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CHARACTER ANIMATION

THE CREATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS OF CARTOON CHARACTERS
FROM 1914 - 1964

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INTRODUCTION

I propose to discuss the history of character animation in the cartoon short, from 1914 to 1964 with reference to the following characters; Gertie the Dinosaur, Felix the Cat, Mickey Mouse, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Tom and Jerry and the Pink Panther. In order to fully understand these characters it is imperative to comprehend why and how they were conceived. Dealing with the creators and developers who moulded and refined them and in the process put so much of themselves into the characters. n/s

The Film Industry ran parallel with the Animation Industry, with one being inevitably influenced by the other. I would like to discuss the influence of the film star and more specifically of the comedian on the animated character.

All of the above mentioned characters became stars in their own right. Each one offered the audience something new and different while incorporating humanistic qualities and variations of humour. Their uniqueness and appeal culminated, to result in their ultimate success.

These characters evolved from American society and provided entertainment for the masses, as an American product, communicating with its society. I would like to ascertain whether cartoon characters reflected or influenced society or maybe did both.

CHAPTER ONE

ORIGINS

Winsor McCay was the first animator to demonstrate the full potential of character animation. His reputation as an animator rests in a handful of films he created at his own leisure. Primarily a comic strip artist, he was able to translate the comic strips that he had made famous onto the screen with minimum modifications. He produced his first film in 1911 featuring the adventures of 'Little Nemo in Slumberland' (based on his son). However because of smoothness of movement audiences assumed that he had made little Nemo move by means of models, and trick photography, when he used the film in his Vaudeville act. For his next film he used an animal which could not be faked and so Gertie the Dinosaur was born in 1914. McCay had previously used a prototype in 'Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend' 1905 for the New York Herald. The strip shows a galloping brontosaurus skeleton entering a horse race. Gertie had a childish but appealing personality. Seeming to be a cross between a trained circus elephant and a frisky puppy. She was tame but not domesticated, shy and stubborn and wept huge tears when criticised. Her weight is suggested in the way she shifts back and forth on her feet and when she kneels to drink water the ground sags beneath her. Executed in delicate line drawing set against a plain background, the highlight of the film seems to be when Gertie appears to take an apple from McCay's hand and eat it. Audiences realised they were seeing something new i.e. a film composed of drawings featuring a character with an appealing personality. At about this time the first animation studios were founded. Between 1915 - 1920 many technical innovations were made i.e. pegs, for registering drawing, celluloid instead of paper and the rotoscope (i.e. ability to trace over live film).

Cartoons made slow but steady progress during these years with characters such as Koko the Clown, Mutt and Jeff and the Katzenjammer kids coming to the fore. However these cartoons were made quickly (i.e. one a week) subsequently the quality animation was poor with a weak plot and story. In 1919 Felix the Cat made his debut in "Feline Follies". Created by Otto Messmer at the Pat O' Sullivan studios Felix was to become the first cartoon star. John King, a Paramount producer gave him the name, drawing it from Felicity (for good luck) and Feline (for cat). The inspiration for the character came from Rudyard Kipling's 'The Cat that Walked by Himself'. Felix's early appearance, in contrast to Messmer's previous work is rather spiky with harsh facial features but after all he was an alley cat and therefore his appearance was in keeping with his sharp and occasionally malicious personality. At first Felix appeared monthly with Messmer doing most of the drawing but in 1924 production was doubled. Extra staff were employed. Messmer still worked out everything in his mind. There was no script and a film began with an idea and a few sketches. Felix inherited some of Messmers gestures i.e. the work, the "eureka" gesture (slapping fist in palm while winking) and the sly look out of the corner of his eye. Bill Nolan, head animator, was responsible for reshaping Felix into circular forms. Felix was now easier to draw and retrace, "as forms are retraced there is a tendency to drift toward simpler forms no matter how one tries to maintain the original shape" (1)

Future animators such as George Stallings, Raoull Barre, Burt Gillet and Dana Parker added subtle changes of style in rendering Felix. However Messmer still controlled his temperament, the stories and the gags. The assembly line method of production within the Sullivan studio ensured that Messmer was in full control. Production formulas were established, i.e. Felix walked across the screen in fifty four frames. Now well equipped with a unique walk, range of gestures and expressions Felix became the unrivalled star of the twenties.

During the twenties experiments with sound became apparent. In 1924 Lee De Forest developed a practical sound system. It's introduction into film was inevitable. Messmer who was aware of this approached Sullivan and proposed adapting Felix to sound. However Sullivan was enjoying Felix financial success and had become distanced from the animated world. He regarded Messmer's proposal absurd and refused. A new star was emerging Mickey Mouse who could speak, without sound Felix could not sustain his popularity. To make matters worse Educational, who distributed Felix films refused to renew its contract. Sullivan in 1930 tried unsuccessfully to regain Felix's popularity by producing a film called 'Oceanitics' with post-synchronised music tracks and sound effects. Sullivan died shortly afterwards leaving the studios in legal shambles. The rights to Felix belonged to Sullivans relatives in Australia with Messmer unable to do a thing. The staff left to find jobs elsewhere. Felix faded into the 30's to be revived in the 60's and produced in colour. Mickey Mouse now took over where Felix left off who was not only to become a star but also the most famous character ever created.

Mickey who when conceived was nicknamed Mortimer, made his debut to the screen in 'Steamboat Willie' the first film with synchronised sound. His creator, Walt Disney began his career as a commercial artist and entered the animation industry in the 1920's producing such series as the 'Laugh o Grams' and Alice in Cartoonland'. He worked with associate Ub Iwerks on "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit" 1924 - 1927

Oswald's button down pants and gloves would later become Mickey's trademarks. A contract dispute with producer Charles Mintz at Universal led to Disney losing the rights to Oswald. A main character was needed quickly for the studio and Mickey seems to have evolved through the process of elimination. Disney is said to have conceived the character while Iwerks designed his physical appearance, quite similar to Oswalds.

He was "a rubbery black construction of circles and garden hose limbs".

(2) This cartoon animal with more of a human touch than Felix was essentially Disney's alter ego sharing the same personality, ideas and attributes Mickey's heart belonged to his girlfriend Minnie Mouse from the start. She gives him a horseshoe for luck before he departs in 'Plane Crazy'. Secondary characters such as Pete the bully (1928), Pluto (1934), Donald Duck (1936) Mickey's Circus takes life seriously. Flys into a rage when things go wrong and Goofy were introduced in later cartoons. Disney never lost his desire or ability to behave like a child exemplified in Mickey's carefree attitude to life and indifference to the future. He went through various modifications and his cleaned up image is apparent in late 1930's cartoons. Some accuse him of being 'squeaky clean' and too morally righteous.

'Steamboat Willie' and its success caused animation to take on a new meaning. The thirties saw great experimentation in the Disney Studio. Virtually all their cartoons of this period were a breakthrough of some kind i.e. 'Flowers and Trees' (1932) - 1st technicolour 'The Three Little Pigs' (1937) a revelation in character animation because although they looked the same their personalities distinctly different animation, 'The Old Mill' 1937 - 1st use of multiplane camera, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs - 1937 - 1st feature film. So by the end of the thirties, through technical innovations and financial success, Disney held the monopoly of the animated film market. The only other character who near rivaled Mickey Mouse was Betty Boop, who was created by Grim Natwick for director Dave Fleischer in 1930. She was the first cartoon vamp and was to become the animated sex symbol of the 1930's. Based on the original Boop Boop a Doop girl Helen Kane, she rolled her eyes, flipped her skirt, snapped her girlish garter and sang "You can feed me bread and water or a great big bale of hay, but don't take my boop-coop-a-doop away". She introduced Popeye, originally a comic strip character to the screen in 1933.

From the mid thirties onwards many animation studios moved and set up in Hollywood, already film capital of the world was soon to become the cartoon capital.

Studios were striving towards creating a main character, a star of their own. Warner Bros introduced Porky Pig to the screen in 1936, in 'I haven't got a hat' directed by Friz Freleng and written by Bob Clampett. Clampett had originally created Pork and Beans who were part of a team. Pork was renamed Porky by Freleng after two of his school mates, who were fat brothers nicknamed Porky and Piggy. Joe Dougherty who actually stammered, voiced Porky Clampett while directing Porky in 1937 got inside the character i.e. would talk, walk and feel like him because as a child he too short and chubby and thus could relate to him even more. Tex Avery also directed Porky Cartoons. Porky introduced two notorious characters to the screen. Firstly Daffy Duck in Porky's Duck Hunt 1937 created by Tex Avery with Clampett writing storylines and gags. This zany unrestrained Duck reminded audiences of a fast talking used car salesman laughing at his own jokes. He acquired his lisp from producer Leon Schlesinger, which in later years was slowed down to become Sylvester's voice "Sufferin Succotash" Chuck Jones refined him and made his character grow. In later cartoons Daffy's character was tamed down and became a foil whose schemes back fired.

Bugs Bunny was the second character which Porky introduced to the screen in Porky's Duck Hunt 1938 created by Bob Clampett and directed by Ben Hardaway Ben 'Bugs' Hardaway gave the character his name who bore a stark resemblance to Disney's Max Hare in the 'Tortoise and Hare.' In this cartoon and in 'Hare um, Scare um' 1939 he is more annoying than enjoyable being even more highly strung than Daffy, contrary to a rabbit's nature. Tex Avery who directed the 1940 cartoon "A Wild Hare" still made some physical changes and gave him the phrase "Eh What's Up Doc!" He also

changed his character. In the vein of Groucho Marx he became a smart aleck with a casual air about him. Chuck Jones who directed most of the Bugs cartoons further refined bugs, placed him in a forest setting and gave him his absurd sense of timing. He also made him stand with one leg straight and the other akimbo because bugs was not afraid. Bob Clampett gave him his life like personality, with a human quality of varying moods sometimes at peace and other times mischievous or irritable.

Bugs became Warner Bros star while at MGM Tom and Jerry were the headliners. Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera introduced this famous duo in "Cat Gets the Boot" 1940 with one trying to outwit and do the most damage to the other. Hanna and Barbera were the creative force behind Tom and Jerry series of the forties and fifties. The latter doing stories, sketches and layout while the former did the exposure sheets. Since Tom and Jerry didn't talk, swift music in keeping with action was scored by Scott Bradley. In the earlier cartoons Tom and Jerry looked homely like your average cat and mouse. Due to gradual changes, Tom became more evil with lurching eyebrows, Jerry, more lovable and good natured. Even though Jerry instigated most of the trouble, Tom became renowned as the troublemaker. The series began to be produced much quicker and the pacing accelerated due to Tex Avery's influence. The cartoons even took on Avery traits, i.e. popping eyeballs and dropping jaws. Secondary characters were introduced. Spike, his son Tyke and little Nibbles (Tuffy) Jerry's infant counterpart. The last series of cartoons produced from 1955 - 56 in cinemascope weren't as imaginative, with sleeker and linear animation, the characters resembled cardboard cut outs. After this MGM shut down its cartoon unit feeling it was no longer profitable. All later attempts in the 1960's to revive the series by Gene Dietch and Chuck Jones were unsuccessful, mainly because they had lost charisma.

Also at MGM Studios, Tex Avery was working on a new character, Droopy the Dog. He had similarities to the comedian Buster Keaton. He was based on Wallace Wimple a supporting character in radio's 'The Fibre McGee and Molly Show' played by Bill Thompson who voiced Droopy. He was introduced in 1943 in "Dumb Hounded". He appeared to be weak and defenceless. "His dwarfed size compounded by deadpan", (3) gave Droopy an innocent humble appearance. He is cable of being aggressive if need be showing off his strength.

During the forties Disney became the master of the feature while Warner Bros and MGM ruled the shorts. In 1941 a strike at Disney studios caused several artists to leave, who then formed U.P.A. They wanted to get away from Disney type naturalism and realism and began to aim for a more flat stylised look. In 1949 they created Mr. Magoo who was to become their main star. He made his debut in "Ragtime Bear". Magoo was a bad tempered short sighted middle aged fuss pot, whose Dickenson red nose, and face with croacking voice were a tribute to W.C. Fields. Introduced to the screen by John Hubley and developed by Pete Burness. His best cartoon was 'When Magoo Flew' (1954) which received an academy award.

The fifties saw the demise of the cartoon short. With the introduction of T.V. the number of cinema goers dropped dramatically. Theatre owners began in some cases to show double bills instead of cartoons. Even if cartoons were used, owners were no longer willing to pay for expensive and lavish shorts. T.V. however could become a potential market, where production needed to be fast. The result being Saturday morning T.V. as we now know it with poor animation and quality of idea.

The sixties were dark days for animation which was becoming associated with Saturday morning shows and childrens programmes. However one worthwhile character did arise in 1964. The Pink Panther. Friz Frelang

had been asked to animate the introduction to Blake Edwards 'Pink Panther' movie. The Mirisch Corp. on seeing the character asked him to animate a series. These purely visual cartoons with lively ragtime music proved quite inexpensive and also very popular.

Towards the end of the sixties combined with the success of such films as 'Yellow Submarine' and 'Fritz the Cat' and a craze for nostalgia caused a revival of interest in animation and more specifically the Golden Age of animation.

FILM STARS AND CARTOON CHARACTERS

The Animation and Film Industry have run parallel to one another since their invention in the late 19th century. It is therefore inevitable that one would be influenced by the other. More specifically speaking cartoon characters were greatly influenced by live film stars, in particular comedians. They reflected various live star personalities humour and situations.

Comics are to cartoons what novels are to the feature film. The comic strip evolves from one persons creation of characters and stories with a freeplay of fantasy. Comics in the U.S. were produced weekly as a supplement in a newspaper and so encompassed an adult and child audience. Most earlier animators worked as comic strip artists before entering the animation industry and ultimately brought with them many comic strip qualities. Story was told in frame by frame sequence which was easily adapted to film. Animators such as Winsor McCay, Dave Fleischer and Pat O'Sullivan looked to the comic strip for their characters, visual language and storyline. Felix, Popeye and Krazy Kat had originally been comic strip characters and became much more successful than they had been in the comic strip.

Comics drew freely from live action and so too did cartoons but to a lesser extent. Some characters were caricatures of live action stars, others were more ambiguous. It excited audiences to see Charlie Chaplin or Laurel and Hardy cartoons, as these stars might be starring in the main feature. It also marked a contrast between the real world of live action and the world of animation with its characters and crazy antics. The most developed example is Disney's 'Mother Goose Goes to Hollywood' (1939)

displaying brilliant characterisations of such stars as Katherine Hepburn as Mother Goose, Greta Garbo, Edward Robinson, Spensor Treacy and Charles Laughton. Cartoon characters also stepped into the live action world. In 'Anchors Aweigh' Jerry, William Hanna and Joe Barbera's creation matches Gene Kelly step for step in their famous dance sequence.

While the above mentioned characters mirrored live film stars, the similarities between them and Felix, and Mickey, Betty, Porky, Daffy, Bugs and Tom and Jerry are less obvious.

Otto Messmer, Felix's creator had previously worked on a series of twelve Charlie Chaplin cartoons (1916) which were distributed by the New York Herald. He worked from films and photographs supplied by Chaplin. Felix was bound to be influenced by him.

"Almost every comic routine you ever see in the pictures owes its origins to Chaplin". (4)

Felix's black blot of a body was as universal as Chaplin's 'tramp'. They were both instantly recognisable and appealed to a mass audience cutting across age and class boundaries and are based on the belief that 'there are little people'. They win over the villain by means of lighthearted tricks. Felix's sharp and sometimes malicious personality was very close to Chaplin's character in his Keystone films. Both live in a dreamland where they can fulfil their ambitions. The versatility of Felix's tail (i.e. can function as an umbrella, a sword etc.) seems to be an extension of Chaplin's use of his cane. Ongoing themes of Felix cartoons parallel Chaplin. For example Felix as outsider, cat put out for the night, the tramp is always an outsider. Felix the good Samaritan rescues Miss Muffet from the Spider, Chaplin in "City Lights" gives the money he has been accused of robbing to a blind girl in order to restore her sight even

though he will serve a prison sentence for his actions. Hungry Felix is a continuous theme. Chaplin "is a poor little fellow starving to death but wanting to be a socially prominent gentleman" (5)

Felix seems to have clipped into Chaplin's repertoire of gags and slapstick routines from his music hall days also using similar visual puns. Donald Crafton in his book "Before Mickey" states that by 1926 "Felix was the most popular screen character living or animated except Chaplin". (6) Felix's success inspired other studios to create characters similar to him. In doing so these 'pseudo' Felixes possessed certain chaplinesque qualities. In Disney's "Alice in Cartoonland" series Alice's cat, Julius bears a stark resemblance to Felix. His later creation Oswald the lucky Rabbit shares the same blot of a body. Disney's next and most famous character Mickey Mouse bore "a family resemblance to Oswald" (7) but his figure was more compact. Mickey like Felix was instantly recognisable and appealing. Audience identified with him more as a "human performer" than animated animal. Mickey's inherited chaplinesque qualities from Felix were further instilled by Disney's fascination with Chaplin's work. Both Disney and Chaplin had the ability to 'hynotise' the audience.

Silent cartoons depended on actions rather than verbal jokes and even though Disney was now incorporating sound the main emphasis was still on action. In the earlier Mickey cartoons he was mischievous and occasionally malicious like Felix. He was also heroic, like Chaplin's tramp he wins over Pegleg Pete, the big burly villian in 'Steamboat Willie'. He regularly rescues Minnie from badie.

'Gallopín Gaucho' (1928) is similar to a Douglas Fairbanks melodrama. Mickey takes on Fairbank qualities such as athletic prowess, enthusiasm and wanting to be a good sport. Mickey's exploits surpass anything Fairbanks could have imagined. He rescues Minnie, who is imprisoned by

Pete in a castle in Argentine, by stretching out his tail to the length required and whirls it up the casement and then producing a crank from nowhere proceeds to wind himself up. Interestingly Fairbanks starred in a film called "Gaucho" (1927)

In 1933 Mickey meets an animated Harold Lloyd and Chaplin in 'Mickey's Gala Premiere'. His character, however is primarily influenced by Disney, so much so that he came to be regarded as his alter ego. Through Mickey, Disney preached morality by giving a message of optimism. Mickey and Disney's other characters were much more humanistic than their predecessors. As Disney went on to achieve technical perfection and naturalism his characters exploited less and less the world of make believe.

In 'The Art of Walt Disney' Christopher Finch claims that Mickey and his gang provided for the sound era the kind of entertainment that Chaplin and the Mark Sennett comedians had provided for an earlier generation. (8)

The only other major cartoon star of the thirties was Betty Boop. She, the first cartoon vamp was based on the original Boop Boop A Doop girl Helen Kane a paramount star. Drawn from a song sheet cover featuring Kane, the original Betty was half girl and half poodle. She wasn't very attractive in the beginning, with no visible neck, her thighs were too wide and her hands were frog-like. With periodic changes in episodes of Talkcartoons she became more humanised and subsequently more successful. This animated 'bathing' beauty became known worldwide as a jewish princess and a sex goddess, to be compared with Mae West. Both rolled their eyes and pouted their lips and were one of the boys. Both Betty and Mae films were about suggestiveness, while Betty was scarcely clad, Mae was wrapped in yards of fabric, slipping in as many inuendos as possible. The former did too but to a much lesser extent, i.e. "Hot Dog". Both Mae and Betty

teased and encouraged randiness in their audience. In 'Is my Palm Read?' Betty's sexual values are exploited when she visits a nearby palm reader Professor Bimbo. Hew turns out the light upon her entrance in his mind reading room to get a peak at Betty's silhouette as her dress becomes seethrough. The majority of stories had sexual overtones. In "Boop Ooop A Doop" 1933, Betty is propositioned by the boss the proprietor of local circus. This leads to violent tussel between the ringmaster and Betty who won't give in. The ringmaster is finally subdued. Mae West has being credited with bringing the Hays Office into being, which led to both characters sexuality being tamed down. The Hays Office set up in 1922 controlled film content with regard to religion, sex and violence. Betty's sexuality was the reason for her success. As a result when it was curbed she lost appeal.

The more innocent Porky Pig arose from the idea to create an animated version of Hal Roach's Our Gang series, using the idea of kid comedy. The two main characters were Pork and Beans. Beans was left behind while Pork, renamed Porky shot to stardom. Bob Clampett, Porky's creator, who usually wrote stories and gags was greatly influenced by Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd and Laurel and Hardy. Porky character seems to be primarily moulded on that of W.C. Fields. Forever battling on and letting off steam with phrases like "Godfrey Daniel" in a world where nothing was amusing. Porky's awkwardness and conflicts with destiny and authority are also reminiscent of Fields. Both are plump and move slowly (if quicker pace is required they both waddle) keeping gestures close to their bodies. On occasion both become henpecked husbands looking after squawling children.

Bob Clampett and Tex Avery teamed up in 1937 to introduce Daffy Duck to the screen. His voice was originally based on film star Hugh 'woo woo' Herbert, a schizophrenic fuss budget, before acquiring a lisp from Leon

Schlesinger. This zany character can be compared with William Powell in 'The Thin Man' (1934) who plays an eccentric husband and together with his wife set out on zany adventures to solve crime mysteries. This film along with a few more of similar nature coined the phrase "Screwball Comedy".

Bugs Bunny's smart aleck nature and Brooklyn accent are reminiscent of Groucho Marx. Both walk in a similar way especially when they are angry. Bugs ever present carrot and Groucho's cigar are resorted to in times of crisis for a moment of comfort, also giving them time to think about the situation. Both react in the same way to a death threat. In 'Love Happy' Groucho is informed by a Romanian that he will kill him in an hour, placing an hour glass on the desk. While the potential killer is deciding which gun to use, Groucho proceeds to fill the hour glass with salt from a sack which appears from nowhere. Bugs in 'Rackiteer Rabbit' (1946) is asked at gun point "where's the dough" he then dashes into the kitchen whips up a bowl of dough, rushes back and presents it to Rocky, the ugly gangster.

In 'Rabbit Punch' (1947) Bugs at one stage is attired in an outsize "tuxedo" equipped with butterfly collar. Like Groucho in 'Night at the Opera', both look like confident tricksters rather than dignified personalities. Both characters poke fun at hypocrisy and pomposity. Groucho's catch phrase "You know of course this means war" conjures up images of when Bugs is disturbed from his peaceful surroundings. He then decides "that does it" as in 'Acrobat Rabbit' (1946) and goes "upstairs" to sort the problem out with Nero, the lion, only to step into the lion's mouth, his answer to the problem is to shout "Pinocchio".

Bugs' sense of timing is similar to that of Chaplin. Which is understandable as Chuck Jones who gave Bugs this attribute had lived near Chaplin, as a child. He once recalled an incident where Chaplin reshot a

scene fifty two times to get the timing right (this particular scene played for fifteen seconds on screen.)

Bugs was also a straight man like Bud Abbot. When Elmer Fudd teamed up with him he was always trying "to kill the wascally wabbit" but never succeeded. They were like Laurel and Hardy, Fudd like laurel was a slow thinker and slow reactor. He was like W.C. Fields in the way he kept his gestures close to his body. Bugs on the other hand was a quick thinker and was fast footed. He gestured freely was never afraid to go outside his own boundaries.

The death scene in 'Tales of Vienna Woods' is like something Hitchcock would have conceived. Porky and his dog are hunting Bugs. The trio meet up and a fight evolves over Porky's riffle. Bugs throws the gun away which lands in a squirrels nest in a nearby tree. The angry squirrel shoots the trio. Porky and Dog survive, while Bugs remains flat on the ground clutching his chest and turns all shades of green. Porky removes Bugs' hand from the expected wound to reveal that he is wearing a bra. Bugs jumps up and pulls it over the two characters heads. Now wearing a tutu, he dances off screen to the music while Porky and the dog stare at the audience in shock.

Edison makes an appearance in cartoon form in Super Rabbit (1943). At work in his laboratory he tests out his new invention super carrots on Bugs.

Tom and Jerry paralleled Laurel and Hardy in anarchic comedy. One is constantly trying to outwit the other. Tom like Hardy is continually submitted to disaster. Through his stupidity and awkwardness Laurel seems unaware of his destructive nature whereas Jerry is fully aware of his actions. Both Laurel and Jerry are instantly lovable. While the audience

feels for Tom and Hardy's misfortunes we still crack up laughing at whatever has happened to them. Hardy never gives up trying no matter how much he is humiliated. Likewise Tom never gives up the chase. Both team ups occasionally land themselves in similar situations. Laurel's singing annoys Hardy who bashes him on the head to shut him up. Laurel then starts singing like a woman. This is paralleled in 'Nit Witty Kitty' (1955) when Tom is bashed on the head and begins to think he is a mouse.

In both of their worlds objects have dual purposes Laurel and Hardy's carpentry tools are used like barbers tools. Tom and Jerry use a frying pan as a tennis racket. Unconscious objects (i.e. sweeping brush, ironing board) become lethal weapons.

Tom and Jerry live in a world of their own sometimes intruded by the domestic, Spike or a lady cat. Laurel and Hardy live together in lodgings who attend to one another's needs and oblivious to outsiders with girlfriends making rare intrusions.

Droopy's obvious live actor equivalent is Buster Keaton. Both have short legged bodies and move in a sudden and machine like way. He seems to adapt Keaton's walk and both rarely smile on screen. Both are passive characters who respond to chaos and hostility by remaining calm, absorbing frustration, and turning a blind eye to fear and failure. In 'Dumb Hounded' (1943) Wild Wolf escapes from prison at lightening speed with several bloodhounds in heavy pursuit. Seconds later Droopy crawls out the main prison gates. He stops, turns to the audience and declares that he is the unsuspecting hero "Hello Folks, I'm the Hee-ro". He recommences walking and turns all shades of red with embarrassment. Like wise Keaton in 'Sherlock Junior' who plays the village 'dimwit' becomes the unsuspecting hero in an elaborate dream sequence.

Both always remain calm. Droopy in the 'Shooting of Dan McGoo' (1945) acquires a girlfriend who is a voluptuous singer in a saloon bar. He keeps his cool when Wild Wolf's eyes pop out, jaw drops and starts howling on seeing her. Likewise Keaton doesn't crack up in 'Sherlock Junior' when he is wrongly accused of stealing money and subsequently banished from his girlfriends house. The fast and frantic villians never manage to escape from these slow moving but clever heros. Both seem indestructible. Droopy in 'Droopy's Good Deed' (1951) helps an old lady (the villian disguised) cross the road amidst frantic traffic. Just like Keaton sails through red lights, uncoming trains and explosions. Both are shy when rewarded, for example Droopy in 'Dumb Hounded' for recapturing Wild Wolf and Keaton when he wins back his sweetheart.

The Pink Panther is reminiscent of Chaplin. In format alone, the cartoons dialogue is replaced by lively ragtime music and visual humour. He like Chaplin's tramp is an outsider and therefore a social commentator. He is always striving for something. In 'Pink Quaterback' (1968) he finds a quarter which drops on the ground and starts rolling. He spends the remainder of the cartoon chasing after it, eventually repossessing it but not without leaving a trail of mass destruction behind him. His cigarette holder is an attempt at sophistication. Pink Panther dangling from a window in 'An Ounce of Pink' (1965) is reminiscent of Harold Lloyd dangling from a building in 'Feet First' (1930).

Each character discussed reflected the personality situation and humour and situation of a live silent comedian and later the talking comedian. Some like Bugs, reflected a combination of both. Occassionally the cartoon character resembled his live star counterpart in appearance. These characteristics add spice to the characters and cartoons alike.

CHAPTER THREE

NOVELTY AND APPEAL

A star is born through his or her uniqueness. His/her personality is well defined and clearly understood. Through regular viewing the audience become acquainted with the "star" "to be a fan is in a way to be in love"

- (9) During the Golden Age of Cinema people went to see the star and not the film. Nowadays the reverse has happened. Stars become stereotypes. As a result stars found themselves being typecast. Mary Pickford was still playing the innocent young girl at the age of thirty. They become the commodity which the studio markets to the public. This star system followed through to the animated film industry. But through the nature of the medium the animated star is more liberated. Character development runs along the same lines as a playwright's development of a person. That is deciding what he/she will identify with what will amuse or upset etc. The characters to be discussed in this chapter are all stars in their own right, all having unique qualities to offer us.

Felix, was the first animated character to gain worldwide popularity. primarily because he was the first animal hero. We enjoy seeing a hero defeat the big bad villian. He had a strong personality, being both witty and intelligent. He was a cat, a domesticated animal that most people like. Due to Educational's (distributors of Felix films) advanced marketing concepts Felix was continually in the public eye. Adverts appeared in periodicals, such as the Saturday Evening Post. Theatres were supplied with cardboard cutouts and other promotional material. Soon the public could avail of Felix merchandise. The first Felix doll was

Drugstores and Hearst United Cigar chain but soon became widely available. Other merchandise included tableware, toys and games. While children were now able to physically possess him, adults could identify with Felix's movements, gestures and experiences. From 1923 onwards Felix appeared in comic strip form, in Pearson's Weekly.

Felix's success led many other characters to follow in his footsteps. Although Mickey Mouse bore a vague resemblance to Felix in the beginning of his 'career' he quickly developed his own personality. Mickey has become the biggest animated star of the twentieth century. His success was immediate because he was the first speaking character, It was sustained because "audiences could identify with him in much the same way as they would a human performer" (10)

Mickey, who became the Disney studios trademark, was marketed much more extensively than Felix had been. He also diversified into the comic strip and the first Mickey Mouse annual went on sale in 1931. By the end of the thirties Mickey was an international celebrity, known in Italy as Topolion and Miki Kucti in Japan.

Betty Boop's success was due to her sexuality. Her producer, Dave Fleischer is said to have pioneered the gag packed cartoon for adults. Betty brought cartoons out of Kindergarten. She aroused and teased counterparts and audience alike, at a time when sex was still a taboo subject.

Porky, one of Warner Brothers first stars, was a pig who stammered and struggled through life being continually hassled. He finds nothing in life amusing. The more he gets hassled and frustrated, the more, we, the audience are amused. We are confronted with the notion that we are not alone in our struggle. In realising that there is someone worse off than ourselves we begin to feel superior.

The neurotic Daffy Duck is appealing for very different reasons. We can envy his individualistic and unrestrained nature. He can 'shoot his mouth' off at somebody he dislikes and call him/her a jerk if he wishes. We can take risks with him without worrying about the consequences.

Bugs Bunny began life as neurotic as Daffy, which was totally off putting. After all you would expect ducks to act like Daffy but it was unsuited to a rabbit's nature. Bugs soon developed into the cool calm collected hero that we all now know and love. The wise cracking rabbit who always outwits his opponents in a totally irrational way.

The novel idea of creating a cat and mouse team resulted with Tom and Jerry becoming MGM's biggest stars. They formed a perfect character contrast. Big versus small with the latter always winning. They continually try to outwit one another. We enjoy seeing Tom defeated even though Jerry usually starts the chase. They have become inseparable, one would be unable to endure success without the other. They arouse within us powerful emotions of love and hate. We enjoy watching Tom being physically punished because he tried to catch a mouse, Jerry.

Droopy's virtually non emotional response to life makes him special. Small and weak in appearance he is capable of accomplishing astonishing feats in the face of hostility and chaos, which seems second nature to him. Victory yet again for the little man.

The creation of the Pink Panther marked a new direction in animation. He is pink, silent, suave and sophisticated. Pink Panther was a combination of UPA surrealism and strong characterisation in the vein of Warner Bros and MGM. He achieves his goal no matter what the circumstances or consequences may be.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM

The animated star possesses both human and animal characteristics. We can relate to his or her human qualities and experiences. We can see more clearly, our good and bad points when transferred to the animated form and can laugh at ourselves. The characters are animal-like in appearance but their mannerisms are for the most part human. They walk and talk like humans, have faults and make mistakes. They enjoy human comforts and use human orientated objects. They get involved in human situations in which we can relate their unreal actions to human experience.

Their ability to converse began with Mickey Mouse. Although he squeaked at first he soon conversed on a human level, voiced by Walt Disney. His voice remained squeaky, thus holding true to his origins, that is a mouse. If a real mouse could speak we would imagine him to sound like Mickey. Betty Boop speaks with a sweet high pitched voice in the vein of a french poodle. Porky never grunts like a pig, but speaks with a stammer. Daffy rarely quacks like a duck but instead has a lisp. Bugs has a Brooklyn accent. Droopy speaks in monotone in keeping with his 'drole' nature, that of a bloodhound. He rarely barks in 'Dumb Hounded' he meets another dog on the pavement. They bark at one another and when finished Droopy turns to the audience and says "Dog talk!".

Most walk upright on two legs. Front legs transform into arms, and paws become hands. Felix can walk upright but can also walk on all fours. Porky shuffles along, never slobbering around like a pig. Daffy doesn't waddle like a duck. Bugs has the speed of a rabbit but walks and runs like a human.

Felix gets dressed like a human. His fur in two parts resembles a sweater and pants. He attaches his ears like a hat and screws on his tail. Donald Crafton in 'Before Mickey' states that, "Felix's self creation is

emblematic of the animator's creation of a cat out of pen and ink". (11)

The original Mickey Mouse wore just a button down pants and shoes. As his character developed so did his wardrobe. He is always suitably dressed for the occasion. Betty wears a rather skimpy dress complimented with accessories i.e. earrings, bracelets and stillettos. Porky Pig goes hunting in suitable attire equipped with shotgun. Daffy and Bugs wardrobe is as wide ranging as their exploits. Daffy as cowboy, sailor, farmer. Bugs as orchestra conductor, pianist, gangster, boxer and even Boo Peep when he puts on the wrong costume. They often dress in the unexpected to amuse. Bugs dresses as an old woman in order to protect the rich old lady from the money minded Yosemite Sam. He goes so far as to walk down the aisle with him. Yosemite Sam is saved from a fate worse than death, when Bugs's dress gets caught in a nail revealing his true sex. Tom and Jerry are occasionally in costume. They wear swimming trunks on the beach and in 'The Two Mouseketeers' wear Musketeer outfits. If occasionally the situation calls for costume Droopy will comply. For example in 'Droopy's Good Deed' he is a boy scout wearing his uniform. Pink Panther's clothing is his fur, which he takes off at night and puts on his pyjamas.

Felix lives in a house, Mickey owns a house. Porky lives in an apartment with room service. Bugs resides in a burrow in the countryside, the interior resembling a house. In 'Acrobat Rabbit' he is awoken by a noisy neighbour and goes "upstairs to sort them out". In 'Rackiteer Rabbit' the travelling Bugs decides to stay overnight in a deserted house. He burrows a hole in the floorboards with a drill and descends into his make shift home. Jerry's residence although mouselike from the outside (i.e. a hold in the wall) is humanised inside. His smallness is emphasised by for example match sticks propping up the bed. Droopy moves from his kennel to his inherited mansion in 'Wags to Riches' (1949) happily adapting to his new surroundings. Pink Panther's house is equipped with all the modern conveniences.

All enjoy human comforts. Felix enjoys a smoke and a few sociable drinks. He sometimes has a few too many and in his drunken stupor experiences "strange worlds" (12). Mickey likes to relax in his armchair beside the fire reading the paper. Porky likes to sit down and smoke his pipe, while Daffy and Droopy like a beer. Pink Panther enjoys watching T.V. Some even have household pets. Amusingly Mickey Mouse has a pet dog, Pluto, and in 'Lend A Paw' (1941) he takes in an abandoned kitten. Betty Boop, who is half poodle, has a pet dog, Bimbo. Porky has a hunting dog and in 'Awful Orphan' orders a pet canary but gets a smooth talking dog instead.

They all experience romance at some stage. Felix frequently chases the white cat who he eventually marries, only to become a henpecked husband. Mickey and Minnie are 'going steady' having dates like human couples. The earlier Betty had a boyfriend, Pudgy but was later demoted to her pet dog. Porky marries and becomes a henpecked husband looking after the squawling infants. In 'Hold the Lion Please' (1942) we are introduced to Mrs Bugs who "wears the pants" in their "house". Tom and Jerry are hit by the cupid's arrow in 'Springtime for Tomas' (1946). Tom is continually trying to show his virility to the elegant white female cat. In 'Muscle Beach Tom' (1956) he and a rival tom cat do battle in the quest to win the lady's heart. We are introduced to Droopy's girlfriend in 'The Shooting of Dan McGoo' (1945) who is a voluptuously caricatured saloon bar singer. In 'Pink At First Sight', Pink Panther goes in search of his valentine. After much mistaken identity he finds her and they live happily ever after. In 'Pink Daddy', Pink Panther adopts a baby alligator which a stork left on his doorstep.

HUMOUR

"Comedy is lighthearted focusing on fun, joy and confusion" (13) It appeals to the unsophisticated taste of a mass audience. The Cartoon's main function is to make people laugh and keep them laughing. Sigmund Freud regarded humour as a tension relieving device. As discussed in Chapter Two cartoon characters were influenced by live film stars all of whom were comedians. Consequently the character in question would inherit the live star's particular brand of humour. The silent era produced an abundance of very talented comedians such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Harold Llyod and Laurel and Hardy, who have yet to be surpassed.

Felix like the silent comedian was an acrobat, dancer, clown and pantomimist. Like Chaplin and Keaton he was a dreamer. But because he was animated his imagination was more vivid, which resulted in the semi-surreal quality of his cartoons. They were replete with visual gags. His versatile body and multi-purpose punctuation marks and visual puns. For example Felix is unable to read his newspaper. To rectify the situation from a nearby road sign which reads 478 miles he removes the 4 which becomes his chair, the 7 his pipe and 8 becomes his glasses. He, like most comedians is small and seemingly vulnerable. He always manages to defeat the villain with light hearted tricks.

Although Mickey had the added advantage of sound emphasis was placed on the action with humour being visual rather than verbal. The cartoon began at a slow pace but quickly accelerated in speed to reach the climax. 'Plane Crazy' begins with assembling of the plane, proceeding to take off, resulting in a climax when Mickey's frolics cause Minnie to fall out and the plane crash lands. The sequence of events is laced with puns and gags. A dog starts the plane with his body, a peacock's fan becomes the propeller and Minnie's bloomers become a parachute. Gags like Minnie

unable to climb into the plane is assisted by Mickey who pulls her in by the bloomers. Story plots are tightly knit together and become more homely as the character developed. For example 'Mickey's Delayed Date'. Mickey tries to get to the party on time. Dressed in formal wear he sets out. En route he has several encounters with oncoming traffic, gets splashed with water and is bowled over the the eager Pluto. He arrives in tatters to be happily informed that the party is fancy dress. Harmless good natured fun.

The much criticised violent humour of Porky, Daffy, Bugs, Tom and Jerry and Droopy cartoons marks a contrast. It has been said that these cartoons would lead to the development of violent tendencies especially in children. Chuck Jones emphatically denies this claim, stating that he "never killed any of his characters". (14) After all children know these characters don't really exist, its fantasy. Similarly children don't see 'Alice in Wonderland' as perverse when reading it. Characters are indestructable. They can be squashed or crumble to bits and still return to their former shape. They can fall thousands of feet and survive. In a Tex Avery cartoon the character will probably pull on his brakes.

Porky is never amused which is why he's so funny. We feel sorry for him but we cannot refrain from laughing when something happens to him. For example when he is confronted with a more dominant opponent, be it Daffy, Bugs or the dog who decides to become his pet. Occasionally the table turns in his favour. In 'Awful Orphan' after numerous attempts to rid himself of smart aleck dog, he gives in and decides to keep him. The dog decides to leave. Porky now becomes the dominant one, making the dog stay on his terms. The screwball comedy of Daffy cartoons calls for good hard laughs from start to finish. Hollywood producer, Frank Capra became the 'King' of screwball comedy during the thirites. Th produced such memorable films as 'You can't Take It With You' (1938) and 'Mr. Deed Goes

to Town' (1939). He is like a fast talking salesman, which was to be mirrored in Daffy Duck. He was an eccentric like Capra characters always trying to put things in perspective. In 'Porky's Duck Hunt' (1936) he orders Porky to stop catching ducks or there will be trouble. Porky continues regardless and that's when war breaks out. Porky eventually surrenders. Daffy's impulse to say and do what he feels, more often than not lands him in a sticky situation. Daffy as Cowboy, decides to take on the big evil looking outlaw by pointing his gun at him. The villain bites off half the gun and eats it. To which Daffy replies "probably didn't have his iron today". Hastily made decisions also land him in a spot of bother. Convinced that his opponents gun is unloaded Daffy demands to be shot. But of course the gun fires, only to riddle his beak with bullet holes. Daffy is always hyper whereas Bugs is always at ease. Bugs always outwits his opponents with a series of clever gags followed by a witty punchline. There is a happy balance between verbal and visual humour. if he becomes involved in a situation where there is no realistic way out, Bugs will come up with a totally irrational solution. For example in 'Rabbit Punch', Bugs is tied to a railway track as a train approaches. The cartoon suddenly stops because Bugs has cut the film strip. His opponents are usually hypocritical like Yosemite Sam or pompous like Elmer Fudd. We are even more amused when he pokes fun at and defeats them. He holds a healthy irreverence for everything. In 'Acrobat Rabbit' (1946) he ascends from his burrow into Nero, the Lion's mouth only to shout "Pinnochio". His cartoons usually commence with Bugs being disturbed. He then retaliates and gets even. Therefore the situation begins as stable becomes unstable finally reverting to stability.

Tom and Jerry don't speak, so humour is purely visual. Their cartoons involve comic chases and fights and are fast moving accompanied with music. Tragedy becomes comedy i.e. if something horrible happens Tom we are amused. In the same way we laugh when Oliver Hardy is humiliated.

Simple mechanical objects become lethal weapons such as wheels, ironing boards, doors, banana skins, carpets, plugs and sockets. Objects can also take on new functions i.e. frying pan and egg are used like a tennis racket and ball. Humour seems to be derived from situations rather than the character. With Droopy the reverse is the case. He is a humourless hero who responds to unfavourable situations in an honourable and expressionless way. The slow moving Droopy is contrasted with extremely fast moving opponents who continually plot against. They set up traps which never seem to work on Droopy, eager to know how he survives they try it out for themselves. But the plan backfires with the baddie injured by his own trick. In the Avery style, Droopy cartoons packed full with visual puns, one foot in the grave, drinks on the house etc.

The success of the above mentioned characters can therefore be divided into three main categories. Each character offers something new or diverts from the norm in some way. Be it Mickey Mouse the first talking character or Pink Panther who is pink, rendered in a new and different style of animation. Their combination of animal and human characteristics help us, the audience, to better relate them and their crazy world. This very combination enables Betty Boop, half poodle half girl, to become a sex symbol compared with live film stars like Mae West. We allow ourselves to love a pig, an animal that most people dislike, without questioning why he talks, walks and lives like humans. We come to dislike a cat because he tries to catch a mouse when in reality we would reward and admire our pet for attempting this task. Their various blends of humour amuse us for different reasons. We start to evolve a preference for a particular character because of his/her type of comedy.

CHAPTER FOUR

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Does mass entertainment reflect what society wants or does it influence society to want what it provides? In this chapter I propose to discuss if animation through its characters' humour and situations reflect or influence society. Or do they embody both? Did Felix reflect the swinging twenties? Why did Mickey Mouse rise to stardom in the years of the Great Depression? Why was Daffy Duck more popular in the thirties than forties? Why were fast moving cartoons laced with slapstick so popular in the war years? Was the animation industry effected by the Cold War?

The twentieth century has become the century of mass man. Mass entertainment communicates with a huge and anonymous audience. Successful communication requires reference to the central concerns of society, namely ideologies, beliefs, habits and situations. Therefore the characters under discussion who evolved from American society, must be truly american reflecting or influencing society.

Felix was a product of the twenties. The First World War ended in 1918. A year later Felix first appeared on screen, viewed by a pessimistic and confused audience. It was a time of recession. In 1919 the Volstead Act brought prohibition into being. It was an attempt to "Americanise the U.S. ... and was aimed at the notorious drinking habits of immigrant working men" (15) The banning of alcohol did more harm than good. Free enterprise enabled fortunes to be made from bootlegging. There was also a drastic increase in organised crime resulting in the emergence of the Mafia. The following year women were permitted to vote for the first

time. The twenties saw the emergence of the 'new woman', who was better educated, working and socialising more. From 1921 onwards the economy began to pick up. Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover encouraged business enterprise at the expense of social and economic planning. Farming and ethnical communities suffered. There was a move from rural to urban centres. Films were first shown in Penny Arcades and Nickledeon Theatres in urban working class areas. The audience soon increased encompassing all classes and creed.

The majority of the Film and Animated Industrys' leaders were imigrants who had come to America, the land of hope and freedom. From the turn of the century immigration had drastically increased. So much so, that in 1920, the Quota Law was introduced to limit the number. They wanted to become part of American Society. As part of the integration process imigrants adopted traditional American values of hard work, honesty and morality with respect for family life and traditional sex roles. Subsequently these beliefs were injected into Film by its imigrant leaders. They also embodied the give'em what they want instincts and entertainment for entertainment's sake.

Felix was an entertainer, whose visual humour appealed to both the imigrant and the American. This small hero encouraged optimism and idealism and reinforced the American dream of democracy and individuality. He was also a rebel, drinking at a time when Prohibition was still in force. His unhappy marriage to a dominant wife may reflect the twenties vogue, to be divorced. Racism was rampant. In film black children were portrayed as "witty wide eyed waifs who experienced feats of the imagination presumably denied by white children" (16). Although Felix's personality was influenced by Messmer and Chaplin, he also bore a resemblance to Sullivan's previous creation Sammy Johnson (1915) who was derived from a comic strip 'Sambo and His Funny Noises'. Sammy was identified as a black.

Although Felix did "experience feats of the imagination" and was influenced by Sammy's personality he wasn't regarded as a black.

Felix reflected Otto Messmer's ideas, beliefs and statements. The cartoon 'Felix in Hollywood' ends with Cecil De Mille handing Felix "one of those long term contracts" while in reality O'Sullivan and De Mille were arguing over renewal. His philandering and alcholic themes reflect O'Sullivan in the late twenties. In later cartoons Felix's paranoia may reflect Messmer's worries over the rights to the character he created and developed but didn't own.

In America during the twenties stockbroking became a national hobby. Subsequently the Wall Street Crash (1929) affected the whole nation. "It meant more to Americans than two World Wars" (17) The economy was in a shambles, unemployment soared. Peoples' hopes and dreams were shattered. They were forced to reshape their image of America and themselves. Dreams of democracy and individuality were now unrealistic. Mickey Mouse made his first public appearandce the year previous to the Crash, yet he managed to become the star of the great depression. He became the all american hero, the eternal optimist, bubbling with enthusiasm and energy. He struggles to overcome the villain or awkward situation, always managing to succeed. He encouraged the audience to tackle their own problems in an optimistic manner. His humour uplifted the audience's spirit and permitted them to escape from their troubles for a while. Mickey often found himself in situations that were prevelant at the time. In 1927 Charles A Lindbergh completed the first non stop trans-atlantic flight and became the all american young hero. In 'Plane Crazy' (1928) Mickey decides to make his own plane. While reading a book entitled 'How to Fly' he comes across a picture of Lindbergh and tosses his hair in order to look like him. Mickey's earlier carefree and mischievous nature vaguely resembles the popular gangster hero of the early thirties live film.

Occasionally his opponents were gangster-like in appearance. Mickey symbolises good and therefore succeeds while the gangster is 'evil' to be defeated. Because Disney continually strived towards realism when Mickey did the impossible it seemed all the more credible. The Three Little Pigs' song who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf was intended to help people whistle away their worries about the Depression. The song became very popular. The story has a moral message. Two of the pigs build their houses hastily of straw and wood, so they can play. While the third pig builds a house of stone having no time to play. He warns the others that he'll be safe and they will be sorry. The Big Bad Wolf blows away the playful pigs' house, who then seek refuge in the third pig's house. They remain joyful even though their homes have been demolished.

While Mickey enjoyed success in America he was denounced by Nazis because he was a mouse, 'a dirty animal'. The Russians referred to him as a warmonger.

In contrast to Mickey, the idealist, was the downtrodden Porky Pig. He reflected public sentiment of the thirties and in some instances reflected similar situations. Agriculture had suffered during the twenties and became the worst hit area of the Depression. In 'Milk and Money' (1936) Porky sets out to save his father's farm from a mortgage broker. Daffy, unlike the majority of his audience, was able to be individualistic and unrestrained. His experiences and achievements were ones which the audience would like to enjoy but were restricted either economically, socially or ethnically. Through Daffy the audience was allowed release their inhibitions and frustrations. Betty on the other hand, released sexual inhibitions in her audience. There was increasing public concern over the film content which resulted in the formation of The Production Code Administration (1934) under the direction of Joseph Breen. The

sexual content of films were toned down and so too was Betty Boop, resulting in her loss of appeal.

From the mid-thirties onwards the economy began to improve and by 1940 it was relatively stable. Just as people were beginning to feel optimistic again they were faced with another dilemma that being the Second World War. With impending war, the public needed to be reassured that the American dream was still alive. The result was a revival of rural cartoons depicting the old Wild West such as Porky's Lone Stranger (1939). The audience was confronted with notion that americans had previously overcome problems such as war and could do so again.

As a result of World War 2 people were seperated form their families, some never to be seen again. Audiences now wanted action, movement, colour, music and comedy. Newsreels became more aggressive and cruelty was more strident. Cartoons such as Bugs Bunny and Tom and Jerry evolved which were fast moving with violent humour. They sometimes made reference to the war. In 'Falling Hare' (1943) Bugs sits in front of a B52 bomber situated in an army airfield. He reads a book 'Victory Thru Hare Power' and is amused to learn that gremlins are wrecking planes posing a serious threat to Americans. At this point a gremlin scoots past him who then tries to blow up the plane. He abducts Bugs and takes off in the plane. Bugs eventually gains control of the aircraft, which goes haywire and rapidly looses altitude while gaining speed. It suddenly splutters to a stop in mid-air with the gremlin informing the audience "sorry folks ran out of gas". Bugs then remarks "yeah, you know how it is with these A cards". A Cards were used during the war as part of Franklin Roosevelt's gas rationing plan. In 'Any Bonds Today' (1943) Bugs and Porky with an army sergeant do a version of the 'yam'. In 'Supper Rabbit' (1943) Bugs marches off to "Tokoyo, Berlin and points east" dressed as a Westpoint soldier. MGM's Blitz Wolf features three little pigs as american soldiers

who put up a fight to the Wolf who resembles Hitler. This cartoon was nominated for an Academy Award but lost it to Disney's 'Der Fuehrer's Face', starring Donald Duck and a caricatured Hitler.

Animation studios produced military training films, posters to sell bonds, and logos for various units of the armed forces. The 18th Airforce Base Unit set up its first motion picture unit. Theodore Geisel created the cartoon character Private Snufu for Frank Capra's army signals corp film unit. Bob Clampett and Chuck Jones worked on the series which was incidentally only shown to soldiers. Pluto towing away mines appeared on the insignia of the Mine Division 19 USS, Howard. While the logo for the Motor Gun Boat 51 - London featured Mickey firing a sling shot from atop a swordfish. While Daffy and Donald tried to evade drafting, Mickey, Pluto and Bugs willingly went to fight for their country.

Disney was involved in two main war projects the first being an instructional film for the Signal Corps entitled 'Two Down And One To Go'. The second was an animated feature 'Victory Through Air Power' (1943) which proposed victory might be achieved with the aid of long distance bombers.

World War 2 came to an end in 1945. During the war America enjoyed full employment. People now feared unemployment and a recession similar to that proceeding the First World War. Recession was avoided and in the work place women were encouraged to return to pre-war duties as housewife thus making room for returning GI's. In 1946 witnessed intense consumer spending and the beginning of the Cold War. Stalin broke all promises he had made at the Yalta Conference (1946) having Eastern Europe and most of the Balkans within his control. The 'Iron Curtain' descended. Events such as the Berlin Blockade and The Korean War made the public realise the

possibility of a Third World War. America now feared the spread of communism and its infiltration into American Society. The House of Un-American Activities Committee's investigations of 1947 resulted in Congressional witch hunts in search of communist sympathisers. Hollywood was one of the first victims of the witch hunts. A combination of writers, producers and directors who refused to sign the First Amendment were blacklisted and became known as the 'Unfriendly Ten.'

Walt Disney feared communism. Combined with the strike at his studio in 1941 when he felt betrayed and communism, he began to distrust people. His Father-like image disappeared and the studio became more like a factory. Americans now feared loss of identity, communism and the 'Bomb'. There was a compulsion to be in harmony with the crowd. In 1954 Hanna and Barbera at MGM produced 'Good Will to Men' about the destruction of the human race by the 'Bomb'.

In the course of the HUAC investigations Charlie Chaplin was interrogated for left wing sympathies. He wasn't blacklisted but was ostracised by Hollywood society. He spent the next four years in virtual isolation. He became as his 'tramp' had an outsider. The Pink Panther is reminiscent of Chaplin's 'tramp' and therefore must encompass the real Chaplin in isolation. The question remains, was Pink Panther formulated as a reaction to what had happened to Chaplin?

All the above mentioned cartoon characters reflected the society from which they evolved. Some influenced it while others encompassed both. Felix reflected the swinging twenties. Mickey rose to stardom in the years of the Great Depression, because he was optimistic and idealistic and helped audiences escape from their troubles for a while. Daffy sustained greater popularity in the thirties than in the forties. His personality, humour and situations appealed to the people of the

Depression. The audience of the forties because of different social circumstances reacted to differently to characters and circumstances. Their sense of humour had also changed. It was a time of war, when audience now wanted fast moving cartoons laced with slapstick. The animation industry was affected by the Cold War, Walt Disney now feared communist infiltration. While the Pink Panther seems in a way to be a reaction to interrogation.

CONCLUSION

Gertie, the first example of character animation spurred other animators to follow suit. It developed producing such characters as Felix, reaching its peak in the thirties and forties. Mickey Mouse, Betty Boop, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny and Tom and Jerry. The advent of Television resulted in the demise of the cartoon short. However it did introduce a new outlet for animation. Saturday morning TV came into being with poor quality animation. Some characters were now adopted for TV and older cartoons were re-run. The 60's saw the rival of interest in animation and the popularity of the Pink Panther.

The creators and developers in moulding and refining these characters impregnated them with much of themselves. Characters also acquired attributes and characters of live film stars adopting their brand of humour and in some cases similar situations. They appealed because they offered the audience something new and different. Their combinations of human and animal characteristics and variations enable us to, and better understand them. They were truly American all reflecting their times, while some influenced others did both.

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FOOTNOTES

- (1) Donald Crafton, Before Mickey p.313
- (2) Charles Soloman & Ron Stark, The Complete Kodak Animation Book p17
- (3) Jeff Lenburg, The Great Cartoon Directors p.71
- (4) Barry Norman, The Movie Greats p.239
- (5) Peter Cowie, A Concise History of Cinema p.64
- (6) Donald Crafton, Before Mickey p.317
- (7) Christopher Finch, The Art of Walt Disney p.49
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- (9) Roy Armes, Film and Reality p.138
- (10) Christopher Finch, The Art of Walt Disney p.50
- (11) Donald Crafton, Before Mickey p. 346
- (12) Donald Crafton, Before Mickey p.339
- (13) Glenn Wilson, The Physcology of The Preforming Arts p.43
- (14) Jeff Lenburg, The Great Cartoon Directors p. 27
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- (16) Donald Crafton, Before Mickey p.327