Classics*, the Fleischers attempted to rival the Disney Studios by employing Disney's formula for successful animation—a combination of color and music. In fact, *Color Classics* were the Fleischers' first project where they used color, employing the Cinecolor system which was limited to reds, blues, and shades of brown.[123] Many of the shorts in both Disney's *Silly Symphonies* and the Fleischers' *Color Classics* series were based on naturalistic images of

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[121] Möllendorff went on to direct the AFIT studios in Prague and supervised production of *Hochzeit im Koralenmeer* [Wedding in the Coral Sea],

[122] Giesen and Storm, 91; Rolf Giesen and Anna Khan, *Acting and Character Animation: The Art of Animated Films, Acting and Visualizing* (Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC Press, 2017), 198.

[123] Maurine Furniss, *A New History of Animation* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2016), 113.

animals and were distinct because of their masterful use of color and music editing. Several shorts of the Fleischers' series tell various stories featuring birds, for instance, *Birds in the Spring* (Silly Symphonies, Disney Studio, 1933); *The Song of the Birds* (Color Classics, Fleischer Studio, 1935), and *Always Kickin'* (Color Classics, Fleischer Studio, 1939). Among the Fleischers' stories with ornithic characters, one short—*Hawaiian Birds* (Color Classics, Fleischer Studio, 1936)—is of particular interest for comparison to *Armer Hansi*. *Hawaiian Birds* has a very similar narrative to that of *Armer Hansi*'s, only with gender reversed. It is the story of a female bird from Hawaii with a particularly good jazz voice, who is lured by a flying jazz band of birds and goes on a tour with them, leaving behind her fiancé and Hawaii. However, the life of a musician in a far-away cold city turns out to be too hard—she is thrown out of the band and almost dies of cold, but is promptly saved by her fiancé and happily returns home. In addition to a similar plot, the imagery of *Armer Hansi* also bears some general similarity to the imagery of *Hawaiian Birds*—both films create an illusion of three-dimensional space, only by different means—the Fleischers' film creates it by using a Stereoptical Camera with a 3D background, while Armer Hansi employs a multi-plane camera, which DZF adopted after Disney.[124] The color scheme of Armer Hansi is also similar to that in *Hawaiian Birds*—it is dominated by natural brown hues, only in *Armer Hansi*, the dominance of brown hues at times is taken a step further, and the imagery acquires a sepia quality. In general, even though *Armer Hansi* was made with Agfacolor, which could produce more vibrant colors than Gasparcolor, the color scheme of *Armer Hansi* is subdued and pastel, and is closer to that used by Hans Held in his *Der Störenfried*[125] than to that of either the Disney or Fleischers' studios. Considering the

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[124] For more on the use of multi-plane camera and its patenting in Germany, see Giesen and Storm, *Animation*, 93.
[125] See Chapter 3.

potentiality of Agfacolor system, such a use of color points more towards the cultural use of color schemes than to the technical possibilities of color systems and color film.

The general aesthetic style of *Armer Hansi*, however, is also similar to those of Disney and the Fleischers in terms of a realistic depiction of the characters—birds. Giesen, citing an interview with one of the animators, Gerhard Fieber, asserts that Fieber had live models—two canaries—on which he based his sketches, though "during production Fieber's designs turned out to be rather difficult for a number of artists,"[126] and they had to be simplified. Such use of animals as models for animated characters was also practiced at the Disney Studios. Another very obvious similarity with Disney is a scene with a storm in which Hansi finds himself during his travels in the world outside his home. The scene is inspired by and partially copied from the scene of Snow White's run through the woods—it features similar relationships between the natural forces and the main characters. The main characters in both films perceive nature and natural objects as anthropomorphized, and they react to the manifestations of nature in similar ways, expressing fear and despair. Several elements of *Armer Hansi*'s scene are directly copied from *Snow White*, for instance, the owl leaning out of his hollow, and tree branches turning into fingers and grasping the main character. However, despite these similarities in the narrative and in the aesthetics, *Armer Hansi* is different from anything produced by either the Fleischers' or Disney's studios.

Giesen and Storm characterize the film as a satire on German society under the Nazis. They write about the film that it "concerned the misadventures of a canary lost in freedom, which was a satire in itself if one considers that all of Nazi Germany was sort of a prison."[127] Concomitantly, they maintain that because "National Socialists didn't seem to understand the

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[126] Giesen, Storm, *Animation*, 93.
[127] Ibid., 74.

freedom aspect," the idea behind the film—"A canary escapes into freedom, gets sick of freedom and returns into his cage where he is safe"—"appealed to the National Socialist way of thinking."[128] However, a close reading of the film reveals that there is much more to the plot and to the characters that would be appealing to the Nazis, and in fact, the seemingly paradoxical ending of the story—Hansi's return home—when considered in the context of the Nazi mythology, represents the Nazi ideas of racial and cultural superiority. Additionally, though the film utilizes the Fleischers and Disney aesthetics, it also uses aesthetic devices and generic formulas of German cinema.

The credit scene opens with the name of the studio, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, written against the background of a blue sky with several semi-transparent clouds.[129] The credit card announces that DZF drew the film [DZF zeigt einen Kurzfilm], and promises a quality color by Agfacolor. The background moves, creating the illusion of the studio name being projected onto the sky, while the projector is tilting from top down. Once the projector stops, and the card with the studio name disappears, two swallows appear on the screen, skywriting the title of the film—*Armer Hansi*—in the manner of airplane. Once the swallows fly down and out of the frame, and the title card fades, the camera also starts moving down, gradually revealing the setting of the film. The camera catches up with the swallows flying past the spire of the town hall with a weathercock on top of it and reveals a fragment of a landscape with several houses. After a dissolve, the camera continues following the swallows, but now panning instead of tilting. It shows an aerial view onto a market square with a fountain and narrow houses with pointed roofs

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[128] Ibid., 91.
[129] *Armer Hansi*, The opening credits scene.
https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=3

characteristic of Medieval Northern Europe in general, and for Germany in particular.[130] The image of the square is a generic and typical image of a Northern and Central European Marktplatz, broadly defined,—similar market squares can be found in, for instance, the Netherlands and Sweden, as well as in Hungary and Poland. By choosing such a generic image, the animated film immediately extends the potential geography of the events taking place in *Armer Hansi* to the whole new territory of the Third Reich. Contrary to the composite landscape in *Der Störenfried* that creates the film's setting as a dream-like surrealist collage, *Armer Hansi* uses the affinities in medieval urban architectural styles in Europe to create an image of an urban environment that is historically typical for the geographical areas that were defined by the Third Reich as Aryan. By exposing the typical and generic features of the architectural styles, the animated film points towards the common "Aryan history," thus implicitly justifying the war the goal of which is to create *Lebensraum* for the Aryan race. And like in *Der Stöerenfried*, the setting of the film is finally identified as German through the main character, Hansi, though unlike in *Der Störenfried*, *Armer Hansi* does not create any space for doubt that the urban landscape we see might not actually be German: by revealing the title of the film with a typical German name—Hansi—prior to setting the scene, the film unequivocally defines the location as German. And thus, in the eyes of the audience, a typical European city market square becomes a typical German Marktplatz.

Following the swallows, the camera proceeds into the depth of the frame, across the square, towards the only house in the Marktplatz that has elements of the Baroque style. This house stands out not only because of its stylistic difference from the rest of the buildings that look more like typical medieval utilitarian constructions, but also because its façade is much

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[130] *Armer Hansi,* Marktplatz.
https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=35

more detailed, with multiple elements such as bigger windows, blinds, curtains, but also arches, ornaments, and a multi-level roof. The swallows disappear behind pointed roofs of houses, and then, after another dissolve, the camera approaches the top floor of the Baroque building, with its open window framed by an ogee arch, in which we see a cage positioned at an angle to the window. This shot immediately establishes an affinity between the building and the cage through the rhyming element of the arch—if the window is framed by an ogee arch, the cage's top is shaped as a reverse ogee arch. (Fig.40) This set of elements inscribes Hansi who lives in the cage into the setting, and makes the setting his environment—Hansi fits into the environment in which he lives, and he is a part of it.

Technologically, the moving aerial shot of the Marktplatz that imitated a crane shot was possible because of the use of multi-plane camera.[131] Both in animation and in cinema of the early 1940s, such aerial shots were a technological novelty. One of the most famous cinematic aerial shots at the time and even today was used in the opening scene of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*, 1935).[132] Riefenstahl's film opens with a black screen, which gradually lightens revealing a figure of the Reichsadler ("Imperial Eagle") on a swastika mounted on the top of a stone wall. The figure of the Reichsadler stands out against a background of moving clouds. The camera moves down, facing the wall with the title of the film and the opening credits establishing the origin of the film—Führer—its authorship, and the myth

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[131] This shot is aesthetically and technically characteristic of Disney's rather than the Fleischers' animation since the Fleischers did not use multi-plane camera. For instance, in *Hawaiian Birds,* the camera is much more restricted—it remains at the eye-level for most of the film, and even when the low angle is used, the camera is static.

[132] Riefenstahl's work in general, and *Triumph des Willes*, in particular, as well as its opening sequence, have been discussed by many scholars. See, for instance, Catherine M. Soussloff and Bill Nichols, "Leni Riefenstahl: The Power of the Image," *Discourse* 18.3 (Spring 1996): 20-46); Linda Deutschmann, *Triumph of the Will: The Image of the Third Reich* (Wakefield, N.H.: Longwood Academic, 1991); Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Susan Tegel, "Leni Riefenstahl: Art and Politics," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 23:3 (2006), 185-200; Samuel Weber, "Clouds: On a Possible Relation of Terror and Terrorism to Aesthetics," *Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88:3 (2013): 339-62.

of the Third Reich as the revival of the German state.[133] The credits dissolve into a shot made by a camera mounted on a plane (what has been commonly perceived as Hitler's plane)[134] displaying a view from above the clouds. Then, it descends with the plane to reveal an aerial view of the medieval city of Nuremberg, created through editing several aerial shorts. In both *Triumph des Willens* and *Armer Hansi* we see a similar movement of the camera from above the clouds, down onto a medieval city.[135]

Such a parallel between Riefenstahl's film that, by using the style of documentary cinema, established a new canon of glorification of the Nazi party and the first animated film produced by a new, state-founded, animation studio is not accidental. All of Riefenstahl's documentary films produced during the Nazi period, and in particular *Triumph des Willens* and *Olympia* (1938), have much in common with animation—they create new spaces, movements, and ideas similar to the way animation does. In *Triumph des Willens*, Riefenstahl creates a new myth of the united German nation. In Bill Nichols's words, *Triumph des Willens* "demonstrates the power of the image to represent the historical world at the same moment as it participates in the construction of the historical world itself."[136] In *Olympia*, Riefenstahl visualizes a myth of Aryan heredity from Ancient Greece and creates a space that does not function according to physical laws, a space in which any movement and any kind of physical action seems to be possible. For instance, in one of the scenes, divers seem not to jump into the water but rather to

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[133] See an excellent discussion of the credits in Weber, "Clouds."

[134] According to Glenn B. Infield, the cloud/plane sequence was created by the work of a team of nine aerial cameramen who took photographs from a D/PN 50 dirigible and from a Klemmer plane followed by aircraft pilot Anton Riediger (cited in Deutschmann, *Triumph of the Will*, 32).

[135] See detailed discussions of this episode in, for instance, Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) 290; Linda Deutschmann, *Triumph of the Will: The Image of the Third Reich* (Wakefield, NH: Longwood Academic, 1991), 31-35; David B. Hinton, *The Films of Leni Riefenstahl* (Metuchen, N.J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1978), 39-42.

[136] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), 137. Riefenstahl also uses clouds as a device connecting the prologue and the main part of the film in Olympia, where they serve as an ellipsis conveying a sense of expanded time and space.

float in the air, jump out of the water, and do things that are impossible in the real physical world.

A *Film-Kurier* article published shortly after the release of *Armer Hansi* also contemplated parallels between documentary cinema and animation in terms of the potential of their imagery: "If the documentary film is an incorruptible witness of the reality, the animated film is a subject to new expressive possibilities of the creative mind."[137] This sentence seems odd and out of place in an article that, except for this brief mentioning of documentaries, focuses exclusively on German animation, and the progress that has been made in its development. However, considering the affinities between the documentary film and animation discussed above, a conclusion can be made that though, due to the specificity of the concept of the documentary film, it is supposed to "document," i.e., present the reality in an unbiased and objective way, and though it is so perceived by many audiences, the way reality is actually constructed and played with in the documentary film, especially in the films of Leni Riefenstahl, who used dramatic techniques for creating imagery, is similar to the way animation deals with imagery—it has an unlimited power to create reality out of an idea generated by a creative mind. Thus it seems no coincidence that in Nazi Germany, both documentary and animated films were both categorized as Kulturfilms.

However, in contrast to Riefenstahl, who created new spaces through editing, and in contrast to *Der Storenfried*, which created new imaginary landscapes through collage, Armer Hansi operates in the setting which is, as I already mentioned, connected with a the idea of a "typical" space presented as German—a *Marktplatz*. The German "Platz" stands for "place," and thus the establishing shot already sets up the idea of place as one of the main themes of the film.

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[137] J.L."Der deutsche Zeichenfilm," *Film Kurier* 141 (11 November 1943).

Edward S. Casey— one of the leading contributors to place studies in the field of philosophy—has claimed that our "immediate placement" as subjects "counts for much more than is usually imagined. More, for instance, than serving as a mere backdrop for concrete actions or thoughts. Place itself is concrete and at one with action and thought."[138] Through positioning Hansi in the space of the Marktplatz, the film positions Hansi's place in Germany—this is where he comes from, and this is his place of self-identification. As John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel point out, "Identity is constructed in and through place, whether by our embrace of a place, our inhabitation of a particular point in space, or by our rejection of and departure from a given place and our movement toward, adoption and inhabitation of, another."[139] Hansi's way to the place of his identity is a complicated one—he has to leave it in order to fully identify with it, but in the end, it becomes his place of conscious identification—the place where he feels at home, his *Heimat*.

In its basic translation, "*Heimat*" means "home" or "homeland," but many scholars deem it untranslatable since in the German imaginary there is much more to Heimat than these two English notions.[140] For instance, Celia Applegate points out, "The term *Heimat* carries a burden of reference and implication that is not adequately conveyed by the translation homeland or hometown. For almost two centuries, Heimat has been at center of German moral—and by extension political—discourse about place, belonging and identity."[141] Appropriation of the term by National Socialists made it particularly problematic and controversial. On the one hand, it was

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[138] Cited in John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel, "Introduction: The Matter of Places," in *Taking Place: Location and the Moving Image*, ed. John David Rhodes and Elena Gorfinkel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), ix.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Peter Blickle points out affinities between *Heimat* and the Russian *rodina*, but also considers the Russian counterpart being different in several semantic aspects (see his *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* [Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2002], 2-3).
[141] Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 4.

one of the central notions of the Nazi ideology, and thus the term became associated with Nazism. On the other, as many scholars[142] demonstrate, the concept of Heimat is much older than Nazism and initially did not have nationalistic connotations, and its development was more a reaction to industrialization—in the works of Hoelderlin, Eichendorff, and Keller, Heimat was imagined as an ideal and idyllic place that "possessed compensatory and healing functions."[143] The term *Heimatkunst* that emerged in the 1890s in response to the surge of rapid social change caused by industrialization and that was used in reference to "literature and other art forms dealing with provincial and rural life"[144] connected the notion of Heimat with rural settings and constructed Heimat in opposition to the changes caused by the modernization of society through a set of binaries: "country against city, province against metropolis, tradition against modernity, nature against artificiality, organic culture against civilization, fixed, familiar, rooted identity against cosmopolitanism, hybridity, alien otherness, or the faceless mass."[145] On the one hand, Heimat was conceptualized as a geographical space, a place of origin or birth, which was perceived as Heimat through personal experience, while on the other, as an imaginary space of nostalgia, a place that never was, and that is rather a creation of a mind. In Ernst Bloch's words, "Heimat is a mirage which seems to represent childhood and which is radiant in our memory, but it is a place where no-one has ever been."[146] Thus Heimat is a concept that simultaneously exists

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[142] Among the scholars who write about Heimat as a concept that initially did not have nationalistic and racist connotations are Mathew Jefferies ("Back to the Future? The 'Heimatschutz' Movement in Wilhelmine Germany," *History* 77.251 [October 1992]: 411-20); and Alexandra Ludewig (*Screening Nostalgia: 100 Years of German Heimat Film* [Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2011]). However, contrary to this position is, for instance, the position of Rudy Koshar, who maintains that racism has always been characteristic of the Heimat movement, and that that is the reason why it was so influential for and appealing to Nazism (Rudi Koshar, "The Antinomies of *Heimat*: Homeland, History, Nazism," in *Heimat, Nation, Fatherland: The German Sense of Belonging*, ed. Jost Hermand and James Steakley (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 111.

[143] Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, 21.

[144] Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman *Heimat, a German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture, 1890-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia,* 37.

in two spheres—in the sphere of personal experience of the geographical, and in the sphere of the imaginary, or the idea. During the Nazi times, these two aspects of *Heimat*—the geographical and imaginary—became incorporated into the idea of the *Lebensraum*:[147] Heimat becomes the imaginary expanded territory of the Reich that was projected onto the actual geographical spaces which through annexation and occupation were being turned or were supposed to be turned into the *Lebensraum*.

Another example of *Heimat* as a German idea that was projected onto a non-German geography was the concept of *Alpenheimat* or *Bergheimat*. Despite the fact that there are no Alps in Germany, this mountain region became an integral part of the German imaginary and even gave rise to a film genre associated with German cinema—Siegfried Kracauer called it "exclusively German"[148]—the *Bergfilm* or mountain film, which chronologically preceded[149] or prefigured[150] *Heimatfilme*, and was associated with them post factum.[151] Ludewig traces the beginnings of the *Bergfilm* genre to the earliest years of Wilhelminian cinema and defines it as focusing on "mountaineering and, in particular, the struggle of man in, or against nature."[152] Kracauer is one of the most famous critics of *Bergfilme*—he notes a surge in pro-Nazi tendencies

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[147] On the concept of *Lebensraum* see more in Chapter 3.

[148] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) 110.

[149] Gertraud Steiner, "Vom Bergfilm zum Neuen Heimatfilm Wie ideologisch ist der Heimatfilm?" *Modern Austrian Literature* 30. 34 (1997): 253. Steiner, as well as many other scholars, attributes the emergence of the genre of Heimatfilms to the 1950s. Johannes Moltke, however, convincingly demonstrates that though the term Heimatfilm did not denote a specific genre until the 1950s, the call for Heimatfilms was already articulated as early as 1912, and already in the 1930-40s a number of films produced in Germany adhered to the criteria of the Heimatfilm genre (Johannes von Moltke *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005], 27).

[150] Moltke, *No Place Like Home,* 28.

[151] Ludewig calls Bergfilme and Heimatfilme "cousins" (77). However, there is a general consensus, shared by Ludewig as well, that these films ultimately belong to the same genre, with the genre of Heimaifilme being the bigger category.

[152] Ibid., 76.

during the pre-Hitler period in "the increase and specific evolution of the mountain films."[153]

Reading side by side two *Bergfilms*—Arnold Fanck's *Stürme über dem Montblanc* (*Avalanche*, 1930) and Lenie Riefenstahl's *Das Blaue Licht* (1932)—he points out the similarities between the main characters in both films: "Like the meteorologist in *Avalanche*, this mountain girl [in Das Blaue Licht] conforms to a political regime which relies on intuition, worships nature and cultivates myths."[154] For Kracauer, because they work in the realm of the irrational, *Bergfilme* become a vehicle for training the audience to accept and support the type of power that operates according to irrational principles. Kracauer also points out that there are formal features characteristic of *Bergfilme*, in particular, cloudscapes, which become important for the imagery of Nazi films. Connecting cloudscapes in *Bergfilme* with the use of clouds in the opening scene in *Triumph des Willens*,"[155] Kracauer maintains that the way Riefenstahl uses the clouds in her propaganda film is an attempt to fuse the "mountain cult"—the sublime beauty of the mountains—with the emerging "Hitler cult." Thus, Riefenstahl's use of cloudscapes *Triumph des Willens* was not unique, but rather a reference to *Bergfilme* and *Heimatfilme*. It was a trope established by one of the most prolific directors in this genre—Arnold Fanck—and was used by other directors who worked with this genre, including Luis Trenker, whose film *The Prodigal Son* (1934) has a similar central narrative line to that of *Armer Hansi*'s.

The main character of *The Prodigal Son*, Tonio Feuersinger (played by the director himself) lives in the Alps. He is "a successful, well-liked, and athletic villager who works in the forest commanding a group of woodchoppers."[156] However, he after meeting an American industrialist and his daughter, he leaves the mountains to peruse a better life in the United States.

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[153] Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler,* 257.
[154] Ibid, 259.
[155] Ibid, 257.
[156] Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia,* 94.

His road to success in the foreign land turns out complicated, but after he goes through a series of ordeals, and eventually makes it into New York's high society. Right when his life seems to be settling in and he is about to start an affair with the wealthy American socialite who lured him into the US, he realizes that his heart belongs to his native mountains, and he returns home to reunite with his fiancé.

The theme of a character leaving his home to find themselves used in both *The Prodigal Son* and *Armer Hansi* is far from new—it is a traditional theme used in different kinds of genres, from folk and fairy tales to the classic German *Bildungsroman* and *Erziehungsroman*. Yet, as Ludewig maintains, extrapolating Linda Schulte-Sasse's analysis of Hans Steinhoff's *The Old and the Young King,* in *The Prodigal Son,* the main character's "finding of self is not achieved by travelling, but by returning home."[157] The same can be said about Hansi—only upon his return can he discover his true identity.

One of the reasons why both Tonio and Hansi leave their home is their striving for professional recognition, and the catalyst for both of them becomes a woman. If for Tonio, it is an American wealthy sociality, for Hansi it is a coquettish chickadee, who is a caricature of Marlene Dietrich in her role in *Der blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*, director Josef von Sternberg, 1930), where she plays Lola Lola, a cabaret singer.[158] The chickadee's feathers imitate Lola's stage gown, and her gestures—her walk, and her manner of pulling up her stockings—are copied from Lola Lola's mannerisms. Attracted to her, Hansi follows her and sings his best, but to no avail—the chickadee lures him into her bird house where Hansi receives a beating from her husband. The choice of Dietrich's character Lola Lola for the chickadee is not accidental.

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[157] Ibid., 95.
[158] *Armer Hansi*, Coquettish chickadee.
https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=129

Dietrich was an internationally famous actress and singer, whose star image was that of an emancipated woman, which was in direct opposition to the Nazi female ideal, with its emphasis on the family and child rearing.[159] Dietrich left Germany for Hollywood in 1930, before the Nazis came to power. Due to her popularity, the Nazi government, attempting to increase artistic prestige of Nazi Germany, requested her return to Germany, and offered a very lucrative contract;[160] she, however, refused. Thus, her relationship with the Nazi authorities became highly controversial—the Nazi authorities wanted her back, but could not have her, so they started a press campaign against her. First, they portrayed her as "a German actress who has shown a preference for prostitute roles in America, who is known worldwide as a German . . . and thus [gives] the world a thoroughly false and unrealistic picture of Germany"[161]; then they started spreading rumors that she was not of German, but of Russian or Polish origin.[162] The famous publication by Julius Streicher, editor of the anti-Jewish newspaper *Der Stürmer* that followed Dietrich's naturalization as an American citizen stated: "The German born Marlene Dietrich has spent so many years among the film Jews of Hollywood, that she now becomes an American citizen. Frequent contact with Jews renders her entirely un-German."[163] The chickadee luring Hansi out of his comfortable home and then not only abandoning him, but also causing his beating, is a caricature of Dietrich that personally attacks her public image and presents her as a

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[159] For more on the gender politics in the Third Reich, see, for instance, David L. Hoffmann and Annette F.Timm, "Utopian Biopolitics: Reproductive Policies, Gender Roles, and Sexuality in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union," in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, ed. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 87-130; Charu Gupta, "Politics of Gender: Women in Nazi Germany," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26.17 (27 April 1991): WS40-WS48.
[160] In 1936, when Diertrich was filming in London, the Nazi Government made her an offer of a contract for "fifty thousand pounds in any currency, tax-free, for one film, with complete freedom to choose her story, leading man and director, and an option for three more pictures on the same terms" (Leslie Frewin, *Blond Venus: A Life of Marlene Dietrich* [New York: Roy Publisher, 1956], 87).
[161] Steven Bach, *Marlene Dietrich: Life and Legend* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 186.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Frewin, *Blond Venus*, 90.

traitor. But it is also a cautionary tale against artists' leaving Germany for foreign lands that meant to discourage them from considering their chances as artists abroad.

Thus, contrary to the party ideology of *Lebensraum* according to which the land occupied by the Germans is their home, or, as Mary-Elizabeth O'Brian succinctly puts it, "The Germans literally are Germany; the people do not merely occupy the landscape, they are one with it,"[164] both *The Prodigal Son* and *Armer Hansi* follow a different formula—Heimat is the place where one feels at home with oneself and the world."[165] The emphasis on the individual feelings in this formula has Romantic undertones and is characteristic of the Romantic conception of the artist as a creative genius, which is relevant for both Toni's and Hansi's characters.

In terms of his appearance, Hansi's image is what can be called "typically German." Though the production of his image was similar in technique to the production of various animated birds in the Fleischers' and Disney studios, Hansi looks different from them. His light-brown hair is cut in an "undercut" or "bowl" style, with the long top hair parted on the side and slicked back, which is reminiscent of the haircut popular with Wehrmacht officers in Nazi times and similar to Hitler's hair style. Hansi's clothes, however, present Hansi as an artist—his feathers are colored in a way that forms a dark-beige tail-coat and white gloves, and on his neck he has a large white bow-tie which stands out against the light-beige of his front. Hansi is a talented singer, whose voice possesses almost magic power: Hansi's voice can move not only in an emotional, but also in a physical sense—his voice is capable of literally moving objects. During the first scene in which he appears, Hansi is irritated by the repetitive sound of a wind-up toy—a house with a ladder which is climbed by a wooden figure plays a plain tune which is too

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[164] Mary-Elizabeth O'Brian, *Nazi Cinema as Enchantment: The Politics of Entertainment in the Third Reich* (New York: Camden House, 2004) 103.
[165] Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory*), 19.

unsophisticated for Hansi. Hansi also becomes gradually angry with it because it interferes with his singing, so he uses the power of his voice to make a rock from the top of the house fall onto the figure and break the toy, thus stopping the tune. At the end of the film, he performs a similar act of moving objects only for a completely different purpose—he unlocks his cage by lifting the lock on it with nothing but his voice. Thus Hansi is an artist whose art of singing is capable of producing an actual physical impact.

Despite his great talent, however, Hansi seems to be alone and unappreciated at his home, so by leaving his cage and following the chickadee, Hansi looks not only for romantic appreciation, but also for appreciation as a talented musical artist. However, his escape turns out to be not only a personal, but also professional failure—Hansi's genius does not find professional acknowledgement outside of his cage, in the "free world."

In Nazi cinema, the theme of an artistic genius was particularly intensely explored in the early forties—at the same time when *Armer Hansi* was in production. Linda Schulte-Sasse, who writes about "genius films" as a distinct genre, asserts that such a concentration of Nazi cinema on the topic of artistic genius was "part of a programmatic effort to boost public morale."[166] Schulte-Sasse points out that though the Nazi "Genius films," as she calls them, are all different, they "project into the past a struggle which implicitly affirms the National Socialist present as having surmounted the instrumentalized world with and in which Genius was forced to cope."[167] She continues: "Affirmation of a supposedly nonalienated present capable of recognizing Personality is implicit in the 'master' narrative thus runs through all the films: the Genius, whether artist, scientist, or doctor, is a 'rebel' constrained by a world that fails to understand him

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[166] Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 147.
[167] Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining*, 149.

and attempts to subjugate him to 'rules,' which are inimical to his 'nature.'"[168] Contrary to the Genius films described by Schulte-Sasse, *Armer Hansi* does not have a diachronic dimension, in it, the diachronic is substituted with a synchronic spatial opposition of the outside, "free" world ruled by the wild nature that metaphorically represents the capitalist society, and cultured and artistic home.

The theme of a cultural home that stands in opposition to the wild life of a foreign country is another theme that unites *The Prodigal Son* and *Armer Hansi*. However, the main characters in these two films demonstrate different ability to adapt to the circumstances of living in foreign conditions. If Tonio manages to adapt to life in New York City, Hansi cannot. At the beginning, Hansi is very curious about everything that happens around him, and tries to explore his new environment. Soon, however, he finds out that the environment is not friendly towards him. When Hansi finds a sunflower and tries to eat the seeds, a flock of dark-colored birds attack the sunflower leaving no seeds for him.[169] He tries to drink water dripping from a tap, but swallows too much. When the storm starts, he is also incapable of finding shelter, while other birds seem to naturally succeed in this task. Hansi, though, is rejected by everybody, starting from a fair-feathered mother chicken who covers her chicks and pushes Hansi away, to multiple birds who act according to the principle—everyone for themselves.[170] These wild conditions with its motto of the jungles creates a metaphor for capitalist America. It is not surprising that it is the scene of the storm that represents the wild American capitalism is copied from Disney's *Snow White*—the foreign environment of the outside world in which Hansi finds himself is

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[168] Ibid.

[169] *Armer Hansi*, Hansi's unsuccessful attempt to compete for sunflower seeds. https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=598

[170] *Armer Hansi*, Hansi is regected by other birds. https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=671

copied from the one originally created by the most famous American animator.[171] (Fig. 45-46)

Hansi's adventures demonstrate that he cannot adapt to this environment. His calling is to be an

artist and to sing; he is unable to provide for himself and to compete with other, less cultural and

talented, birds.

If Tonio returns to "'the land of Goering' and Hitler"[172] out of his own free will, and for

him it is a conscious choice that he makes in favor of his home place, Hansi returns by accident,

but it is a lucky accident because he cannot survive in the "free world." He cannot find the

appreciation and understanding he was striving for, and thus, though he escaped home in order to

find them in the first place, his home ends up being a more rewarding place where he can finally

fulfil his dream for a heterosexual relationship—for returning back, he is rewarded with a female

partner.

Tonio and Hansi re-emigrate to their home land "at a time when Germany's political

reality," as Ludewig points out, "presented rather more reasons to proceed in the opposite

direction."[173] Ludewig maintains that "In this respect, Trenker's film is clearly political and

responds to the concerns and anxieties shared by a number of German artists (along with the

Nazis) about the threat posed by American influence on German popular culture, an influence

which was evident in film, music, theater, and the visual arts during the years of the Weimar

Republic. The socio-historical and cultural impact of international arts and cultures on German

tastes and cultural production was so significant that Tonio's return to his homeland and its

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[171] Scenes in *Armer Hansi* copied from *Snow White*: Tree branches turn into bony hands, https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=747, An owl moves out of its hollow, https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=750
[172] Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia,* 95.
[173] Ibid.

traditions can be interpreted as symbolizing a return to a pure German culture."[174] Aspiration for purity in German culture and anxiety about its contamination was one of the main driving forces of the Nazis' aesthetics. In this regard, the US exemplified the most dangerous land not only because its capitalism, presumably, could not provide an adequate system of support for a true artist, but also due to its racial diversity that presented a cultural danger. It is not accidental that attacks on Dietrich mentioned above had a racial premise—for the Nazis, race, being the essential human quality and the driving historical force of the humanity, required cultural care and protection.

A standard rhetorical strategy in denigrating whatever could be considered potentially dangerous for the purity of the German culture was to present it as inferior, underdeveloped, not artistic, and incapable of true artistic abilities. This strategy is also used in *Armer Hansi.* After Hansi leaves home, he finds himself struggling with flying due to the weakness of his wings and his inability to fly similarly to other birds. He creatively uses his weakness by introducing to his flying style elements of swimming and figure skating, demonstrating, once again, his artistic nature. However, he gets tired, and eventually he becomes nauseating from the heights and too much movement, as a result of which he falls into the smoking chimney of a house. Hansi gets out safe and sound, and even manages to use the incident to his advantage—he entertains himself by artfully playing with rings of smoke, and then makes a bicycle out of them. But his appearance changes—the smoke makes him much darker, which Hansi does not seem to realize.[175] While playing with the rings, he hears the group of young birds practicing singing and is appalled by them. The birds' voices are coarse, and they sing out of harmony, so Hansi decides

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[174] Ludewig, *Screening Nostalgia*, 95.
[175] *Armer Hansi*, Hansi's appearance changes.
https://youtu.be/n4vrt8XojA8?list=PLVWVSEfywUXFBEIywoYcatWVtCzsO5c6q&t=372

to demonstrate to them what good singing is. He joins them on the electric wires on which their choir is sitting so that different birds resemble different notes on the staff. He sits on the very top wire, and though his outfit differs from that of the birds, they all are of the same color, and for a moment, before he starts singing, it looks like he might blend in with the others. Everything changes once he starts singing his tune. He sings to the best of his skills and ability, but the birds seem to completely misunderstand how beautiful Hansi's singing is—they cover their ears with wings as if trying to hide from the sounds Hansi makes, and their facial expressions demonstrate utter discontent. Hansi, however, is completely oblivious of the birds' dissatisfaction—he is enjoying his own singing and is ecstatic that he finally found his audience. While Hansi is singing, he undergoes a transformation—the smoke from the chimney fades, and he becomes his own light-colored self again. This transformation exposes the difference between him and the other birds on the staff—all the other birds are dark-colored, and Hansi looked similar to them only because he was covered in soot. In the end, the birds get rid of Hansi by using the electric wires as a catapult that propels Hansi away from them. The conflict between Hansi and the bird choir raises questions about the nature of the aesthetic relationships between them, and about the grounds for the aesthetic misunderstanding between Hansi and the others, who, in his view, are less culturally advanced creatures and cannot appreciate his art.

Hansi's appearance, his artistic aspirations, as well as his position in the film as a culturally advanced protagonist have racial foundations: all these characteristics emphasize that Hansi is supposed to represent the Aryan race in the Nazi understanding of this term. His advanced artistic abilities are in accord with how the Nazis imagined the Aryan race as culturally more superior to other races. Curiously, even the choice of a bird capable of clear and masterful singing as the main character corresponds to the racial classification developed by the Nazi race

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theorist Herman Gauch. Gauch's classification is based on the analogy between the animal world and human races. In it, he compares the Nordic, or Aryan, race to birds. He states, "[T]he Nordic race alone can emit sounds of untroubled clearness, whereas among non-Nordic race the pronunciation is impure, the individual sounds are more confused and like the noises made by animals, such as barking, sniffing, snoring, squeaking…. That birds can learn to talk better than other animals is explained by the fact that their mouths are Nordic in structure—that is to say, high, narrow, and short-tongued. The shape of the Nordic gum allows a superior movement of the tongue, which is the reason why Nordic talking and singing are fuller…."[176] Thus, according to Gauch, just like the advanced biological build of birds, that manifests itself in their advanced cultural performance, naturally puts them above other animal types, the advanced build of the "Nordic race" ensures their racial, and thus cultural, superiority. Hansi's natural ability to sing better than any other birds makes him a character superior to any other birds he encounters.

Thus, without being engaged in a direct propaganda, *Armer Hansi* creates a representation of an Aryan ideal. Hansi is a true artist, the cultured bird with an ability to sing skillfully and beautifully that, as the film presents it, comes from his natural qualities—his race. His race is pure and unequivocal, he belongs to the most cultural and most advanced race in Nazi categorization—the Aryan race, and, as the film tells us, as a true artist he can be appreciated only in his homeland—in his Heimat. For his return to his home, he is rewarded by a female canary, Hansin, who looks like his female version. Through a seemingly innocent and not particular original plot, *Armer Hansi* recreates the structure of racism and Nazi ideology, and promotes the ideas of racial and cultural purity. The unoriginality of the plot can be seen as an application of the Nazi cultural orientation towards universal narratives that transmit stable

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[176] "Professor Hermann Gauch Compares Nordics with Non-Nordics," in *Hitler's Third Reich: A Documentary History*, ed. Louis L. Snyder (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981), 163.

traditional values. Though *Armer Hansi*'s employs imagery inspired by Disney and the Fleischers' animation, in terms of the plot development, *Armer Hansi* follows the formula of the traditional German genre of Heimat films and utilizes elements of the "genius" film genre, particularly popular in German cinema at the same time as *Armer Hansi* was produced, which makes it an organic product of the Nazi culture industry.

5.3   CONCLUSION

This Chapter focuses on the aesthetics of Nazi animation. Because of a tight intertwining of Nazi aesthetics and politics, the Chapter considers the aesthetic nature of Nazi cultural politics, and analyses how art and culture were considered to be central for the politics of Nazi Germany. Nazi top officials, in particular, Hitler, considered strong national art and culture to be the backbone of the Nazi society (Gemeinschaft), and interpreted the figure of the politician as analogues to the figure of an artist, which made the significance of the figure of the artist particularly high.

At the center of both Nazi aesthetics and politics were the concepts of "purity" and "purification." While on the political and social scenes the implementation of this concept into practice led to such atrocities as the Holocaust, in the artistic sphere, it led to following the model of realist art, and cleansing of artistic imagery from any manifestation of non-realistic, modernist, or cosmopolitan elements.

In the art of animation, this tendency resulted in adaptation of the imagery that was a spin-off of Disneyan anthropomorphic animalistic imagery. The specialized animation studio, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, founded in 1941 with support by the Nazi officials, in particular,

Goebbels, was not only supposed to compete with the Walt Disney Studios for the European market that for Germany was advancing together with the front line, but was also to reproduce Disney's success by using his aesthetics. Though the studio was founded with the purpose of producing full-length animated films, because of the lack of necessary cadres, the initial plan for the studio was to train the necessary animation workers while producing animated shorts. Due to a number of reasons, including the change in the course of World War II, bombings, and others, the studio managed to complete only one 18-minute animated short, *Armer Hansi* (1943, dir. Frank Leberecht). The main character of *Armer Hansi*, a canary and a gifted singer, escapes from his cage in attempts to find recognition and love, but instead discovers how scary and hostile the outside world is. Only upon returning back he finds everything he strove for.

The formal analysis of *Armer Hansi* reveals direct connections to and borrowings from Disney's films, in particular, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*—the ultimate model for Nazi animation. It also demonstrates the film's ties to German cinema, in particular to such genres as *Heimatfilm* and genius film, as well as such an important pseudo-documentary of the Nazi period as *Triumph of the Will* (1935, dir. Leni Riefenstahl). The close reading of the film and its cultural contextualization demonstrate how the plot of the film and its aesthetic choices are informed by the racist politics of the Third Reich, and exposes its anxieties of contamination, both biological and cultural. Thus, *Armer Hansi* sings, both metaphorically and literally, an ode to Nazi Germany as a country of pure race and culture.

6.0   CONCLUSION

On February 12, 2018, the website of the Russian Federation Ministry of Culture announced an open-for-press meeting that featured an esteemed line-up of participants, including Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinskii, Associate Minister of Industry and Trade Gul'naz Kadyrova, Head of Board of Studio Open joint-stock company "Lenfil'm" Fedor Bondarchuk, Head of Board of Studio "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" Iuliana Slashcheva, and Director of Studio "Soiuzmul'tfil'm" Boris Mashkovtsev. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss the development of Russian animation. The announced title was "Animation as a Basic Instrument of Children's Upbringing and Development." [Animatsiia kak bazovyi instrument detskogo vospitaniia i razvitiia].[1] The meeting was scheduled as a part of the preparatory measures for the governmental program, "The Decade of Childhood" that is to start "no later than June 1, 2018."[2]

The Ministry did not post any reports on the meeting, but multiple newspapers did.[3] Articles in various news sources repeated the same points, which presumably summarized the

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[1] "Soveschanie, posveshchennoe otechestvennoi animatsii,"
https://www.mkrf.ru/press/announcement/zamestitel_predsedatelya_pravitelstva_rossiyskoy_federatsii_olga_golode ts_provedet_soveshchanie_posv/
[2] " Desiatiletie detstva vyvedet rossiiskuyu animatsiyu na novyi uroven',"
https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2987980&cid=7
[3] See, for instance, Alena Sycheva, "Animatsiia kak vospitatel' pokolenii: zadachi na desiatiletia vpered,," Regnum, 14 February 2018, https://regnum.ru/news/2380420.html; "'Desiatiletie detstva pomozhet' rossiiskoi animatsii," Tlum.ru, 15 February 2018, https://tlum.ru/news/desatiletie-detstva-plotno-vozmetsa-za-animaciu/; "Desiatiletie detstva vyvedet rossiiskuyu animatsiyu na novyi uroven'," Vesti.ru, 15 February 2018, https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2987980&cid=7; Svetlana Khokhriakova, "Radi mul'tfil'mov: Medinskii prizval ogranichit' prokat inostrannykh fil'm," MKRU, 13 February 2018, http://www.mk.ru/culture/2018/02/13/radi-multikov-medinskiy-prizval-ogranichit-prokat-inostrannykh-filmov.html.

discourse of the meeting: animation is a contemporary means for children's molding;   the government should prioritize the development of animation due to its export potential;   the program of animated adaptation of Russian classical literature that the President commissioned is at a standstill because of the absence of targeted financing; it is important to create animated films that will attract school-aged children's attention to art and music; the animation industry annually receives 800 million rubles [of state funding], which is equivalent to 8 percent of the production budget of a Hollywood animated film (for instance, *Shrek*), which is insufficient; the successful development of animation requires long-term planning: it takes three years to create a full-length feature film and five years to reach its profitability. One of the articles explicitly stated that during the next decade, the new generation of children that will be shaped by the governmental program "The Decade of Childhood" will grow and animation will participate in this cause.

What is particularly noteworthy about this meeting is that its topic, the importance of animation for molding children, and its line-up, which included representatives from different spheres of economy, was reminiscent of the meetings on animation that took place in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. What stands out in the news reports is that they replicate (undoubtedly, unintentionally), the content of the multiple reports written by Karl Neumann, the Managing Director of Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, in which he explained to the officials from the Ministry of Propaganda the importance of animation and the specifics of its production. Even the comparison with American animation (for Neumann it was Disney) that brought the Ministry's attention to the lack of resources in the German animation industry at the time, and the potential of animation for export—all these were a part of the rhetoric Neumann used to persuade the Ministry to financially support animation industry. The two themes that the reports share—the

use of national literary sources for animated adaptations and the importance of animation for the growing generation were common in the discourses on animation in both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Thus, many decades later, the discourse on animation is repeated by cultural workers, who see animation as a useful tool for molding new generations of children.

The current political situation in the Russian Federation in general is similar to the situation in the 1930s. A surge in nationalistic politics, a high level of the international conflict with a subsequent increasing political and cultural isolation of the country, and the domination of a single political leader seem to repeat some of the main trends in the politics of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. This situation is also similar to the political situation in Nazi Germany, with its nationalism and racism, which in Nazi Germany informed all its social and cultural processes, and seems to be increasingly present in Russia.

In addition, there is another striking similarity in the contemporary animation production to that of the 1930s—then as now, Soviet animation was going through a major technological change. In the 1930s, a new technology—celluloid—was introduced in the Soviet Union, which brought dramatic changes to animation production and became the foundation of the newly developing Soviet animation industry. Now, Russian animation is moving towards 3-D computer animation production. In both cases, these technological transformations follow the technological innovations of American animation. The current transformation is, of course, different from the one that took place in the 1930s: the introduction of 3-D computer animation is happening much more slowly than the transition to celluloid in the 1930s, and this process is much less radical— celluloid over two decades replaced all other animation techniques existing at the time, whereas

3-D computer animation is developing together with other, more traditional, techniques. Despite these differences, the tendency towards animation digitalization is very prominent.[4]

The contemporary animation scene in Russia also demonstrates much more thematic diversity than back in the 1930s-1940s, and yet, starting from the 2000s, we see a surge in production of full-length animated features that use folklore narratives and characters.[5] The reports of the meeting on animation discussed above also reveal that the call for animated adaptations of Russian literature comes from the highest state authority—the president himself.

This repetition of the history of early Soviet and Nazi industrial animation in contemporary Russian animation points to the timeliness of this research on the animation of the 1930s-1940s. The project's focus on different aspects of industrial animation, such as animation production, the discourses on animation, and also the animated films produced during this period ensures a multi-faceted approach to the medium of animation. The theoretical framework of this dissertation project, which draws connections among the politics, technology, and aesthetics of animation and views all three dimensions of this framework as interrelated and mutually influencing, proves to be viable and beneficial for understanding the tendencies in the development of the medium of animation, and, potentially, in other media. Using this framework, the dissertation analyzes the specific characteristics of the animation industries' development in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany by looking closely at the historical processes of their establishment, studying the discourses on animation, and analyzing the actual animated films produced by Soviet and German animation studios. This project also studies the foundation and development of the two animation industries in a transnational perspective—both

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[4] Among the studios that produce digital 3-D animation are Animakkord, Peterburg, Melnitsa, and others.
[5] Among the folklore-based feature-length animated films are *Alesha Popovich i Tugarin Zmei* (Melnitsa, 2004), *Dobrynia Nikitich I Zmei Gorynych* (Melnitsa, 2006), *Ilia Muromets i Solovie Rozboinik* (Melnitsa, 2007), and many others.

Soviet and Nazi industries were heavily influenced by American animation, taking American animation as a technological and aesthetic model, and both strove to replicate the success of Disney animation. However, despite following the aesthetic model of American animation, both industries developed differently and ultimately produced different animation. Thus, as a result of the multi-faceted analysis that the project undertakes, it comes to the conclusion that transplantation of a media technology and of a media product into a different political situation with a different production culture that operates according to different aesthetic principles results in a different media product that has its unique characteristics, and that has to be studied on its own terms. The dissertation also points to the differences between the Soviet and Nazi systems, thus continuing the work of complicating the concept of totalitarianism and calling for a more nuanced approach to the ideologies that informed the cultural and political situations, in different countries that could be united by this umbrella concept.

The theoretical-historical framework used in this dissertation enabled the creation of a nuanced representation of each of the industries, as well as provided an explanation of the differences in the development of these animated industries and the animated films produced by them.

The project is based on primary archival materials and publications in periodicals of the period. The major difficulty of this research arose from the dispersion and disorganization of the archival materials on animation, especially on German animation. Even though both archives in which I worked, RGALI (in Moscow) and Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde (in Berlin), had special archival collections on the animation studios—Soiuzmil'tfil'm and Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH, respectively—many documents related to animation production and development were

filed in different collections on different studios, which required sifting through multiple documents.

Another problem with the archival materials was that many documents on animation were lots during the war in both countries. Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH was bombed and was subsequently relocated from Berlin to Dachau, and Soiuzmul'tfil'm was relocated to evacuation to Central Asia, which resulted in a massive loss of documents from the pre-war period, and especially from the first two years of the war on the Soviet soil.[6] Thus, the amount of documentation that survived is incomplete, and the types of documents available on the animation studios in Russia and Germany are somewhat different. The archival materials on Soviet animation contain financial and organizational documents, such as financial and production reports, regulations, estimations, orders of materials, etc. But there are also scripts of meetings during which animation workers discussed different aspects of animation production, including styles, types of characters, genres, ideological and thematic content of animation, etc. These scripts demonstrate the high level of animators,' scriptwriters', and animation directors' involvement into the discussions of aesthetics and technology of animation, their creative thinking about animation and its potential, as well as their attempt to find the better, most productive ways to develop animation as a medium. They also show that, despite the conveyer method of production that established a hierarchical distribution of labor, animation continued to be considered a collective creative process, in which contributions of different cultural workers were welcome and valid. Additionally, these discussions emphasize the importance of collaboration among animation directors, scriptwriters, and composers. However, the documents also demonstrate how the animation workers' ideas about the directions of animation

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[6] See the note to Soiuzmul'tfil'm collection in RGALI, Collection 2649.

development were regulated by the Party orders. The meeting discussions were often structured as a response to the Party orders and regulations, and animation workers demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm in attempting to find the best solutions as to how to meet them.

As for the archival materials on German animation, they are predominantly connected with the financial aspects of animation studio development and with the projected prospects for German animation to saturate the market of the "new Europe." With these types of documentation, it is impossible to say definitively to which extent the studio animators were involved in the process of creation of animation imagery, if it at all. However, considering other factors of the studio functioning—a large emphasis on training, which was often practically implemented through copying from Disney's frames—as well as the imagery created in *Armer Hansi* that was more of a derivative nature and was heavily influenced by Disney and the Fleischers, it is probably possible to assert that the creative labor at the studio was not organized as a collective process, but rather was more regulated from the above.

The available archival documents also reveal different positions of Soviet and German animation industries in relationship to Disneyan animation. The Soviet documents present a range of different attitudes to Disney, from the calls for adopting Disneyan animated form with a socialist content, to heavy criticism of American style, in general, and Disneyan style, in particular, and calls for development of a unique animation style. The Nazi documents display a more homogeneous approach. Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH was founded with the purpose not only to replicate the financial success of the Walt Disney Studio, but also to replicate the studio's animation style since it had proven to be popular and profitable. The full-length animation, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio*, were seen as the model for the future development of German animation.

The results of the differences in these positions are clearly seen in the films produced by both Soviet and Nazi studios—*Koniok Gorbunok* (1947, Soiuzmul'tfil'm) and *Armer Hansi* (1943, Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH). *Armer Hansi*'s aesthetics is realistic and naturalistic, whereas *Koniok Gorbunok*'s imagery is a merger of traditional Russian arts, such as traditional print—*lubok*—architecture, and ornaments, with modernist and avant-garde art and animation. Thus, Soviet animation becomes the intermedial space in which various artistic traditions, including those of modernist art—that was officially disposed of from the Soviet art scene for its formalism—were preserved and flourished. These aesthetic differences also corresponded to the differences in the realisms practiced in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Soviet socialist realism had futuristic orientations, with the grounds in traditional folklore mythology, whereas Nazi realism was grounded in Romanticism and the ideas of purity and rootedness.

The research also makes connections between the archival documents and publications in periodicals which proved to be crucial for understanding the multiplicity of perspectives on animation existing at the time. The periodicals allow for following the critical debates on what animation should do and what kind of narratives it should employ, which happened in both the Soviet Union and Germany. These publications together with analysis of the actual animated films allow for seeing the differences between Soviet and Germany animation industries in relationship to the respective countries' politics, and identifying the politics that inform animation production in both countries. Thus, Soviet animation that emerged in the 1920s as an agitational medium was considerably less engaged in agitation by the 1930s. During the 1930s, it transitioned from the emphasis on entertainment, which was also characteristic for Soviet cinema at the time, to the emphasis on education, especially children's education, and upbringing—the same emphasis that the current —in a broad sense of the term—films, to a large extent based on

fables and fairy-tales. However, during the World War II, there is a return towards agitational animation, the main purpose of which is which is to raise anti-Nazi sentiments. Nazi animation, on the contrary, positioned itself as purely entertaining. It was supposed to steer clear from any political topics, and yet, as analysis of the film *Der Störenfried* demonstrates, it was heavy with the current Nazi politics, including the politics of space (*Lebensraum*), as well as racism.

The technological specific characteristics and changes in animation of the period became the third dimension of the dissertation's framework. The analysis of the technological innovations used for creation of the animated imagery at both studios reveals not only the technological grounds of the animated imagery, but also the connections of animation produced in the Soviet Union and Germany with animation of the Walt Disney Studio and the Fleischer Studios. However, the technological dimension of the project is less developed, and calls for further research.

The post-war history of the animated industries in the Soviet Union and Germany is very different. Soiuzmul'tfil'm became one of major European studios that up to the early 2000s remained among the leaders of drawn animation production. Deutsche Zeichenfilm GmbH seized functioning as an independent studio, but became the foundation for Eastern German animation studio DEFA, whose animated films were popular in the Soviet bloc and beyond it. But in both cases, these early years of the studios' functioning set the groundwork for Central and Eastern European animation, and became formative for its development.

Animation, in general, is a largely understudied medium. Studies in Soviet and Nazi industrial animation are absolutely insufficient and are not included into a general discourse of the media and cinema studies. Putting under scrutiny the animation industries of these countries

as well as the animated films produced there, this dissertation opens a new direction of research and criticism.

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