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The National College of Art and Design

**FEMALE CHARACTERISATION IN ANIMATED FILM -
AN ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL STEREOTYPING**

by

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Visual Communication 4



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INTRODUCTION

DOVE

Small Book

I propose to examine the history of female characterisation in animated film from the early nineteen twenties to the fifties in America and analyse their impact on the audience of those days. I will try to analyse American society and its demands from the moral to the social consciousness and how they both paralleled and deviated from the Hollywood scene.

I have selected various characters which I feel to be must illustrative of the stereotypical approach to females. Their images changed over the years as social and moral thoughts dictated. The females of the animated screen though, were based upon and compared with actual stars but they were actually a race apart. They often possessed an ethereal quality and a vulnerability which real Hollywood stars often lacked. Animated females needed only the basic essence of a star to be attractive to their audience.

Most of these characters prevailed at a time when America was between wars and at the height of the Great Depression. Only through the cinema could people relax and unburden their thoughts as their eyes were subjected to those airy images which were like a dream, so real yet non-existent.

In animation, fantasy worlds were easy to create and characters would accomplish feats. **Tex Avery's** characters exhibit this to the greatest degree with characters whose eyes can pop out or body fall apart without any apparent harm coming to the character.



Betty Boop and Mae West both lost their careers as a result of censorship.(No.2 &No.3)

I will discuss women's liberation as regards their outlook in the twenties and thirties, their independence in the forties, becoming part of the workforce after the return of their men from the war. In keeping with that I will discuss the movie scene which measured alongside this upheaval and its subsequent portrayal of these times. Women changed character in the movies as much as they did in reality; there were innocent dream girls who hid their sexuality; there were the cold- or warm-hearted vamps who displayed theirs and after World War Two, there were the notorious **Film Noir** women, who displayed a treacherous sexuality, drawing men to their webs much to their subsequent detriment. These films were often filmed in a bleak light, the women often using weaker men to further their ambitions. This type of film portrayed the new independence of women, but it also may have been a cry of distress for society to return to normal after the war. (In other words, for women to return to the kitchen and start taking notice of their families or else the corruption of the women of Film Noir would quickly ensue!)

The censorship laws from the mid-thirties to the fifties changed the visage of animated starlets as well as existing ones. Some characters, notably **Mae West** and the equally popular animated **Betty Boop**, lost their charm through the strict codes laid down by the Hays Office and its right-hand man, the Legion of Decency,

concerning sex. They eventually lost their careers even though they were tailored to the whims of the codes. They just were not the same. Betty was forced to become a fully clothed bachelor girl, a boring image compared with the sexy starlet she used to be, sporting a garter and mini skirt and her career declining slowly and steadily after that. Mae West was forced by the code to become a "bad girl" on her way to redemption and became a self-deprecating comic, but her career officially ended in 1938 as her new image was just not as exciting as the image she had once portrayed: that of a saucy woman who was not afraid to flaunt her sexuality and to whom men were unused to saying no.

Tex Avery's **Red Hot Riding Hood** and **Swing Shift Cinderella** also had the censors breathing down their necks, but he managed to carry off very dubious scenes indeed nonetheless, so his series was not spoiled.

For the duration of the censorship codes, sex in films became somewhat puerile. It seems amazing that movies remained under the thumb of censorship for such a long period: close to two decades with little or no rebellion. It was understandable at the time of the Depression because of the economic slump that also hit the studios. The censors were clever though, beginning their rules at the pre-production stage of a film, so that, if it was considered unworthy, the producers just did not bother to continue, so the film was never even made.

Consequently, they eventually lost their careers.

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I will discuss a few selected characters because of their comparability and diverseness. Some are vamps, some are dream-girls, some are nagging girlfriends, and some are small-minded and fickle. All of them attract men like flies. Some have even been resurrected and star in such contemporary features as **"Who Framed Roger Rabbit"** (1988) alongside real actors.

CHAPTER 1

WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND HOLLYWOOD

FROM 1920 TO 1934

ROAD
SMALL BOOK

BOOKS IN ENGLISH AND HOLLAND

FROM 1850 TO 1914

The twenties in Europe and America were looked upon as a reward for what had preceded them, namely the First World War. They were the post-war chaos years, innocent and playful in comparison with the tragedy of the war. They have been described as containing

co educationalists, Mom's dancers, vegetarians, teetotalers, professors of economics, drug takers, boozers, socialists, gossip columnists, playwrights, communists, Roman Catholic converts, painters and poets, all having an uninhibited fling . . . they were years of psychological compensation for what preceded them.

(no. 6, p. 15)

They were years of eternal optimism with regard to peace, and, in America, that peace extended to prosperity as well. In Europe, people wanted peace without conditions of money.

By the time the Depression set in in America, there were eleven thousand millionaires, over twenty-six million cars with a tendency for two-car families and people were encouraged to buy shares on the stock market and sell them at a profit. Fortunes were made, especially in fraudulent cases where banks and certain companies began to invest money which was not theirs to invest on the stock market. These businesses would then pocket the profit without anyone being the wiser for it. The twenties was a decade with no sense of guilt or social conscience. Communism had not yet left a lasting mark and class differences went unabridged.

Perhaps the greatest upheaval of the norm was the increasing independence shown by women of the twenties.

has been in the past and will be in the future.

It is a fact that the world is not a perfect place.

There are many things that we can do to make it better.

One of the things that we can do is to help the poor.

We can do this by giving them money or food.

We can also help them by giving them education.

Education is one of the best ways to help people.

It gives them the skills they need to live better.

It also gives them the chance to improve their lives.

So, if we want to make the world a better place,

we need to help the poor and give them education.

That is the only way to make a difference.

Let us all work together to make the world a better place.

That is the only way to make a difference.

Let us all work together to make the world a better place.

That is the only way to make a difference.

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In Europe and America, they began to wear lipstick and smoke and drink in public. Promiscuity became more prevalent as girls threw away old-fashioned values. By 1928, one in ten girls carried contraceptives in their purses. By 1928, one in six marriages ended in divorce: divorce became a fashionable word. One woman summed up the mentality of the time with the phrase "It's much more exciting to be a divorcee than an old maid". It was fashionable and expected to be daring and oblivious to the accepted norm. Women wore their hair short in bobs and their skirts grew steadily shorter too. The skirts lengthened again at the end of the decade. It is said that hems came down with the stock market.

The taste of freedom for women had come during the Great War, when women had to take over men's jobs while the men were at war. They were earning their own money and thus began to claim the right also to give themselves to a man of their choice. The short leaves and sudden partings of wartime made this seem a privilege, not a sacrifice. "Petting parties" became a feature of American youth culture. One girl in "this side of paradise" said "I've kissed dozens of men, I suppose I'll kiss dozens more (no. 6, p. 24). This was said as early as 1919. Five years previously a kiss might have constituted an engagement!

New forms of dancing complemented the changing face of sexuality in the twenties. Men were, for the

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first time, putting their ungloved right hands on the backless dress of their partner while dancing.

Bad language among women was on the rise. Words such as "damn" and "lousy" now peppered their speech. Perhaps one of the women's champions on screen was the infamous Mae West, the brassy blonde who began the age of the **Hollywood Vamp**.

In Hollywood, women were treated a little differently from how they were perceived in society. "We believed in Dream girls", said Sam Behrman in "Tribulations and Laughter". "It was a more guileless time." (no. 6, p. 70) In spite of all the instant sex and permissiveness that was the rage in society, women on screen were put on pedestals. They gave the illusion of being unsophisticated and needing protection, yet they had an underlying sexuality. Dorothy Parker said: "Protectiveness and pass making were never far apart. In the early twenties you were first a beauty, then an actress" (no. 6, p. 70). Dream girls were preferably blonde. Many brunettes dyed their hair with bleach to achieve this look. The typical twenties beauty was summed up by Lady Diane Cooper's photographer, Cecil Beaton, upon photographing her in Venice in 1928: "Her face was a perfect oval, her skin white marble, her lips japonica red, her hair flaxen, her eyes blue love-in-the-mist" (no. 6, p. 73).

As the twenties dwindled to the end, a new breed of woman came to the screen called **Vamps**. They were

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basically like whores with either hearts of gold or no heart at all. Their passion was indicated by their heaving bosoms (nice girl did not have bosoms, nor were they plastered in make-up like such vamps as Theda Bara, Pola Negri and Myrna Loy. Curvacious figures came back into vogue.

For a time, with the advent of sound in film, stories and plots became trivialised in favour of singing musicals and this was churned out by the film companies to such an extent that people became bored with it. Stories became just a medium for songs. With the onset of the thirties, people wanted characters in movies: people who talked and acted, as well as sang.

To look up the words "Wall Street" in the Encyclopedia Britannica, you will find a cross reference: "see panic". If you then attempt to find panic, you will find nothing at all to do with economics. The market was going down, because it was going down. What really happened was the swing from optimism to pessimism. The Wall Street Crash in October 1929 brought the gilt-edged walls of Hollywood down a peg or two. In the rest of America, accountants found themselves selling apples and farmers dumped their surplus goods, unable to get a good price for them; they were migrating east and west looking for work, only to find the economic situation as bad everywhere else.



Jean Harlow, The First Blonde Vamp.(No.3)

Sometimes, in order to forget their problems in the bleakness of the Depression, people flocked to the cinema to see the untarnished stars. The Depression did not hit the movies as early as it did everything else. **Jean Harlow**, a screen goddess of the early thirties, updated the image of silent-movie vamp. Until Harlow, vamps were mostly sultry brunettes. Blondes were the good girls, the fairy-tale princesses men married to forget dark-haired vamps. From Harlow on through, vamps were more inclined to be associated with being blonde. The typical vamp usually wins her man but loses him in the end as the standard comeuppance for a vamp. In 1933, Harlow starred in "Bombshell" which satirised sex symbols and movie stars, people who could afford to live in a brand new palace of a Hollywood house during the Depression, when movie goers were trying to figure out how to pay next week's rent. They enjoyed the joke of the film and flocked to see it.

As the Depression hit Hollywood, some producers reverted to adding mixes of sex and violence into their moves to swing the audience. Mae West became famous at this time. Her films expressed female desires with a shocking frankness usually reserved for male characters. She set out to become what had never been before: a woman who had sex without guilt, who did not need love, who turned men into sex objects, who never had kids and would not regret it, and to whom no man

ever said no. She never varied or expanded her role or never played anything else. She was Paramount's hottest property from 1932 to 1938 until the censors clamped down on her.

Meanwhile the Depression hit the previously unattainable Hollywood stars. They had always attained an air of fantasy and immortality about them which people had respected and admired. Now they were brought down to the same level as the rest of America. Hollywood cut stars' salaries under President Roosevelt's "Recovery Plan" which was intended to try and help the floundering economy. Despite their outrage, stars still earned more than Roosevelt himself. He decreed that no star was to earn more than \$2000 a week, a not inconsiderable fee. The audience became distraught at the cracking porcelain images they had built up of Hollywood stars. Newspapers fed them titbits such as the fact that Gary Cooper walked around Hollywood trying in vain to change \$100, or that Wallace Beery used candles in his mansion for the duration of the Depression, and his wife made her own dresses. Then, on top of everything else, rigid censorship was introduced.

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never placed in the hands of a few
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CHAPTER 2

CENSORSHIP FROM 1920 TO 1952

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SMITH 3500K

GENERAL CHIEF 1930 TO 1933

Once the Depression effects had seeped into the movie industry, censorship was soon to rise and hold its grip on the movies until the fifties.

From 1908 to 1915 American censorship had been carried out with mixed efficacy by the National Board of Review, but it had no real power over producers who continued on, making films without looking back. In July 1916 the National Association of Motion Picture Industries came into being due to protests made by people who questioned the morals of films. It wrote a list of written standards, but was unable to enforce them, so failed in its objectives . In 1922 people clamoured again for proper censorship especially since there had been a number of scandals reported involving Hollywood stars and these were frowned upon by the general public more than the content of the films themselves.

Before 1934, Hollywood led Europe in an adult depiction of sexuality. Without exposing more than a soft white throat, **Norma Shearer in A Free Soul** and **Claudette Colbert in Honour Among Lovers**, displayed all of the erotic assurances and sexual pleasure of the liberated woman, both realistically offering themselves to men they found attractive, unconcerned by the inconveniences of marriage or social obloquy. John S. Sumner, the secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice said:

With the increase of leisure among women, as among men, immorality will increase, because idle hands and Satan's work are as closely related today as ever. Attendant conditions of our present day civilisation have left millions of people with insufficient honest work to occupy their time. The hardest problem for some of these people to solve is what to do next. Girls and young married women are largely in this unfortunate class. They must be educated in methods of properly utilising this new freedom from what they disdainfully call drudgery.

(no. 2, p. 43)

A general outcry was raised about the transformation of young women, from God-fearing maidens who valued their virginity into hedonists who exposed their legs, bobbed their hair, went unchaperoned and indulged in gross familiarities in parked cars. This appeared to be mirrored in Hollywood films, though in actual fact the girls were still good and unsullied by desire or corruption.

In 1922 the **Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association** (MPPDA) became a new regulatory body. Its president, Will Hays, had a strong political reputation as a Republican reformer. His first step was to enlist the support of the very people who had clamoured loudest for censorship. In 1924, he proposed a formula whereby producers had to forward a copy of each story together with the observation of a reader upon any aspects of the treatment which might be considered questionable. This proved to be the most effective action yet taken towards censorship, as it meant that questionable films were rejected at the pre-production stage and it

and the interest of the community, it is
necessary to have a clear understanding of the
situation. The first step is to identify the
problem. The second step is to determine the
causes of the problem. The third step is to
develop a plan of action. The fourth step is
to implement the plan. The fifth step is to
evaluate the results. The sixth step is to
make adjustments as needed. The seventh step is
to report on the progress. The eighth step is
to conclude the project.

(The following is a list of the members of the committee.)

1. The first member of the committee is Mr. John Doe.

2. The second member of the committee is Mr. Jane Smith.

3. The third member of the committee is Mr. Robert Johnson.

4. The fourth member of the committee is Mr. Mary White.

5. The fifth member of the committee is Mr. David Brown.

6. The sixth member of the committee is Mr. Susan Green.

7. The seventh member of the committee is Mr. Michael Black.

8. The eighth member of the committee is Mr. Emily Gray.

9. The ninth member of the committee is Mr. James Blue.

10. The tenth member of the committee is Mr. Patricia Red.

11. The eleventh member of the committee is Mr. Christopher Yellow.

12. The twelfth member of the committee is Mr. Benjamin Purple.

13. The thirteenth member of the committee is Mr. Victoria Pink.

14. The fourteenth member of the committee is Mr. Daniel Orange.

15. The fifteenth member of the committee is Mr. Ashley Silver.

16. The sixteenth member of the committee is Mr. Matthew Gold.

17. The seventeenth member of the committee is Mr. Sophia Bronze.

18. The eighteenth member of the committee is Mr. Lucas Iron.

19. The nineteenth member of the committee is Mr. Olivia Steel.

20. The twentieth member of the committee is Mr. Noah Copper.

21. The twenty-first member of the committee is Mr. Isabella Tin.

22. The twenty-second member of the committee is Mr. Ethan Lead.

23. The twenty-third member of the committee is Mr. Sophia Zinc.

24. The twenty-fourth member of the committee is Mr. Noah Nickel.

25. The twenty-fifth member of the committee is Mr. Isabella Silver.

26. The twenty-sixth member of the committee is Mr. Ethan Gold.

27. The twenty-seventh member of the committee is Mr. Sophia Bronze.

28. The twenty-eighth member of the committee is Mr. Noah Iron.

29. The twenty-ninth member of the committee is Mr. Isabella Steel.

30. The thirtieth member of the committee is Mr. Ethan Copper.

avoided the waste of investment in films that had to be scrapped on a censor's instructions after completion. At first this system was very efficient; Hays did not wish to wipe sex from the screen. He said repeatedly that films could be made passionate if they were made pure: "giving the public all the sex it wants with compensating values for all those church and women groups" (no. 10, p. 70).

Bold producers made films with perhaps ninety minutes of sin followed by five minutes of redemption, which technically placated the Hays office. As the Depression took hold, films began to reflect the disillusionment of the audiences experiencing the Depression. To save money, producers used their age-old exploitation devices to prop up cheaply made movies: sex and violence. Malevolent gangsters, monsters, and smart, clever and disrespectful Broadway-like dialogue from chorus girls were the type of image projected from the screen. The **New Girl** on screen knew about sex, its price and sometimes payment was accepted (i.e. Mae West). Once again there was public uproar.

Censorship was still not working sufficiently. Even after the establishment of the Hays office, producers did little more than clean up their act for a few months after which forbidden material was edged back onto the screen. Though the Hays office had a list of "Don'ts and Be Carefuls", it did not have a means to enable it to supervise all the films made.

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In 1930, the office issued a new and longer production code including an attack on screen lawlessness. It sought to regulate films so that crime would not be shown in such a way that would prompt sympathy or imitation. The code, however, recognised the financial burdens on studios if they came down hard on sexual matters. It tried to reconcile religious morality with box-office necessity. Even then, the studios, faced with falling admissions, had no qualms about ignoring it.

While the studios were at their financial lowest, the **Legion of Decency** came into being. This was organised by a group of Catholics. In 1934, bishops distributed forms pledging support for boycotts organised by the Church. Eleven million people signed and informed the Hays office that, henceforth, they would review all films and classify them to their standards. Those disapproved of would be boycotted by the Legion of Decency. Hays, whose previous attempts to control film morality had failed, was left no choice but to endow power upon the Legion. From that date in 1934 no film could be distributed or screened by a member of the MPPDA unless it carried the **Production Code Administration Seal**. Every stage of production was reviewed in minute detail and had to receive written approval before being awarded the PCA seal.

This control had considerable impact on the films produced thereafter. An unusual trait of film



Mae West in "Im no Angel" before the Code diluted her image.(No.1)

producers, exhibited after 1934, was to reverse roles in films in order to please the censors. Gangsters of the screen such as James Cagney were cast as FBI men instead of gang bosses. It made their appeal less attractive. Mae West, whose career had taken off in 1932 because of her rampant sexuality, was now forced to become a self-deprecating comic, a bad girl on her way to redemption. This role did not suit her and her career was over by 1938.

Relatively innocent musicals did not escape unscathed. For example, the songs for "On the Town" were reviewed and the phrase "New York, New York, It's a Helluva Town!" was found to be unacceptable. The producer's attention was also directed to

the need for the greatest possible care in the selection and photographing of the dresses and costumes of your women. The production code makes it mandatory that the intimate parts of the body - specifically the breasts of women - be fully covered at all times. Any compromises with this regulation will compel us to withhold approval of your picture . . . The kissing . . . throughout this production should not be unduly passionate, prolonged or open-mouth.

(no. 10, p. 107)

For more than two decades, sexuality was replaced by coyness and controversy by blandness. Hollywood allowed its scripts to be tailored to the whims of the Legion. The Legion had three categories: A, B and C. The A rating explained that a film was entirely pure, the B that there were certain dangers, and C that it must not be seen. It was a hundred percent effective since Hollywood could not afford to make films which

might be labelled C. Pope Pius XI said, in 1936:

The cinema speaks not to individuals but to multitudes and does so in circumstances, time, place, and surroundings which are the most apt to arouse unusual enthusiasm for good as well as bad, and to conduct that collective exaltation which, as experiences teaches us, may assume the most morbid form. A motion picture is viewed by people who are seated in a dark theatre and whose faculties, mental, physical, and often spiritual, are relaxed.

(no. 2, p. 64)

Censorship changed all the promise and subtlety which had begun to come to the fore before 1934. Hollywood was now spending its time trying to defy censorship bans rather than concentrate on creativity. Locked in competition with the censors on the issue of female nudity, it ignored the cinema's countless erotic possibilities. The film goer, already rendered a voyeur by the very nature of films, preferred the suggestive to the explicit and this was not realised until after the censorship board was defeated by the courts two decades later. Sexuality became puerile at the very least.

When America joined the war in 1940, the government outlined six basic themes which it felt that Hollywood producers should concentrate on as a contribution to the war effort.

1. The reasons for America joining the struggle;
2. The nature of the enemy, his ideology, objectives and methods;
3. America's allies in arms;
4. The work of those producing materials required for the war effort;



Greta Garbo in one of her "Tragic Bad Woman" Pictures, "Romance".(No.3)

5. The home front - the duties of civilians;
6. The allied fighting forces.

The studio came up with tired-looking pictures in which stock characters and formulaic action were merely translated into military contexts. The sheriff, private eye, as well as the blonde in the silk negligee, now appeared in uniform. But they were quickly criticised by men and women who had experienced real combat and were offended by the falsity they saw in these films. The overseas audience was eroded. **Greta Garbo's** career probably came to an end, because, with the loss of her European audience, MGM changed her haunting presence into an All-American Comedienne in *Two-Faced Woman* (1941). This image did not suit her.

Through the 1930s Hollywood had presumed that most of its audience consisted of married, middle-aged and classed women, and films had offered an escape from a dull life to an imaginary luxury, rounded out with fictional husbands more solicitous of their wives' desires than the average man. During the war women's pictures changed, however, to reflect the altered circumstances of the war and showed women coping with a new independence in their private and working lives.

Film Noir came into being with its darkly lit scenes, emphasising the threatening sexuality of women and the treachery even to himself of the hero, and showed even more the renewed independence of women. It may be that, beneath it all, there was a deep desire

for the restoration of the traditional family values: women's domesticity and man's honourable authority.

For close to two decades, the censorship bridle was kept on the cinema with barely a protest until a film "The Miracle" was made and released in 1948. It came to New York and was approved by the state censor. The Legion of Decency did not agree and the case went to court. The Supreme Court decided that the law invoked against the film violated the Fourteenth Amendment as prior restraint interfered with the separation between Church and State and employed the term sacrilegious too vaguely. In May 1952, the Supreme Court decided that film was entitled to the same guarantees of freedom as the press.

The new freedom, however, had its own particular limitations. Ethnic humour and slurs were unofficially banned. The lazy good-for-nothing negro, the Irish cop, the Jewish peddler, the Italian gangster and many other stereotypes disappeared. A man, however, could sleep with a woman he was not married to. Hollywood was portraying real life once more.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been

admitted to the membership of the Association since the last meeting.

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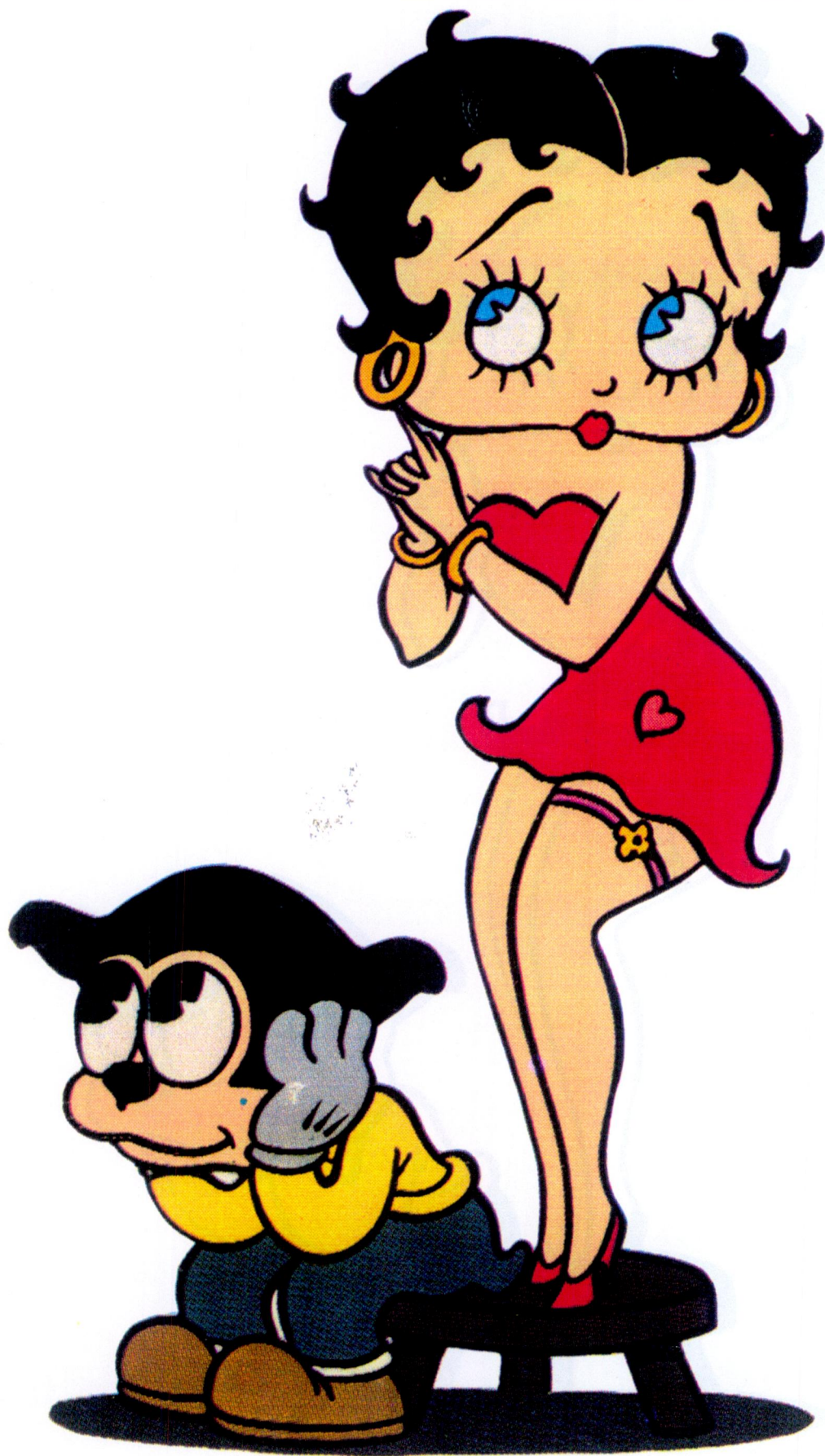
CHAPTER 3

BETTY BOOP AND OLIVE OYL BY THE FLEISCHER BROTHERS



Betty Boop with some of her co-stars in "A Hunting We Will Go!".(No.8)

Dave Fleischer was responsible for producing such cartoon characters as Betty Boop, Popeye and his girlfriend Olive Oyl, amongst others. He ran the Fleischer's studios with his brother Max. Born in 1894, he had no formal training in art but worked his way up to eventually become a successful cutter at Pathe films. His brother Max became a successful cartoonist. He had an interest in mechanics and this probably inspired his interest in animation. Both brothers were dissatisfied with contemporary efforts at animation and they spent all their time together inventing a rotoscope. This was a vertical lightboard that magnified a single frame of film onto a table. The idea was to trace live footage frame-by-frame to achieve fluidity of motion which was lacking in other animation efforts. The brothers created the "Out of the Inkwell" series featuring **Koko the Clown**. This combined live action with cartoon characters. Koko was popular for a number of years but the Fleischers retired him in favour of a new character, **Bimbo the Dog**. One cartoon in this new series was called Hot Dog. It opened with Bimbo driving his automobile when suddenly he sees a girl roller-skating. The girl is gorgeous, a vamp-type with a shapely figure. Bimbo tries to pick her up and in doing so exceeds the speed limit. He appears in court and wins over the judge and jury by testifying to the strains of his banjo. It ends up that the court starts dancing to the music and subsequently Bimbo is freed.



Betty Boop & Bimbo The Dog. (No.4).

Bimbo could not keep up with other cartoon stars such as Mickey Mouse and Oswald the Rabbit. His faults lay in his inconsistency: he was sometimes drawn as a white dog, sometimes as a black one, and his voice fluctuated to different levels in every cartoon in which he appeared. This suited Dave Fleischer but it was not practical in order to make a star out of Bimbo.

His successor was discovered when a certain **Betty Boop** made an appearance in one of the Bimbo cartoons. She appeared in **Dizzy Dishes**. In the earliest cartoons, she was a strange-looking character, more dog than human. She had long dog ears, large jowls, and a button nose. Her animator was Grim Natwich, who later worked for Disney. He animated her from a mixture of his conception of a French poodle and **Helen Kane** who was a Paramount star singer. Betty was difficult to animate because of her neckless body, her wide thighs and fat fingers.

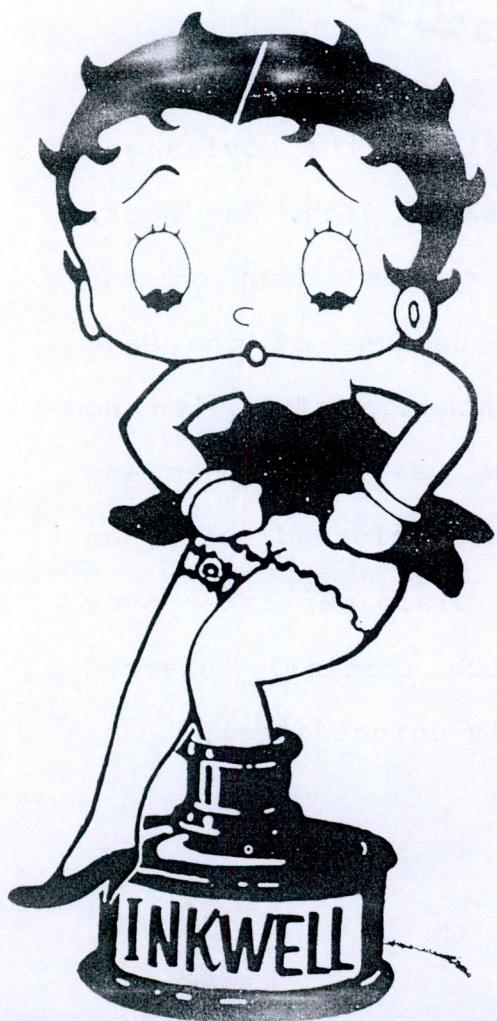
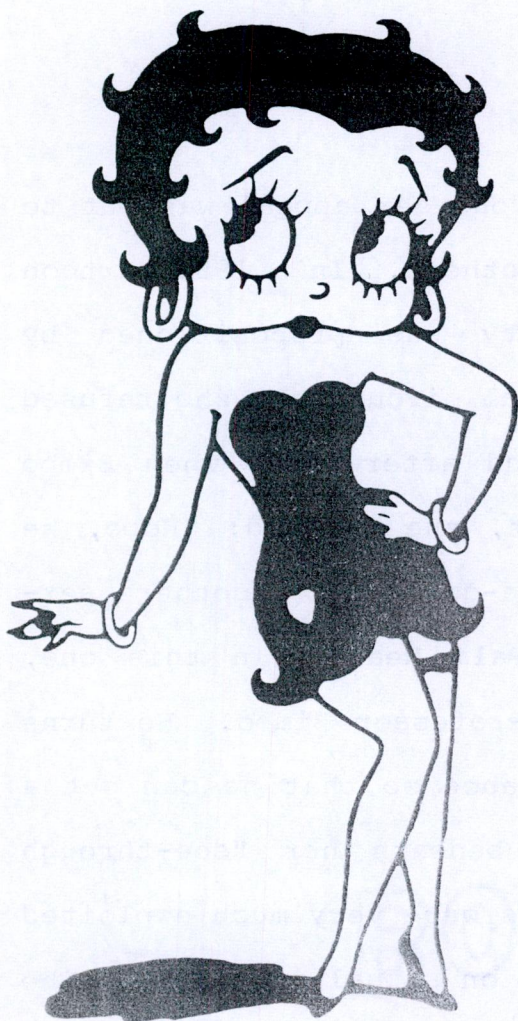
By 1931, she began to feature more prominently in the talkartoons, overshadowing Bimbo. Finally he and Koko the Clown became her supporting characters. Betty's appearance was modified gradually to become a sexy-looking woman instead of a dog-like creature. Her long ears became ear-rings. This was most apparent in the 1932 cartoon **Any Rags**. She had a new status as a sex goddess. After **Minnie the Moocher**, she also exhibited personality and was compared with the flamboyant **Mae West**. She was the darling of the



Betty Boop & Mae West were often compared (no.3).

animated screen. Her tremendous sex appeal was put to great use by the Fleischer brothers. In a 1933 cartoon called **Boop-oop-a-doop**, Betty was propositioned by Boss, the proprietor of a local circus, but she refused him. A big fight ensued and afterwards, when Bimbo asked her if she was alright, she replied: "Nope, he couldn't take my Boop-oop-a-doop!". Another sex-orientated film was **Is my Palm Read?** In this one, Betty visits a palm reader, Professor Bimbo. He turns out the lights upon her entrance so that he can get a peek at Betty's silhouette beneath her "see-through skirt". Betty's sexual values were very much exploited here. Betty's image depended on sexual innuendos. She was a flirt and a tease who kept her sexual desires firmly under control. She was the ultimate animated sexy playmate.

However, animation was also hit by the mid-thirties/ Censorship laws, as well as the movies and Betty, like the star she was compared with, Mae West, lost her appeal as the censors clamped down on the sexual overtones of her image. Because of the Hays office, Betty reverted into a bachelor girl with no interest in men whatsoever. Gone was her garter and short skirt. She became a more fully clothed Betty, an image that did not suit her. Her place was taken over gradually by Popeye cartoons which initially starred her but then her part became merely coincidental.



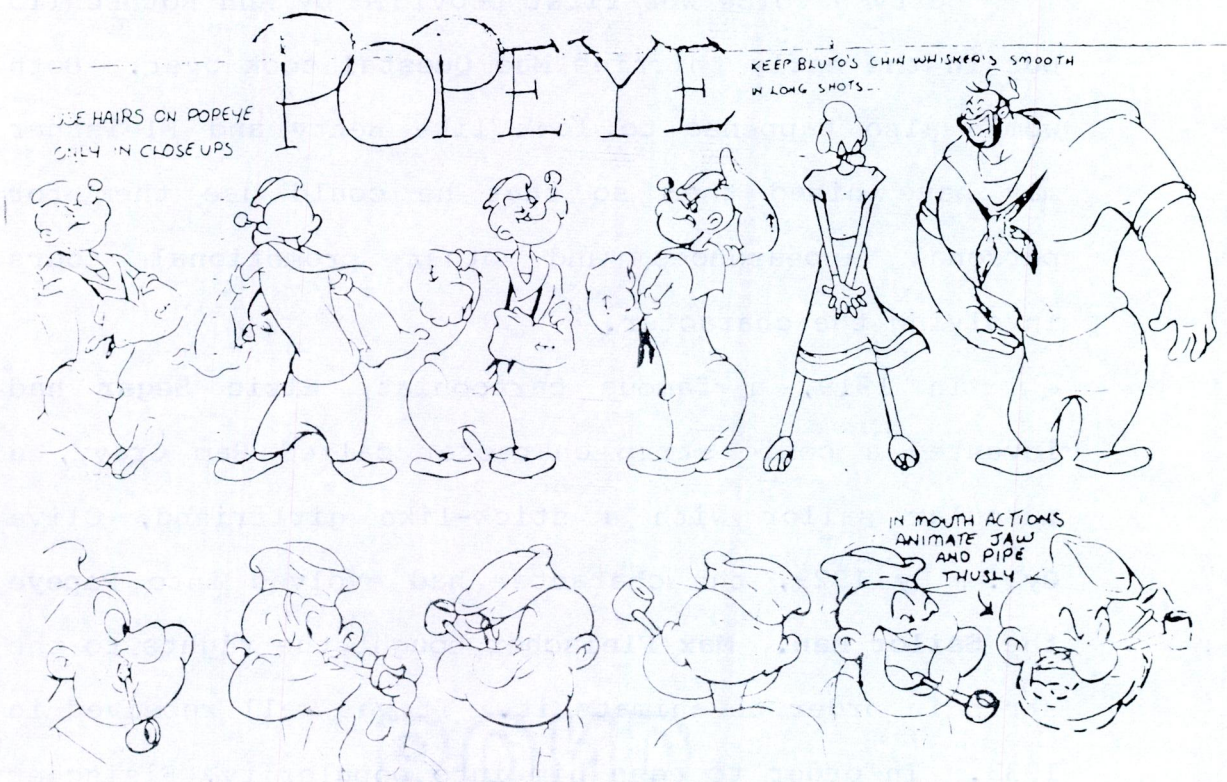
The changing face of Betty Boop. (No.8 &No.6).

Betty's voice was first provided by Ann Rothschild but in the early thirties **Mae Questal** took over. Both women also happened to look like Betty and Fleischer may have hired them so that he could use them for personal appearances and other promotional tours involving the character.

In 1919, a famous cartoonist, **Elzie Segar** had invented a comic strip character called Ham Gravy, a muscular sailor with a stick-like girlfriend, Olive Oyl. By 1929, the character had evolved into **Popeye the Sailor Man**. **Max Fleischer** bought the rights to the strip in order to animate it. It was well received in 1933. In order to ease him into popularity, Fleischer put him into a Betty Boop cartoon at first, but it soon became clear that he was the star. He soon appeared in his own scenes.

Mae Questal, long the voice of Betty Boop, now became the voice of **Olive Oyl**, Popeye's girlfriend. She had a squalling voice which Questal said was inspired by Zasu Pitts. Lines such as "Yoo-hoo, Popeye. Her I ya-a-yam!" gave Olive the same dumb-like charm of **Gracie Allen**. Popeye cartoons had more of a storyline to them, whereas Betty Boop cartoons were inclined to be more full of gags. Some of the basic plots centre around the supposed fickleness of women. Olive Oyl represents this fickle side: it is her nature.

In **Clean Shaven Man**, Olive tells Popeye and his adversary, Bluto, that she can only fall for clean-



Preliminary sketches for a Popeye cartoon (No. 8).

shaven men. While they battle it out to see who will be the cleanest-shaven, Olive is seen with a man sporting a beard and long hair. In **Olive's Sweepstake Ticket**, Popeye searches for a winning ticket Olive has carelessly lost. When he eventually finds it, he discovers that it is only for a caged parrot!. In **Females are Fickle**, Olive sends Popeye into the sea to rescue her goldfish which has fallen in and cannot swim. When Popeye rescues it, Olive decides the fish is lonely and puts him back!

There were also stories about Popeye and Bluto chasing other women. In **Never Kick a Woman** Popeye falls head-over-heels for a Mae West-like gym instructor. Olive wins him back by downing a can of spinach and clobbering the sexpot. In **Hospitality**, Bluto and Popeye are in love with Nurse Olive Oyl and try to injure themselves badly enough to get into hospital to see her. In the end, Popeye feeds spinach to Bluto so that he can beat him up badly enough to go to hospital.

For a 1937 cartoon entitled **Popeye Meets Ali Baba and His Forty Thieves**, Popeye was advertised proclaiming: "Gable and Taylor is just amachures, I yarn the greatest lover in moovin' pitchers". Patrons did not realise that Popeye did not make love in the picture. It was just a clever ploy by Paramount's promotional department to lure the sex-starved audiences of the censorship years. By 1939, with



Popeye & his' voice', Jack Mercer.(No.8).

Betty Boop retired from the screen, Popeye was the number one breadwinner.

Betty Boop and Olive Oyl are just two of the animated women the Fleischers were responsible for putting on the screen. I felt that represented the two opposite types of women portrayed in animated film, the sexpot and the fickle, silly woman. Yet both of them have men floundering at their feet.

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SMALL BOOK

CHAPTER 4

WALT DISNEY PRESENTS :

SNOW WHITE AND DAISY DUCK

ROAD

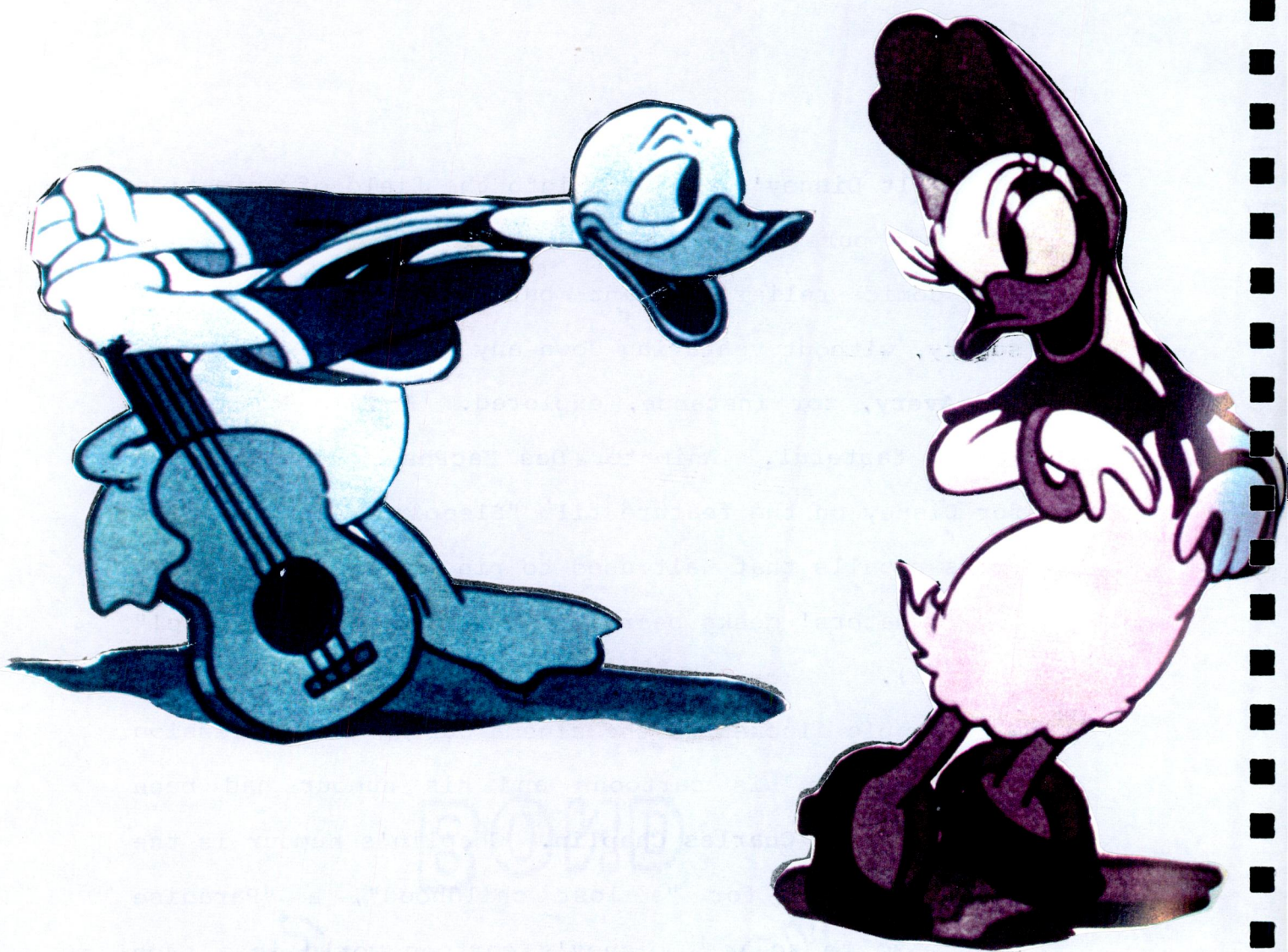
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SHOW WITH AND DATE BOOK

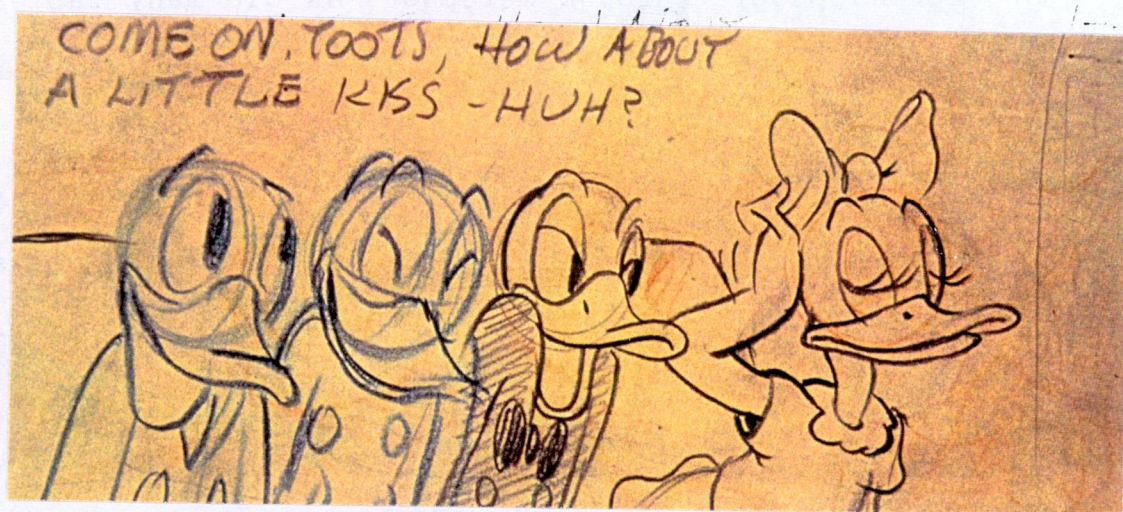
Walt Disney's ventures into the field of animation were for purely entrepreneurial reasons. It explored the comic relief element but kept his characters sugary, without venturing down any of the branches that **Tex Avery**, for instance, explored. His cartoons were always tasteful. Animator **Des MacPherson**, who worked for Disney on the feature film "Sleeping Beauty" in the 1950s recalls that Walt used to pin little reminders on the animators' desks bearing the words: "Keep it cute!" (no. 11).

People flocked to the cinema during the Depression years to see his cartoons and his humour had been compared with **Charles Chaplin**. Chaplin's humour is the soul lamenting for "a lost childhood", a "Paradise Lost", so to speak. Disney's cartoon world is a type of "Paradise Regained", an eternal search using the imagination of a child yet touching the senses of an adult in its vibrancy. They did not sermonise, brand or express people through metaphors as did many fables and legends of old where the monster often disturbingly reflected the uglier side of man himself.

Disney was a determined individual who was obsessed with attaining perfection in his work. His staff had to draw live animals and learn to draw their anatomy correctly. When animating humans, people had to act out various scenes in front of the camera. The animators in Disney's staff did not usually trace the actors onto the cel from the resulting film: they mostly used them as reference.



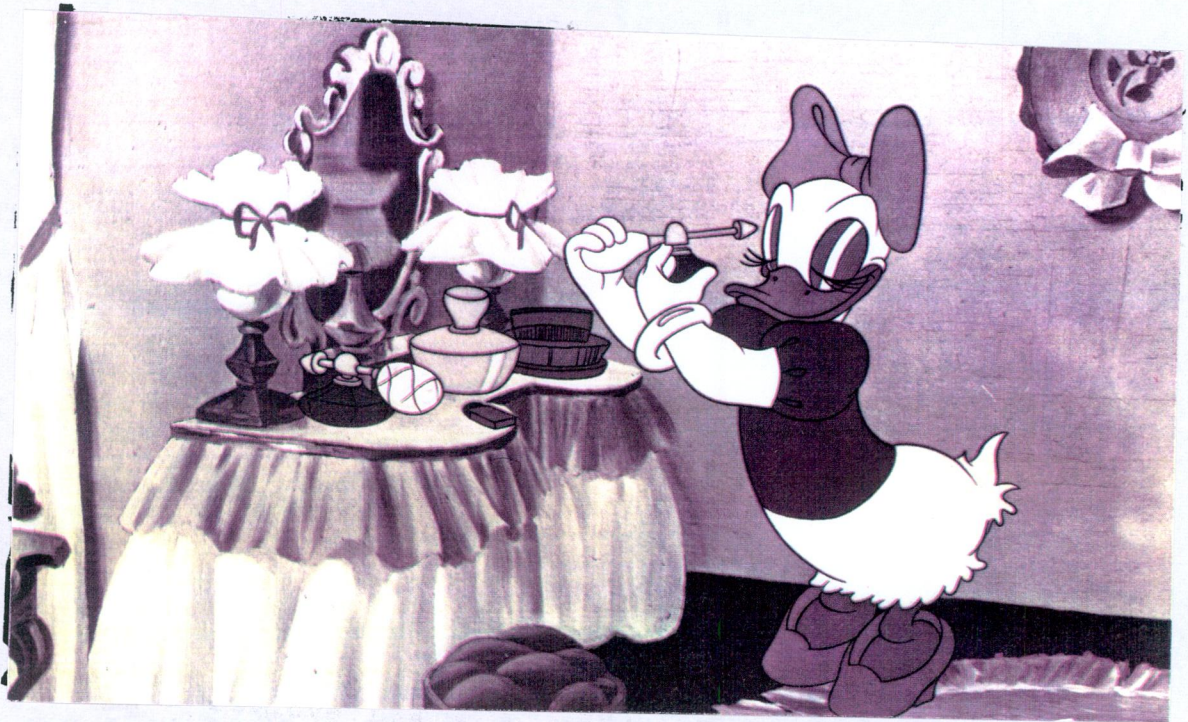
Donald Duck & the Vampish Donna Duck.(No. 9)



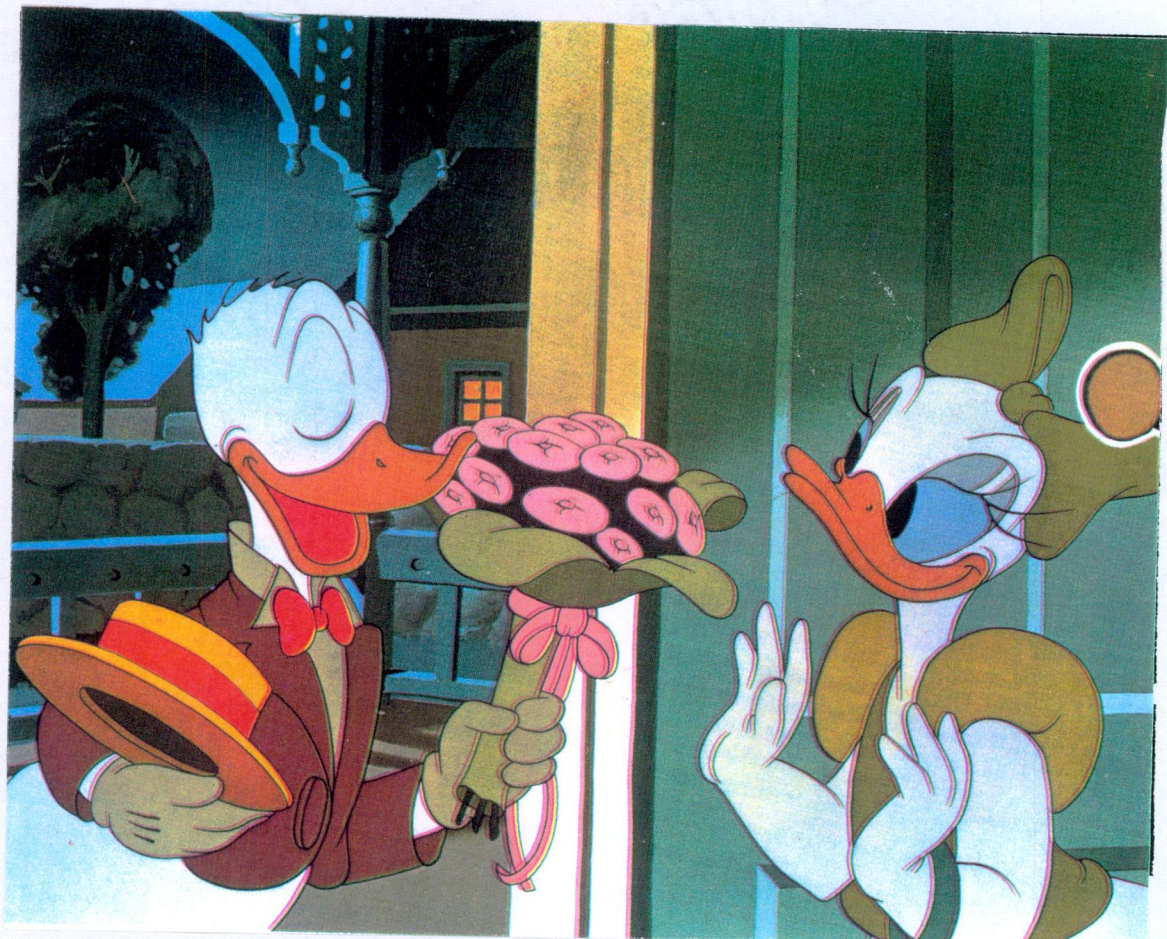
A Sketch for a Scene with Donald & Daisy.(No.9)

By 1928 Disney had invented Mickey Mouse, one of the most famous cartoon characters ever. Coinciding with this was the release of the Warner Brothers' **The Jazz Singer** and thus began the sound era. Walt Disney introduced sound into his own cartoons using a metronome so that rhythm and sound effects could be matched to the frames of animation. His first cartoon made with synchronised sound was **Steamboat Willie**, which made its debut in 1928.

After **Mickey Mouse**, another Disney character became famous: **Donald Duck and His Girlfriend Daisy**. They began to steal the limelight from Mickey. **Daisy** was one of Disney's most changed characters. She went from vamp to archetypical girlfriend. She first appeared in a 1937 cartoon entitled **Don Donald**, set in Latin America. She was called Donna, complete with languishing lashes and a mean left hook. She was vain, capricious and devoid of humour or gratitude. She was the society vamp. When Donald's car broke down, she whipped a bicycle out of her purse and cycled away without a backward glance. He wooed her with infinite pains and minimal gratification. By 1940, she reappeared as Daisy Duck, still embodying all the supposed vices of women. Her lashes were now kept, she was still a flirt wrapping Donald around her little finger but now she was wearing a puffy-sleeved blouse. She was no longer a woman of mystery. She remained a rather one-dimensional character, but managed to establish herself in early comic strips.



Daisy the Vain & Capricious Duck.(No.9).



The Archetypical Couple.(No.9).

During the fifties, she began to bear a resemblance to the wives and girlfriends in contemporary television sit-coms. These, of course, were basically scatterbrained, terrible drivers and golfers and addicted to silly hats. This was the tiresome repertoire of feeble female gags made at women's expense. Daisy was much maligned and made petty, irrational, quarrelsome and always scheming for Donald's attention. Her only virtue seemed to be her loyalty to Donald. He was a difficult duck but she loved him dearly showing herself to be an enduring friend and a woman of independence, able to love and let love. So, was she merely a catalyst for Donald's antics or a more liberated woman than we know?

There was another side to Disney's portrayal of women. The innocent little girl lost portrayed: an image used in **Grimms Fairytales**. One such fairy tale was Snow White. As a child growing up in the town of Marceline in north-central Missouri, Disney was exposed to Teutonic legend. Missouri was heavily populated by people of German and French descent and European folk tales were familiar to his ears. Many of Disney's subsequent feature animated films have a gothic-type thread of influence in them: films such as "Cinderella", **Sleeping Beauty**, **Fantasia** and **The Brave Little Tailor**, as well as **Snow White**. In 1938, Walt said, after the success of his first feature-length animated film, Snow White:



Adriana Caselotti the singing voice of Snow White. (No.5).



Snow White.(No. 5)

I saw **Marguerite Clark** in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs when I was delivering papers in Kansas City, and the film made such an impression on me, I'm sure it influenced my decision to use the Grimm fairytale when I decided to make an animated feature.

(no. 11)

In 1963, Disney and his staff went to work on his first and most successful feature-length animation picture. For it, animators made more than five million drawings and sketches and used five hundred miles of paper.

Snow White was herself portrayed as a **Jane Gaynor type**, about fourteen years old and sometimes appearing too like a twentieth-century co-ed in the finished project, but she had great charm and easily won the audience's sympathy.

Fred Moore, one of Disney's young recruits, did the preliminary sketches for her because he was good at drawing innocent yet provocative young girls.

The young woman chosen as a basis for Snow White was **Marge Champion** who went on to become a famous dancer. Her voice was that of **Adriana Caselolli**. Disney wanted an amateur singer rather than a professional because of Snow White's youth. She ended up being a very polished character indeed. Nothing was excepted in trying to make her appear as naturalistic as possible. In an effort to make her cheeks rosy, real blusher was added to the celluloid.

These are just two examples of the differing women Walt Disney produced.

I am requesting that in the future, and in the future, the following information be furnished to the Bureau of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20535, in the event of any further information being received from the source.

(No. 11)

1. Name and address of the person or persons who furnished the information, and the date and place where the information was furnished.

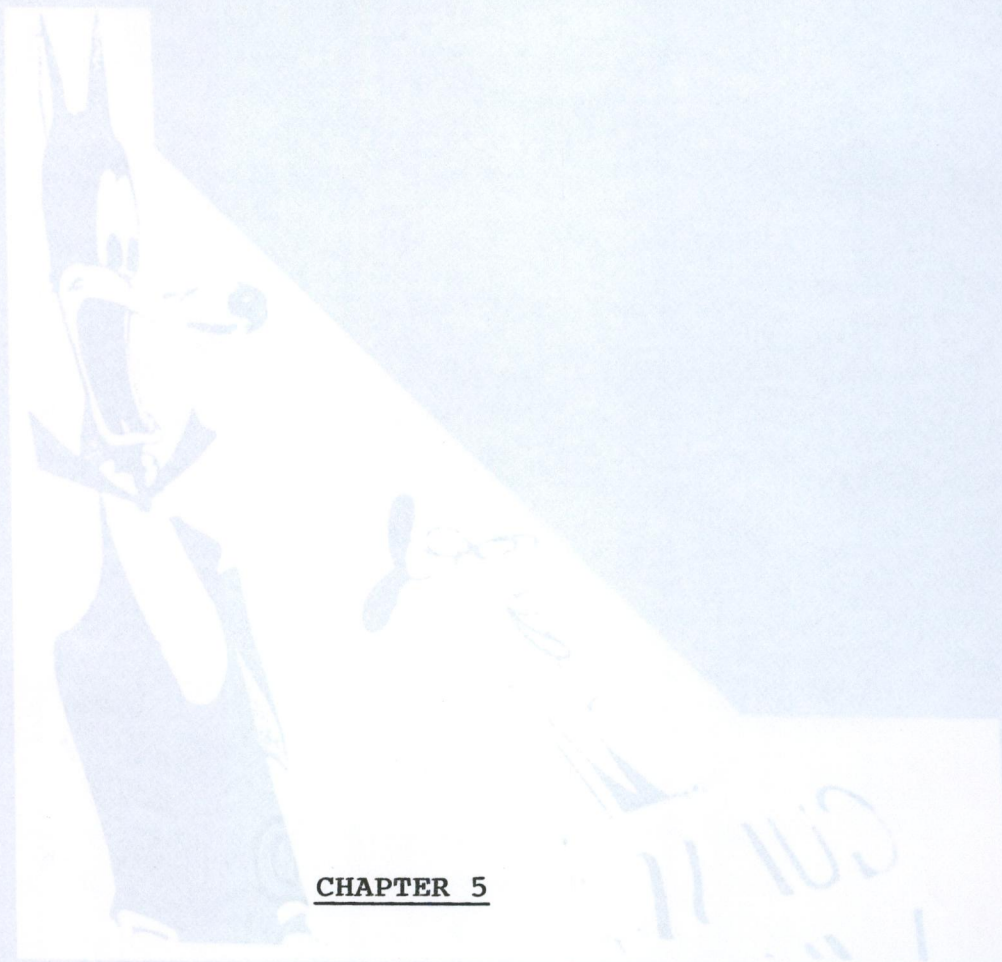
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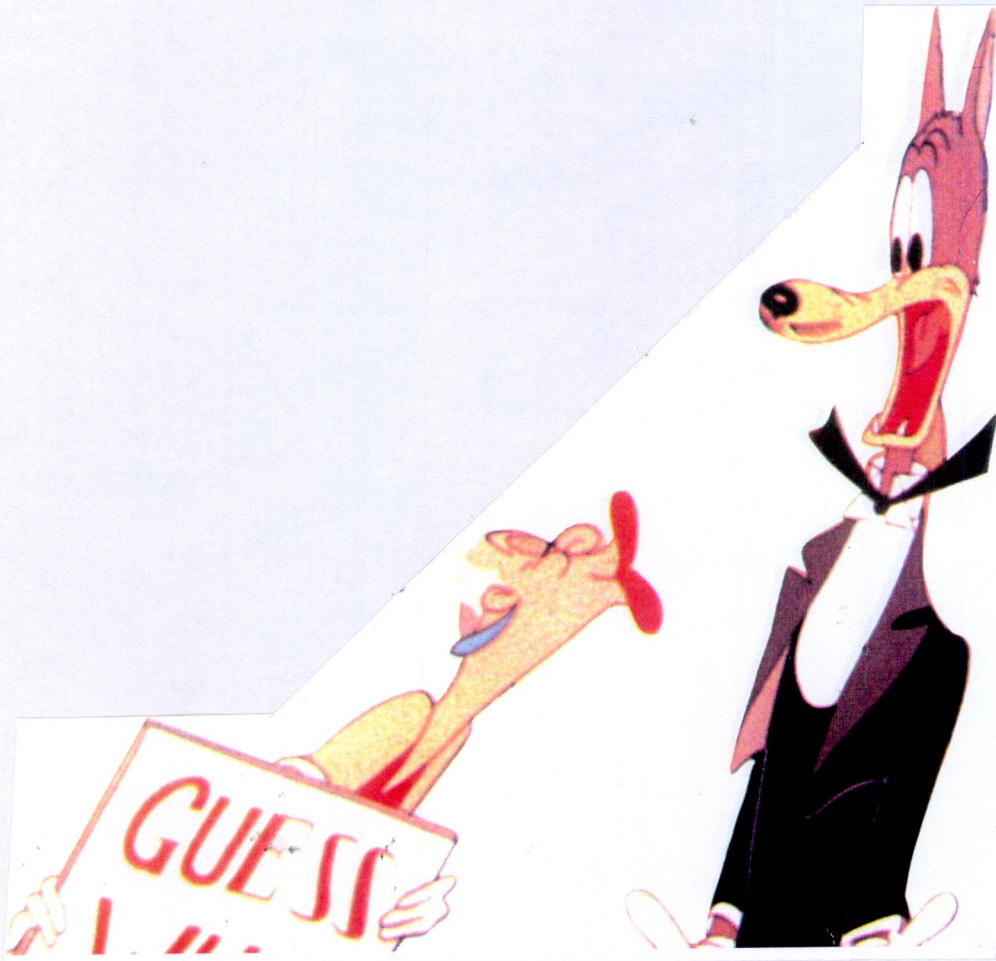
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CHAPTER 5

TEX AVERY'S CARTOON WOMEN



The Nymphomaniacal Grandmother & The Wolf. (No.2).

Tex Avery originated in Texas where he claims he got his sense of humour. He was born in 1908 and emigrated to Southern California in 1929. He started out interested in designing cartoon strips and joined the Walker Lantz Studio to see if animating his strips would help to sell them. It did not but at Lantz's Avery quickly realised that his talents lay more in his sense of humour and inventing gags rather than actually drawing.

Avery has the power of every great humorist, from **Aristophanes** to **Woody Allen**, to take a serious matter and keep blowing it up out of all proportion until its gravity begins to shrivel.
(no. 1, p. 40)

From 1941 to 1954 Avery ran his own unit at **Metro-Goldwyn Mayer**. He began concentrating on characters which were not directed at children, and a type of black humour was evident. Avery liked his cartoons and subjects to be absurd and the best absurdity sprigs from reality. He used sex as an important ingredient for his particular type of humour. In 1943 he produced an updated version of a child's fairy tale. It was entitled **Red Hot Riding Hood**. It starts off with a gushing narrator saying "Good morning kiddies! Once upon a time, Little Red Riding Hood was skipping through the woods! She was going to her Grandmother's house to take Grandma a nice basket of goodies!" (no. 1, p. 94). At this stage, the wolf, who is supposed to pounce on Red Riding Hood, pounces on the narrator instead and gobbles him up. Red Riding Hood and



Red Hot Riding Hood & The Wolf (No. 2).

Grandma back up the wolf, Grandma chiming in with "I'm plenty sick of it myself". The action then shifts to Grandma's penthouse, a neon sign outside proclaiming "Come up and see me sometime!" (Mae West's immortal line). Red Riding Hood herself is a singer in a Hollywood nightclub, just like many women in the Film Noir phase which was just beginning on the screen. The wolf now plays the part of a lascivious lustful character who, on every sighting, of Red Riding Hood dancing, loses his head. His eyeballs pop out, he whistles and stamps. The dancing Red Riding Hood is animated without the use of a Roboscope or live action footage and "the wriggling of this bouncy starlet was a joyful beacon to the world, and a shining example to shame, the plasticised, programmed impersonalities of Disney's heroes and heroines" (no. 1, p. 96).

Red Riding Hood herself is too worldly-wise to accept the wolf's advances and when he chases her to Grandmother's house he discovers that Grandmother is a nymphomaniac with designs on him; as she ends up chasing him, we realise that this is the opposite of the real story.

Other sexually-orientated fairy tales include **Swing Shift Cinderella** in which Cinderella's fairy grandmother transports her by magic, into the twentieth century with the words "You do wave a mean wand". Cinderella, fulfilling the same role as her predecessor, now works in a posh nightclub and she

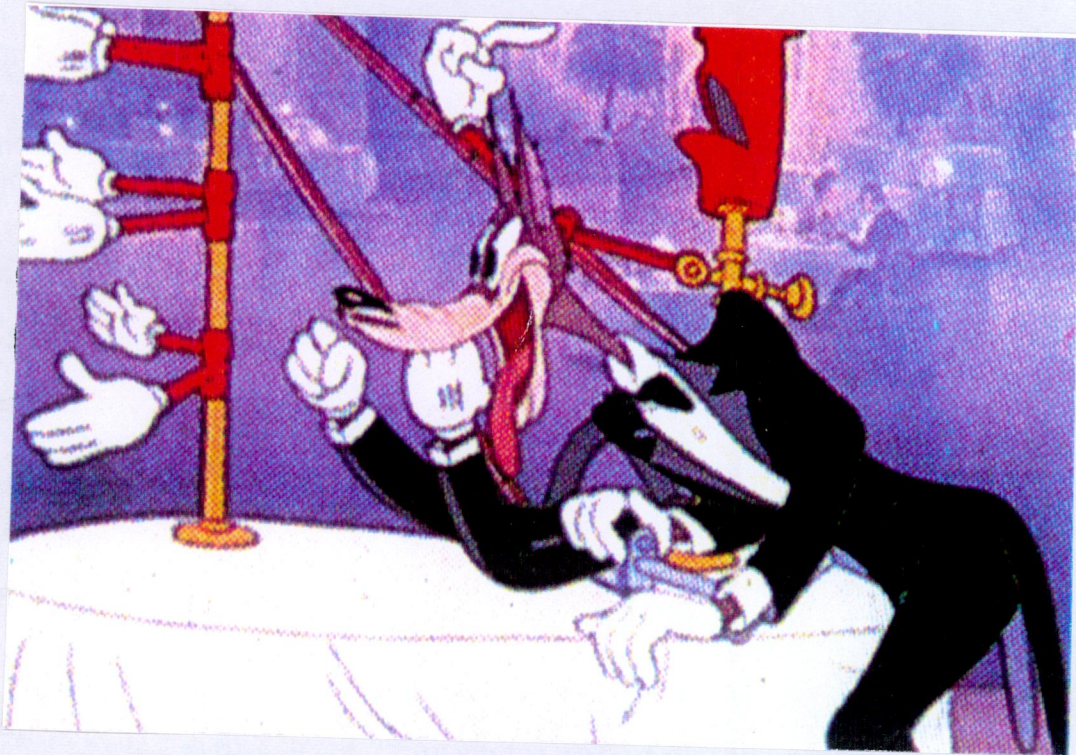


The Wolf's Reaction on spotting Red Hot Riding Hood. (No.2).

sings "Oh Wolfie, oh Wolfie, ain't you the one!" This seems directed at the ever-present wolf who becomes as excited as he did in the Red Riding Hood saga. Once again it is Grandma who turns her misguided affections on the wolf, much to his detriment. This film was made in 1945.

In **Uncle Tom's Cabana** (1947), Uncle Tom is telling his offspring the story of a swinger called **Little Eva** who owns a penthouse shaped like a tiara on top of a skyscraper. Her would-be love is Simon Legree who goes into a frenzy every time she sings "Carry me back to old Virginny" in the swinging nightclub. His reactions to her are probably the most graphic and least suggestive images of erotic fascination ever produced. He starts by sailing up, bottom first, to the music. He then shakes a stalk of celery over the salt shaker after which he eats the salt shaker. He butters his fingers and eats them up to his elbows. He lights his nose and stubs it in the ashtray. Eating a pie, he slices the table and eats it. This is only the beginning. Afterwards he eats the crockery, shatters what remains over his head, bangs his head off the table and pours ketchup over himself.

After Red Riding Hood, Avery had moved sexual arousal scenes to the end of a film so that there could be a suitable noisy finish, but he soon developed this scene to a point higher than anything preceding it and he learnt to follow it with something even better.



More of The Wolf's Outrageous Behaviour (No.2)



Red Hot Riding Hood Taunts The Wolf. (No.2).

The sexual innuendos seemed to go from bad to worse. Pinning sexual desperation on a horny old wolf was one thing but Avery also passed it onto an animated of cute Disney-like bunny rabbits in a most un-Disneyfied way: one female snuggles up to a sapling and it eagerly responds by sprouting a full head of leaves.

After six years of sexual gags, one would have thought Avery would have depleted his stock but in 1949 he brought out **Little Rural Riding Hood** which puts the other sexually-orientated cartoons to shame. Again, he opens up with the syrupy narrator. A country Bumpkin Red Riding Hood is on her way to her grandmother's house, within which a country bumpkin wolf is waiting. He explains to us that he does not want to eat Red Riding Hood but to "Chase her, and catch her, and kiss her, and hug her and love her, and hug her and kiss her and hug her . . ." (p. 103). It gives a disturbingly full visual of his intentions with a blanket. She, upon arriving, is not too convinced and as he chases her around, a telegram arrives from the wolf's city cousin who tells him to come to the city where there is a choice of Red Riding Hoods. He encloses a picture of one, which sends the wolf into a familiar frenzy and he takes off to the city. Once there, he looks for her and the city cousin, a smoothie, informs him that she will be at the night club that evening. At the club, the country wolf falls to pieces at the sight of the singer. At length he is removed by the city wolf



The Censors didnt object to Droopy running away with Women No.2)

who fears for his sanity and drives him back to the country. However they catch sight of the bumpkin Red Riding Hood which drives the wolf mad again. The city cousin returns with his cousin to the city, thus proving that sex, wild reactions, sound and fury are eternal (at least in Avery cartoons).

As Tex Avery says himself in an interview with **Joe Adamson** in 1971: "All the Red Riding Hoods were labored over". When Adamson asks why that was so, Avery says: "We were dealing with a human for one thing; according to the censors there on the lot, we had to watch bestiality, an animal against a human female - so they couldn't get close. Those were rough to keep clean!" (no. 1, p. 176).

It has often been wondered how Avery managed to get his "Red Riding Hood" cartoons past the censors at the Hays office. In one scene, the wolf was in one of his frenzies and the censor at the time said "Boy, he's getting too worked up" (no. 2, p. 182) and ordered it to be trimmed. A colonel in Washington purchased "uncut" versions from MGM for his personnel overseas and it remained in its entirety over there. The censors did not like the idea of the wolf and the girl getting close. They did not object to the little dog **Droopy** running away with a girl in one cartoon because Droopy was just an ordinary fat little dog, whereas the wolf stood for a sleazy man-about-town. He showed body



Red Hot Riding Hood & The Wolf With The Lolling Tongue(No
2)

CHAPTER 6

JESSICA RABBIT, THE CULMINATION OF
RED RIDING HOOD AND GILDA

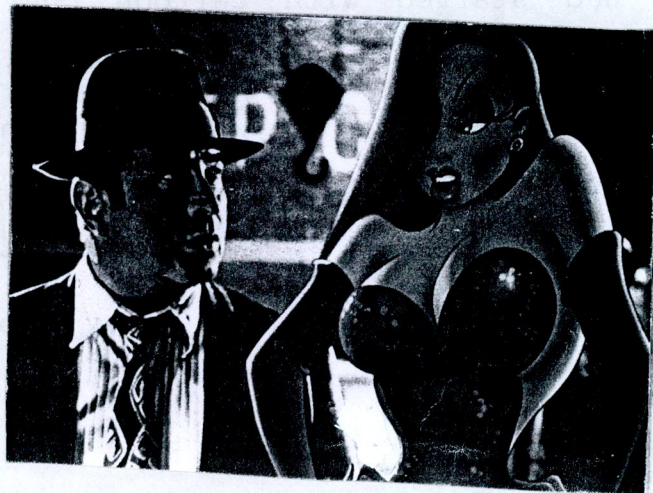


Red Hot Riding Hood (No.2)

Tex Avery's Red Hot Riding Hood, and subsequent heroines from his sexually-orientated fairy tales in the forties were used as a base from which sprang a character in a 1988 movie, combining live actors and cartoon characters. Her name was **Jessica Rabbit** and she was an animated nightclub singer in a reality setting. The film was called **Who Framed Roger Rabbit** and it was a difficult task for the producers to combine the live action footage with animation. Live actors had starred with cartoon characters before, though **Walt Disney** had a series of **Alice in Cartoonland** films at the beginning of his career in 1923. Before that, the **Fleischer brothers** had combined reality with animation in their "Out of the Inkwell" series featuring **Koko the Clown**. It was cheaper to use live action with cartoon characters back then.

The 1989 movie, however, was not so simple and certain not inexpensive. Disney achieved his "Alice" cartoons by photographing a real life "Alice" against a white background and then combining this film in the printing process with another strip on which the animation was shot.

"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" stars **Bob Hoskins** along with animated heroes and heroines of the thirties and forties, among them **Betty Boop**, **Donald Duck** and **Bugs Bunny**. When watching the film it is sometimes easy to forget that Hoskins is acting alongside characters who do not exist. The special effects team had quite a

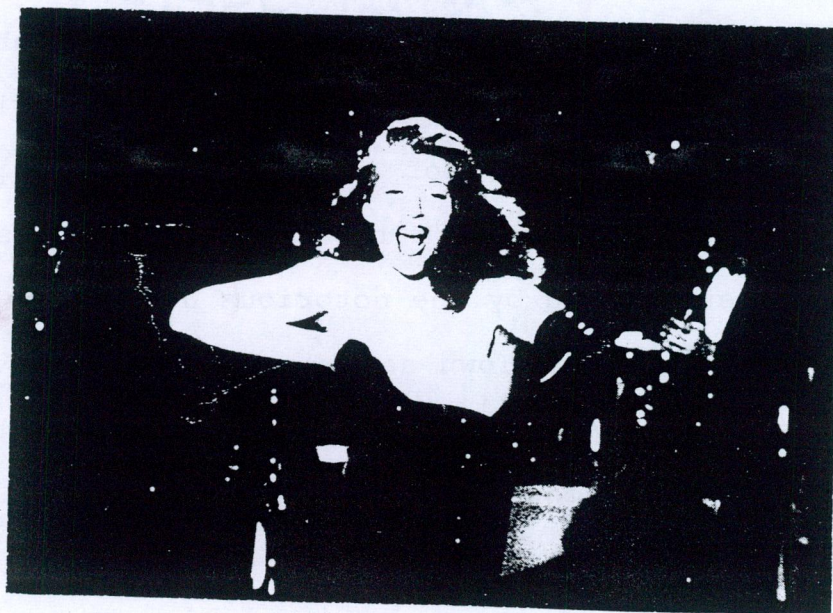


Jessica Rabbit & Bob Hoskins (No.8)

time trying to make the idea of existing cartoon characters seem feasible. Bob Hoskins had to jump into garbage cans as though he had been thrown there by a cartoon adversary. The character was then superimposed over this piece of action. The film is based in the Hollywood of the late 1940s. It reads like a typical detective story of that period with the voice-over and narrative style. It becomes an ultimate buddy movie, examining the relationship between **Eddy Valiant** (Bob Hoskins) and his "toon" partner.

The film proposes the fantastical yet simple notion that cartoon characters are merely actors that walk off the set at the end of a day's work. They live in an animated setting called "Toon Town", but work in the human world. The plot of the film centres on rumours that have been spread about Roger Rabbit. His vampish wife Jessica is rumoured to be playing around and Roger is framed for the murder of his producer's rival. In the end, it transpires that these rumours have been planted by the notorious **Judge Doom** who wants to take over Toon Town and who has also unravelled the secret of the apparent indestructability of the cartoon characters who cannot feel pain. He immerses them in a patented concoction called "the dip".

Jessica and her husband Roger look like the most unsuited pair imaginable. He is a chatterbox, a coward, a hopeless hoker and a crybaby, while she is



Scenes From Gilda (1946) Starring Rita Hayworth (No.7)

the ultimate self-controlled, voluptuous vamp. When asked by Hoskins what she sees in Roger, her reply is "He makes me laugh" delivered in that sultry voice provided by **Kathleen Turner**. It is said that Jessica's role in the film parallels that of **Gilda**, a 1946 performance by **Rita Hayworth** in a film of the same name. Certainly the two characters look alike, sex-goddess types, nightclub singers with luxuriant long hair falling over one eye, deep relaxed voices and sequined voluptuous figures. They each portray an air of sophistication.

"Gilda" was a more ponderous and sinister film than "Who Framed Roger Rabbit". It was one of the post-war movies which most encompassed the name which they were given by French critics **Film Noir**. Film Noir women were set in different roles than their predecessors. The new trend was probably a reflection on the society at the time. In reality, women who had been forced to take up men's jobs during the war, were now reluctant to give them up. They had realised that there was more to life than staying in the kitchen and they wanted to be part of the post-war workforce. The rebellion of women was reflected in the movies after 1946. Women took on a more sinister aspect. They were the unknown, the mysterious, while at the same time highly attracted to unwary men.

Film Noir movies always had this recurring theme. Notably, men starring in these films always seemed to



Gilda (1946) (No 3)

heat, the steam from under his collar and his tongue hanging out. It was too suggestive. As Avery said in the interview:

Sometimes we would stiffen him out in mid-air, he's make a take and his whole body would stiffen out like an arrow. And they cut that one out on us. On the first one they cut out quite a bit.
(no. 1, p. 182)

The censors did not cut too much out of the ensuing cartoons after the first one because the studio found a way to get around them. The Hays office demanded a synopsis of each scene of each cartoon. The studio would put in a gag which was suggestive and subtle and that they particularly liked; then they would surround it with gags which were blatant. The surrounding material would be cut and the censors would say that the retained gag was bad enough but they would leave it in out of sympathy, because they were cutting out so much material.

be flawed or drop-outs, like in the cast of "Gilda" where **Johnny** has to solve the mystery of the villain and also the woman in traditional Noir style. He is a drop-out, rescued from a fight by a nightclub owner who hires him as his right-hand man. There he meets Gilda, the nightclub singer. His voice-over denounces her at first. She is an object of sinful sexual desire, long coiffed lustrous hair and wearing velvet and satin dresses. She is strong and treacherous, he is weak and known to us in the true Noir style. There are undertones of latent homosexuality between Johnny and the nightclub owner 'Ballen'. This is treated as in all films of this period as something weak, sick and decadent.

Disappointingly the film ends with Gilda marrying Johnny and begging him to "be a husband to" her and so they live happily ever after. It is hardly credible when we are led to believe in the film that she is a true femme fatale and he is a weak man susceptible to homosexuality. Yet the end is heterosexual. This treatment is probably a form of appeasement to the censorship board which did not condone these femmes fatale unless they were destroyed or repented at the end.

In some ways this particular film deviates from the normal Noir films in its treatment of masculinity and the role of the deviant femme fatale. Gilda has been allowed to develop more of a personality than the

expected unknown females of the set. This was probably due to Rita Hayworth being cast as Gilda. She was known as a love goddess first and foremost and was not used to playing femme fatale roles. She had a known personality.

Gilda, along with Jessica Rabbit and Red Hot Riding Hood, is based on updated versions of Hollywood vamps and yet are more sophisticated in their methods. They thrive on the weakness of men and exploit their faults. They are mysterious, yet latently treacherous as objects of desire as the man who responds, ultimately finds out. They are like spiders trying to trap victims in their nets. All three women are nightclub singers, all look very much alike and are the objects of man's desire, much to his eventual detriment.

The Film Noir world is one in which women were placed at the centre of the intrigue. They were never placed in any of the familiar roles, someone's mother, sister or daughter or mistress.

The women function as the obstacle to the male quest . . . The hero's success or not depends on the degree to which he can extricate himself from the woman's clutches and manipulations.

(no. 7)

Woman usually entered two different categories: she was usually the vamp, the nightclub singer, and barfly who worked on the fringes of the underworld with ruthless ambitions and blatant sexuality, or she was the long-suffering girlfriend on the other side, or wife or object of the hero's protection.

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Frequently the **femme fatale** is critical to the centre of the plot. She often shares the hard-boiled cynicism of the hero and is not conventional. The two extremes of women who star in these films are defined in relation to men. The attitude towards women evidenced in Noir is a fear of loss of stability, identity and security. The women of Noir films are vain, ambitious and deadly. However Noir seems to have a problem with a positive image of masculinity. In *Gilda*, the male hero was placed in relation to her, his face lit in such a way as to be the object of desire for her as well as vice versa. He is glamorised as she is, as an object of desire. Most film noir end with the heterosexual hero eventually triumphing over the femme fatale who is either submissive or done away with.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

BOND

SMITH BROS

As we have seen, women have changed their images and ways since the early part of this century. As their images changed in society so too did they change on the screen. In the troubled early thirties the stars were at their most popular, the screen goddesses shone during the bleakness of the Depression. They lost ground when censorship took hold in the mid-thirties and some lost their careers, such as **Mae West**, **Greta Garbo** and **Jean Harlow** when the advent of censorship forced them to become types they did not want to be.

Juxtaposed with them were the animated screen goddesses. They were hit by censorship just like the existing stars and their careers were rocked also.

There was such a multitude of different types of screen women to fit the changing face of society from the twenties to the fifties. In the twenties there were **Dream Girls** who behaved innocently yet had a provocativeness about them without having to bat an eyelash. On screen, those girls were put on pedestals and they were thought of as innocent and pure. In real life, however, girls were rebelling against the established norm expected of them and they were beginning to act independently especially about sexual matters. Another girl was the queen of the silent movie along with the Dream Girl. She was the **Vamp**. Vamps wore a lot of make-up and they were either good-hearted or bad-hearted whores. They were usually dark-haired as opposed to the blonde dream girl.

Jean Harlow advented the blonde vamp and thereafter, in the thirties, vamps were associated with blondes. Censorship became prevalent during the Depression years, at a time when studios were low on finances and used sexual and violent themes more often in their movies to attract crowds. The Legion of Decency set up by the Catholic Church, along with the Hays office, set up new laws governing censorship so that it began at a pre-production stage of a movie. Since it was very difficult to meet with approval from these new strict laws, films did not get made at all and those that did were puerile in their depiction of sexuality. I feel that producers spent so much time trying to defy the censors that they did not concentrate on something they could have achieved: subtle eroticism. I also feel surprised that after all the promising films that were being produced before 1934, the producers chose to lie down under censorship. They had always defied it before. It is understandable that they did not have enough money to stand up to the authorities, but censorship ruled until 1952 and that seems to me to be a lot of wasted years.

One good thing came of the censorship rules and that was **Film Noir**. It was derived from the idea of the old silent movie vamps and their blatant sexuality. The Noir woman was devious, aware of her sexuality and how to use it to achieve her own ends. She was nearly always destroyed or forced to submit to the male hero

at the end as a concession to the censorship board but it was the first time women had been portrayed out of the usual family, housewife scene, and independent in her own right. This attitude followed the return to the workforce after World War Two by women even after their men came home. Women had tasted independence with their own money during the war and they were not willing to give it up too easily.

Film Noir was always filmed in a dim setting; it was eerie and unpredictable and perhaps the producers meant it to be a warning to women that life could become unstable and unpredictable if women did not return to the kitchen and bring up their families.

In the animation world **Betty Boop** was the first animated screen vamp and she became very famous, especially with older audiences. There was something about her which no live Hollywood star could catch: an expression in her oversized eyes. She was an immortal character, innocent yet very provocative. Censorship laws stripped her of the sexuality that throughout her fame and her career ended gradually after that, even as the bumptious Mae West's did. The Fleischer brothers, who had brought Betty to the screen, produced **Popeye** with his girlfriend Olive Oyl. Olive Oyl seemed to degenerate women into nagging, fickle creatures without an ounce of sexuality. She had very different qualities to Betty Boop.

Walt Disney produced a **Vamp** in Daisy Duck, Donald's girlfriend, but over the years she was denigrated into a sort of **Dream Girl** though perhaps without some of the sweet nature. Disney preferred to have a syrupy feel to his cartoons. His feature-length animated cartoons mostly featured young innocent pretty girls in Teutonic legends. Snow White was one of these. He based her looks on **Jane Gaynor** but she remained little more than a child. Disney was not one to annoy the censors.

Tex Avery certainly came to the attention of the censors many times with his "updated Teutonic legends" such as **Red Hot Riding Hood** and **Swing Stiff Cinderella**. His cartoons were full of a blacker humour and were aimed at an older audience than Disney's. He was very innovative about getting his cartoons around the censors and he had a great overseas audience for "Red Hot Riding Hood". Soldiers serving abroad bought 'uncut' versions. All of his stories featured a lustful wolf who fell apart literally whenever he met Red Riding Hood singing at her local nightclub. She is based on the old Hollywood vamp and also on Rita Hayworth's portrayal of **Gilda** in 1946. She is also updated in 1988 as **Jessica Rabbit**, also a nightclub singer in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit".

I feel that though the Hollywood stars may have outshone the animated stars in the thirties and forties, the animated stars have a certain fleeting

1. The first part of the report is a summary of the work done during the year.

2. The second part is a detailed account of the work done during the year.

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immortality about them which is versatile and flexible. Most of the original Hollywood stars of the twenties and thirties are dead now, but the animated stars are as alive today as they were sixty years ago. They are versatile and adaptable even to today's films. After all, both Betty Boop and Jessica Rabbit starred in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" with no sign of wear and tear. People can never fail to be impressed with the art of moving drawings that is animation.

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APPENDIX

1. The first of the two books is a history of the city of London, written by John Stow, and published in 1597.

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