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A HISTORICAL ENQUIRY INTO THE ANIMATION UNIT, SITUATED WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (SABC) 1976 – 1988

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A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Mater of Arts in Dramatic Arts by Coursework and Research Report.

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Abstract

This historical enquiry exhibits the chronology, growth and development of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) Animation Unit (1975-88), largely through the understanding of the Unit's production context as well as through a contextual analysis of the socio-political, economic and technological landscapes of the decades preceding the launch of television in South Africa. This report traces the history of animation through the pre-cinematic, cinematic and televisual eras, both locally and internationally, in an attempt to expose the many influences, overlapping animation traditions and parallel technological histories evident between Europe, America and South Africa. This empirical study is concerned with the preservation of the history of the South African Animation Unit through the combined use of archival materials, interview subjects and pre-existing historical data.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.



_____

Shanaz Shapurjee

15 day of October, 2008

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Introduction

This research report explores both empirically and historically the art form of animation in South Africa at the time of the "televisual" age, specifically from 1975-88 when an Animation Unit was created and developed by the National Broadcaster, the SABC. The report documents the history of this Unit within the context of South African cinematic, economic and political landscapes.

During the preparatory stages of the research-gathering process, it became apparent that there was a very limited amount of documented material concerning the SABC Animation Unit, and indeed concerning the entire history of animation in South Africa. Many academics, archivists and animators that I interviewed were not even aware that such a Unit had ever existed. This lack of awareness and documentation indicates that a report of this kind is necessary and fundamental to the preservation of the history of the art form of animation in South Africa, which to date has been completely neglected.

The Preservation of an Art Form

In his 1997 article, "Bones of Contention: Thoughts on the Study of Animation," Andrew Darley[1] states that the field of animation has been relatively neglected by academics, largely because it is still not viewed as an entirely "legitimate field of scholarship" (Darley 63). He goes on to describe how animation has long been regarded as being ambiguous and multifarious as an art form, and as a result of this has been "overshadowed by live-action film" and escaped in-depth "academic disciplinary definition" (65). However, as of late, the tide has begun to turn: a concerted effort is being made to map and recover the history of animation, as well as to "investigate its diverse forms and understand its cultural significance" (64). Maureen Furniss[1] has pointed out in her book, *Art in Motion: Animation*

Andrew Darley's article offers an insightful look into the study of animation and served as my initial inspiration in this research endeavour as it tackles issues surrounding the preservation of the medium of animation.

[1] Maureen Furniss is the founding publisher and editor of *Animation Journal*. She is on the animation faculty at California Institute of the Arts, in the Los Angeles area and has done extensive research into animation studies methodology.

Aesthetics, how in the past scholarly work on animation was only carried out by a small and confined group of people including fans, collectors and "historically minded practitioners" (4). During the latter half of the 20th century organisations such as the French l'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation (ASIFA), SIGGRAPH (a special interest group from parent organisation, the Association for Computing Machinery), the American Film Institute and the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) were concerned with the preservation of animation history.[2] Furniss goes on to suggest that the "denigrated status of Animation Studies [at university level] is largely due to the belief held in many countries that animation is not a 'real' art form because it is too popular, too commercialised, or too closely associated with 'fandom' or youth audiences to be taken seriously" (1). This indeed appears to be the major reason for scholarly neglect of the field.

Conducting Research

The focus of this research report is primarily on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)'s Animation Unit, which was set up and headed by Butch Stoltz in Johannesburg, from April 1975. The Unit lasted for thirteen years until its closure in 1988. During its existence the Unit produced a range of animation directed at child audiences of SATV 1 and SATV 2. Several of its works became national favourites, in particular the introductory titles and animated links for *Wielie Walie*, a children's magazine programme.

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[2] ASIFA is generally considered as one of the first organisations that concerned itself with the preservation of the art-form of animation. It was founded in 1960 and since its inception has been fostering the history of animation, operating on an international level with local platforms in many parts of the world. According to Furniss, "ASIFA groups have held animation retrospectives and have published a wide array of writing on the topic of animation history" (4). When I approached ASIFA about the history of South African Animation, they regrettably informed me that what they have is insubstantial, which further indicates the urgency for empirical research of this kind to be undertaken. SIGGRAPH emerged in the late 1960s and began hosting conferences from the mid-1970s. This organisation has been responsible for the wide range of print and online publications available. During the 1980s there was a growing concern amongst industry professionals and scholars with the preservation of animation. Walter Lantz was one such professional who offered financial assistance to the American Film Institute, which hosted 2 conferences in 1987 and 1988. As a result of the conference 2 anthologies were published of critical writing on animation. The SAS was founded in 1988 by Harvey Deneroff (http://animationstudies.org) and aimed to produce research in the field of animation. According to Furniss, the SAS soon realised that "it remained difficult to place essays in the majority of media journals, which are generated towards live-action motion pictures. As a result a lot of animation research languished undeveloped and without proper distribution. To address this problem, *Animation Journal (http://www.animationjournal.com)*, the first peer-reviewed publication devoted to animation studies, was founded in 1991" (Furniss 4).

Initially, my intention was to provide an accurate and thorough account of the SABC Animation Unit through an investigation into how and why it came into existence, and how it was internally organised and structured. My aim was to uncover such structural and procedural changes as the unit underwent in its relatively short-lived existence, as well as to explore the reasoning behind its sudden closure in 1988. In other words, this study started out as an institutional history of the SABC Animation Unit. However, once archival material was collated and interviews with key players were completed I realised that the Animation Unit was, in fact, a rather small and peripheral component of the SABC during the Apartheid era.

Through this realisation I acknowledged that I needed to incorporate Furniss's "contextual approach"[3] into my research methodology. This approach explores the belief that "it is important and necessary to understand the production context of the animation being created – the historical, economic, social, technological, industrial and other influences upon any work at the time of its making" (7). This approach also affected my research-gathering methods and aided me in defining the final structure of my report.

In terms of the revision of the structure of the report, I decided that it was essential to incorporate relevant aspects of the chronology and growth of the entire South African animation industry, from its beginnings in 1915 until 1988 when the SABC Animation Unit was shut down. I also decided to document the institutional history of the Animation Unit largely through a contextual analysis of the South African Broadcasting Corporation from 1976-88. This requires an understanding of the socio-political and economic status of state broadcasting in South Africa during the apartheid era. The study will use a similar documentary/historical approach to examine also the studios and the individual artists who contributed to the SABC Animation Unit's program output.

[3] Furniss believes that "in considering a production context, it is advisable to extend an analysis to at least the ten years before a production was made, the period during which a context was becoming established" (7).

Rationale

From its inception, the SABC Animation Unit brought animated viewing to South African television audiences both through its acquisitioning of American and European cartoons and through the production of local animated content that became hugely popular . This research report therefore serves to acknowledge the contribution that a handful of South African artists made in the field of animation, as well as to outline the processes and formatting procedures undertaken by the SABC Animation Unit.

There is also an urgent need to document the history of animation in South Africa as it is in danger of slipping away from potential scholars. Recordings of productions have not been systematically archived, personal copies are on formats that are difficult to view because of technological change, and, most seriously, many veterans having already died without their histories being properly documented.

Through my research, I have discovered that, regrettably, only three individuals have managed to collate pieces of the animated film history of South Africa, namely Sarienne Kersh, Silvia Bazzoli and Giannalberto Bendazzi. Kersh has published her work in *Screen Africa* (a magazine targeted at live-action motion picture professionals) and Bendazzi and Bazzoli[4] have each published many books. None of these scholars have given any serious consideration to the history of SABC Animation Unit, and the fact that Bazzoli and Bendazzi are Italian scholars doing South African historical research further affirms the importance of this field of research, and endorses the value of this report's attempt to remedy the apparent lack of interest among local scholars in empirical research of this kind.

Theoretical Approach

According to Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, authors of *Film History: An Introduction*, there are 5 distinct approaches to the explanation of historical facts:

[4] Unfortunately Silvia Bazzoli has not as yet managed to translate her book, *Cartoons: Il Cinema di Animazione in Africa* into English.

biographical, industrial/economic, aesthetic, technological and social/cultural/political.[5]

Each approach focuses on a specific aspect of history, and it is advised that historians investigate which combination of approaches suit their academic argument and subject matter best (Thompson and Bordwell 5). In the case of this research report, I will be applying a combination of biographical, technological and social/cultural/political histories. I have chosen these three approaches because they appear to be the most helpful in establishing a historically accurate chronology of South African animation. This range of approaches is conducive to a full engagement with the context within which the Animation Unit was created, which in turn allows the investigator to approach the research in the contextual manner that Furniss outlines in her book. In fact, because there is not much documented history on the subject matter to begin with, any information on the Animation Unit would have to be obtained through contextual analysis: the oral documentation of facts, biographical profiles of the founders of the unit and individuals instrumental in establishing the industry, archival records and socio-economic and political histories.

Technological explanation is important when one is documenting animation history as it delineates the quality of equipment as well as the professional standards set by relevant countries. In the case of South Africa this technological history is directly linked to social/cultural/political history, as the political landscape of apartheid affected the content, distribution, exhibition and development of the industry. I have explicitly excluded the aesthetic approach as I am focusing on the institutional history of the Unit and not on the form, style, genre and aesthetics of the productions it created.

The reason I have chosen to incorporate Furniss's and Thompson and Bordwell's approaches into my research is because they explore the fundamental

[5] Despite the fact that Thompson and Bordwell are dealing with cinematic history in their book, it is important to note that these approaches are applicable to all forms of historical research gathering. In my case I have used this knowledge to aid in creating a historical landscape for animation in South Africa both in the cinematic era and the televisual.

methodologies involved in collating past events: chronology, causality, influence, trends and generalisations, periodisation and significance.

Historical Research Programs

Historical research programmes are based on questions that require answers, and involve assumptions and background knowledge. The concept of "background knowledge" in interactive research of this kind is indispensable. I gained this knowledge through interviews with relevant figures, from documentaries on the SABC and on animation history, as well as from publications and journals in the field. The internet also provided substantial historical information. Archives are essential resources for detailed empirical research, and I visited the National Film Video and Sound Archives, run by the Department of Arts and Culture in Pretoria, the Johannesburg Library's African History Archives, and the SABC Program Archives. These archives provided me with information pertinent to the compilation of a chronology of animation in South Africa and material relating to the socio-political, economic and religious contexts within which the Animation Unit at the SABC operated.

Film historians and researchers argue that "there is no film history, only film histories. For some, this means that there can be no intelligible, coherent 'grand-narrative' that puts all the facts into place. For others, film history means that historians work from various perspectives and with different interests and purposes" (Thompson and Bordwell 2). This argument sheds important light on the whole concept of history, and has made me cognisant of the fact that I am helping to compile and mould the history of South African animation through my particular questions, opinions and perspectives. Thompson and Bordwell also remind the historical researcher that it is imperative to gather plausible evidence (4). This can usually be achieved through a successful marriage of formal and informal sources, of published and unpublished work, which I hope I have been able to achieve.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Animation Roots

Using the contextual approach to historical research methods outlined by animation scholar Maureen Furniss, the first part of this chapter outlines briefly the historical, socio-political and economic conditions that defined the origins of the art form of animation, which will help to situate South African animation in the global entertainment continuum. The true beginnings of the art form are identified and clarified, certain misconceptions that arose during the industrial period are dispelled, and the magical, participatory potential of the art form is revealed. The ground-breaking technologies explored by the early animators influenced artists worldwide and encouraged further exploration of the medium. The progression of the South African animation industry, from Vaudevillian theatre to cinema to television, would not have occurred without the influence of American and European pioneers.

The second part of this chapter explores the Industrialisation of Animation that occurred in America in the years 1914-1928. This phenomenon revolutionised animation production by introducing methods that have been used throughout the world up until the present day. This section of the chapter covers the factors that have led to the global domination of American commercial animation, specifically the influence of the famous Disney Studio, and traces the impact this commercial form of animation has consequently had on the South African industry. This chapter is significant to the understanding of the Animation Unit, because the practices of the animators employed by the SABC were directly informed and influenced by the traditions that originated in this cinematic era of animation in America.

I have purposely refrained from discussing alternative, experimental forms of animation as they are not pertinent to this study. They do not represent the dominant global perceptions of or trends within animation and so did not really influence the burgeoning South African industry. I have also chosen to refrain from focusing on puppet animation, both live-action marionettes and stop-motion,

in this study as puppets were not used by the Animation Unit; discussing this medium would therefore be somewhat of a digression from the central aims and focus of this specific study. However, puppet animation in South Africa was popular so much so that the SABC had an entirely separate department that dealt with puppets for television broadcast, which I will discuss briefly in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Animation and Film in Southern Africa

This chapter aims to explore the rich history and cultural traditions of the South African film and animation industries. The chronology established here helps to contextualise the territory in which the SABC Animation Unit was to later operate, and exposes the circumstances which have led to the diminished status of the industry as a whole. This chapter also provides a comparative study of the relationship between the animation and film industries, which is significant as it exposes the lack of affiliation between two industries which ought instead to enjoy a mutually beneficial rapport.

From a historical perspective, the tracing of this period of development in South Africa is essential as it delineates key role-players, contributors and modes of production that later impacted upon the SABC Animation Unit.

Chapter 3: Animation in the Context of Television

The medium of television sparked opportunities for new production and exhibition technologies, and demanded the restructuring and reformatting of the aesthetics and modes of production employed by American animators and studios of the time. In this chapter I will be exploring these technologies and their repercussions, as well as the techniques of "limited animation" which suited the new broadcast medium. This chapter is significant in that it explores the relationship between television and the animation industry, which is markedly different from the relationship between cinema and animation, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

In his essay "The Great Saturday Morning Exile," Jason Mittell argues that "while cartoons [themselves] may have remained the same from the film era, the way in

which cartoons were presented for television altered their textual flow and relocated the texts within the realm of children's programming" (36). This American notion had a tremendous impact in South Africa: the SABC believed firmly that animation was a medium that catered to children viewers only, and in this way marginalised it as an art form. In this chapter I will also be looking at three independent South African studios that contributed substantial work to the South African television services' Children's Programming Department.

Chapter 4: The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)

Due to the socio-economic and political situation during the time of the Animation Unit's existence (1975-88), I will begin this fourth chapter by examining the SABC as an ideological institution: its "vision," history, children's programming traditions, and its censorship and regulations.

The introduction of television in South Africa (and other "third world" countries) occurred more recently (1975) that its appearance in first world countries (the 1950s). The process of establishing a broadcasting structure is quite complex and requires thorough organisation and attention to financial structures, as well as a fundamental knowledge of the technology required to operate a broadcast facility. It is therefore only to be expected that many African countries relied on training and assistance from either the British (British Broadcasting Corporation – BBC) or French (Office de Radio-Télévision Française – ORTF) broadcasting corporations. I will therefore be analysing briefly the British and French models of broadcasting, as they also influenced the way in which South African broadcasting structures were originally conceived and set-up.

In 1975, the SABC created an Animation Unit, which was headed by Butch Stoltz and later by Gerard Smith. The primary focus of their work at the broadcasting corporation was creating content for children's programming, in the form of animated entertainment inserts and special effects. The Unit was responsible also for the creation of illustrations for Afrikaans children's programs such as *Haas Das se Nuuskas*, the *Wielie Walie* opening logo, *Kraaines* opening logo, *The Invisible Grisibles* and the *Cabbages and Kings* opening logo. In addition, the

Unit was utilised for the creation of the opening logos for adult series such as *Uit and Tuis*, *Dokter Dokter*, *Nommer Asseblief* and *Sing and Die Drie van der Merwes*.The primary focus of this chapter is an analysis of the Animation Unit through a contextual approach. The latter half of the chapter explores the following: the Unit's founders, management systems, internal hierarchies, production pipelines, output type, as well as works produced and production techniques employed by the Unit over the time it was in existence.

Chapter 1:
Animation Roots

Animation as an art form spans four primary epochs[6]: the pre-cinematic, cinematic, the televisual and, most recently, the digital. Chronology and causation are inextricably linked, so that (for instance) the cinematic era of animation directly influenced and affected the ensuing era of television animation. It is therefore necessary to examine the notable innovators, artists and businessmen involved in the development and progression of the art form from the beginning of the cinematic era until the end of the "Golden Age."[7]

This chapter consists of two sections:

1. *The Origins of an Art Form*, which delineates the progression of the animation industry from its shared beginnings with live-action cinema. An analysis of this period in history, albeit brief, is critically necessary as the modes of production employed by animators at this time were modified and adapted during the industrialisation of animation and the resultant birth of the studio system.

2. *The Industrialisation Process*, which documents the standardisation of the medium of animation in America in the form of the studio system and the introduction of cel-based animation. I aim to explore the rise of a specific form of industrialised animation production (also called commercial

[6] It is important to be aware that these 'epochs' were not stand-alone time periods; much overlapping occurred between them.

[7] According to Thompson and Bordwell, "chronology is essential to historical explanation, and descriptive research is an indispensable aid to establishing the sequence of events". However, history is not merely a chronological account of a series of events; there are many causes for these events which in turn impacted and influenced the next series of events. It is therefore critical to link causality with chronology as "much historical explanation involves cause and effect" (Thompson and Bordwell 5). In this chapter I will be looking at the many 'trends and generalisations' that occurred in Europe and America, that would later affect/influence the SABC Animation Unit's modes of production and understanding of the art form of animation, due to their resounding success globally. Animation underwent many 'ages' from its foundations in optical toys right up until the televisual age and the now digital age and it is necessary to document these ages so that a comprehensive, contextual analysis of the SABC Animation Unit can be conducted.

animation production), epitomised by the Disney Studio, which has surpassed all other forms of production across the globe due to its resounding commercial success. This half of the chapter will discuss the foundations of the production process at the Disney Studio, through an analysis of the animation techniques, innovations and marketing strategies.

1.1 The Origins of an Art Form

The 19th century saw animation emerging gradually as an art form due to complex, multifaceted, cultural and technological advances made by various scholars and scientific practitioners of the time.

Peter Mark Roget, who was at the time an examiner of physiology at the University of London, published a ground-breaking book entitled *The Persistence of Vision with Regard to Moving Objects*[8] in 1824. Roget's theory explained that images captured by the human eye are retained by the retina for a fraction of a second before being replaced by the succeeding image. Roget believed that the human eye would perceive a series of still images as moving if the succession of images being seen was sufficiently rapid. This phenomenal innovation in scientific theory led to further exploration and refinement over the next 5 decades, sparking excitement and wonder across the globe (Bendazzi 3).

[8] In 1978 this theory of the 'persistence of vision' was challenged in the *Journal of University Film Association* by Joseph and Barbera Anderson; in that article the theory was proved as a myth. In searching for the reason why humans perceive a succession of still images as being moving they posed two basic questions: Why is the image continuous and why does it move? The answer was not as simple as Roget's theory of image 'fusion'. In the early 1970s, with almost "total indifference to the problems of film scholars, researchers in several disciplines were pursuing problems in their own fields which would inadvertently shed light upon problems such as the phenomenon of motion in the motion picture. One such avenue opened when psychologists began to explore the relationship of apparent motion to real motion" (Anderson). Their research questioned whether apparent motion and real motion are, in fact, mediated by different mechanisms. According to Anderson, "this inquiry is directly relevant to the perception of the motion picture; there is, after all, no motion on the screen. There is only a succession of still images. The motion in motion pictures is the result of a transformation made by our visual system". Joseph and Barbera Anderson's ground-breaking article hinges on the idea that the eye is a complex, multi-faceted organ. The processes and transformations performed by the perceptual system when confronted with cinematic images needs to be completely understood in order to gain insight into the complexities of 'perceived vision'.

1.1.1 Optical Toys

Giannalberto Bendazzi, prominent film scholar and animation enthusiast, believes that the human being's fascination with moving images is rooted in the "ancient human need to reproduce existence as faithfully as possible" (Bendazzi 3). This theory came to technological fruition with the invention of the first optical toy[9] prototype, by John A. Paris in 1825, the *Thaumatrope*. This device consisted of a disc with complimentary images stuck on either side, and strings attached at each end of the disc's horizontal axis. When the disc is spun, an illusion occurs that allows the two images to composite into one image.

Belgian scientist Joseph Plateau and Austrian geometry professor Simon Stampfer independently invented prototypes of another optical toy that came to be named the Phenakistiscope.[10] This device consisted of a series of successive images that were drawn around the outer edges of a circular disc. This disc was connected to a pivot, which allowed it to spin freely. The viewer then observed the images through a slit and the illusion of movement was created (see Fig. 1). These optical toys served as precursors to motion pictures and their historical legacy and significance should not be overlooked (Thompson & Bordwell 14).

According to Furniss, "long before 1895, the year in which a motion picture was screened publicly for the first time in America, models for both live-action and animated films had been established by optical toys and various forms of projected images involving sequential movements" (Furniss 13). These novelty toys naturalised the concept of moving images and the illusion of movement in the minds of the public and prepared them for the advent of cinema at the turn of the century. Optical toys were imported into South Africa during 1895 and swiftly became a novelty across the major coastal and inland towns. The introduction of

[9] It is important to note that these 'toys,' though they provided much entertainment, were also developed in part as scientific experiments to clarify the then myths of 'perception' and 'motion' (Thompson & Bordwell 14).

[10] Improvements and modifications were made to Plateau and Stampfer's prototype and some of the refined models that emerged from the original model were the *Praxinoscope*, the *Kinematoscope*, the *Fantascope* and the *Zoetrope* (see Fig. 2). These inventions served the same purpose of entertainment and worked on similar principles.

these rudimentary animations prepared the public for the era of cinema, both live-action and animation, in South Africa.

1.1.2 Émile Reynaud and 'Théâtre Optique'

Frenchman Émile Reynaud is an important, although somewhat isolated, figure in the history of the invention of cinema. He is credited with the invention of the *'Théâtre Optique' (*patented in 1889), which is a modification of his earlier invention, the *Praxinoscope* [11] (see Fig. 3). This Optical Theatre served as an oversized, primitive projector where long, broad strips of hand painted frames were rear-projected onto a screen. Although the projected movement is slow and erratic, the animated shorts that Reynaud created were the first documented public exhibitions of moving images. According to Bendazzi, Reynaud's unique contribution to the history of cinema is the expansion of the time dimension, which theoretically opened up unlimited possibilities to images in rapid succession. Reynaud should be credited as the innovator of performance-based narrative using moving pictures.

1.1.3 James Stuart Blackton and the 'Chalk Talks'

Born in Great Britain in 1875, Blackton immigrated to America at the age of ten with a passion for story-telling. Blackton and his film partner Albert E. Smith are said to have stumbled across the technique of 'stop-motion[12]' animation, whilst shooting a 'trick film' in 1898.[13] They realised that peculiar illusions of movement could be created by stopping the camera, moving objects or altering/modifying drawings and starting the camera again (Crafton, 20). What set

[11] The *Praxinoscope* (patented in 1877) consisted of a "cylindrical box attached to a pivot. The coloured strips of paper on the inside face of the cylinder showed the consecutive stages of movement. When the cylinder rotated, these stages were reflected in rapid succession on a mirrored prism mounted on the pivot, and the viewer who looked at the prism would see the drawn image move freely (Bendazzi 4).

[12] A distinction should be made between *stop-motion* animation and *stop-frame* animation: the latter, in this context, refers to the most rudimentary process of stopping the camera and restarting it with something having changed in the mise-en-scène. *Stop-motion* involves a series of frame-by-frame manipulations of objects, as in the films created by Blackton and Smith.

[13] The 'trick film' was popularised by 'magician – filmmaker' Georges Méliès at the turn of the 19th century. The 'trick film' involves the stopping of a film camera at varying intervals, making the necessary adjustments and then restarting the camera to create an illusion of metamorphosis. It is sometimes known as the "technical predecessor of animation" (Crafton 13).

this discovery apart from George Méliès' "trick film" was the fact that Blackton and Smith saw the potential for a more "believable" fluidity of motion.

This discovery culminated in the successful release of *The Haunted Hotel* in 1907.[14] This 'trick film', in terms of narrative convention, was already part of an established literary genre – the horror – and its success lay largely in the animated special effects that were noticeably more "credible" than anything previously attempted and caused quite a stir among audiences. Consequently, the short-lived tradition of the 'trick film' was abandoned in favour of the newly-discovered techniques of Blackton and Smith (Crafton 15-17). Whilst stop-motion animation was not terribly popular in the early history of South African animation, the techniques innovated by Blackton and Smith greatly influenced many animators, even to an extent those animators working at the Killarney Studios in Johannesburg 1940, who were concerned with the production of special effects and title sequences for theatrical exhibition. Interestingly it is these animators who later trained Butch Stoltz and Gerard Smith in these techniques, which they in turn applied to some of their work at the SABC.

Blackton also had experience using this stop-motion technique for constructing dynamic, visually interesting "lightning sketches," as they were called in America or "chalk talks" in Britain. These chalk talks grew out of a Victorian parlour tradition which became part of the Vaudeville stage around the end of the 19th century in Europe and America, and proved to be a great source of entertainment (Crafton 19). [15] Due to South Africa's being a British colonial territory at the time, it is no surprise that these chalk talks, along with other Victorian parlour traditions (specifically the art of puppetry), became popular sources of public entertainment.

[14] *The Haunted Hotel* was a horror film that employed animated special effects. Its huge success was due primarily to the fact that the effects were so realistic.
[15] Prior to the invention of the radio, film and television, Vaudeville was a very popular form of entertainment in North America. The Vaudeville theatres showcased a variety of acts from puppeteers, acrobats, singers and dancers to jugglers, clowns, comedians, mimes, artists and musicians.

The "lightning sketcher's" talent lay in his ability to rapidly draw caricatures of viewers or modify an existing image on stage, whilst performing a monologue (Bendazzi 8). These performances were a fusion of traditional art and theatrical performance, which allowed for the artist to take on the role of the enchanting story-teller (see Fig. 4). During the later filming of these performances the artist was endowed with the title of auteur and the drawings often displayed an exceptional autonomy, which paved the way for the "self-figuration" prominent in the works of animators to come (Bendazzi 1994: 8, Crafton, 1993: 48).[16]

This filmic mechanism of self-figuration exposed the animator as a magician of sorts and was used prominently in European and American animations for the first three decades of the 20th century.

1.1.4 Winsor McCay

The films that Blackton and Smith created were rather two-dimensional and static in appearance, in terms of narrative and character progression; they were merely linear chalk drawings on a blackboard and similar to the original chalk talks. Experimentation with innovative camera angles and emotive character animation only appeared at a later stage in the work of artist Winsor McCay.

The Vaudeville shows of Europe gained immense popularity in America and by the turn of the 19th century they were admired equally on both continents. McCay was an "eminent comic-strip artist and vaudevillian who began making drawn animated films, initially to project in his stage act" (Thompson & Bordwell 53). His first film, completed in 1911, is entitled *Little Nemo*, and features characters from his famous comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (see Fig. 5, 6). Donald Crafton suggests that McCay's vivid graphic style and penchant for closed forms and illusionism set a standard for American animation. He also mentions that McCay's style is "profoundly consistent with the traditional concerns of American artists in general for solidarity, pragmatism, and pictorial realism". It is his

[16] Self-figuration is a term used to describe the parts of the narrative film where the auteur is consciously and deliberately making his/her presence known to the audience. It often took the shape of characters being introduced to audiences by the artist's hands drawing them on screen followed by the characters then 'coming to life' (Crafton 11).

striving for verisimilitude that made his work so well received by viewers, a trend later followed in the work of Walt Disney (Crafton 134-35) (See Fig. 7,8,9)

1.1.5 George Pal and Puppet Animation Traditions

Described as a world traveller, George Pal cannot be classified by nation. He was born on February 1, 1908 in Cegléd Hungary and began his career as a scene designer at Hunnia Studio in Budapest. Pal's affinity to puppet film began only when he joined UFA in Berlin where he was given the opportunity to work on an advertising short for a cigarette brand. In 1934 he travelled to Eindhoven, The Netherlands, where he worked for the Philips Corporation, which was fully equipped for puppet animation. Whilst in The Netherlands, Pal also completed many advertising films for the British market (Bendazzi 107).

Pal's career reached its zenith in the United States of America where he was contracted to Paramount, from 1940-49, for the puppet series *Puppetoons*.[17] Pal is described by Bendazzi as an "inimitable technician of movement and a showman of taste" whose beautifully stylized puppets gave exceptional performances (107).

There is no apparent relation between Pal and South African animators. However, in South Africa, specifically within the context of early television broadcasting (1976-88), the use of live-action puppets and marionettes was very popular and was often preferred over the medium of cel-based animation because it was cheaper, easier and faster to create live-studio sets and animate puppets than it was to produce a 24-minute episode of animated material. Famous South African puppets that regularly graced the silver screen to the delight of audiences were Bennie Boekwurm (Bennie Bookworm), hand-crafted by Butch Stoltz, and Liewe Heksie (Lovely/Sweet Little Witch), Sarel Seemonster (Sarel the Sea Monster) and Karel Kraai (Karel the Crow), all created by Rod Campbell, from *Wielie Walie* (see Fig. 10-13).[18]

[17] This unique series involved the character Jasper, a black boy based on the stereotypes of American black vaudeville (Bendazzi 107) Pal went on to become a special effects expert and won five Oscars for his talent and contribution.

[18] Bennie Boekwurm was created by Rod Campbell from the Scenic and Décor department. This character imparted much knowledge to the youth of South Africa. *Wielie Walie* was the SABC's

Out of all the puppet films/series created, *Liewe Heksie* is perhaps the most well-known South African television series across most of the African continent. The endearing little witch was originally created by Afrikaans children's book author Verna Vels in 1961. The series of books was turned into a television series in 1981 by the SABC, using marionettes as the preferred output medium. The series was directed by Louise Smit, a well-known and respected children's programming writer/director involved in the creation of over 4000 children's shows (SABC Library).

1.1.6 Emile Cohl

French animator Emile Cohl was born on 4 January 1857 in Paris. Cohl's interests and talents were vast and his personae varied from caricature artist and photographer to comedic playwright and magician. He only approached cinema in 1907, the year of the release of Blackton's *Haunted Hotel* in Paris (Bendazzi 9). According to Bendazzi, Cohl came to understand the technical processes involved in Blackton's work and after just a few months released his first completed animated film, *Fantasmagorie* (see Fig. 14). Cohl produced more than 250 films in his animation career, between 1908 and 1921, and exerted a major influence on the development of European animation techniques (Crafton 59).

In 1913 Cohl created *The Newlywed*s, based on the successful *New York World* newspaper cartoon strip by George McManus; it was the first cartoon series with a recurring cast of characters.[19] The advertising created around the show was the first officially to confer on Cohl's work the title of "animated cartoon," and henceforth an affinity grew between animation and comic strip art, which became "naturalised in the minds of the public" (Crafton 83).[20]

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longest running children's series and was first broadcast in 1976. By 1986 the series had celebrated its ten year anniversary and was still pleasing audiences through songs, rhymes and riddles (SABC Annual Report, 1976-1988).

[19] Cohl worked for the Éclair Company in France 1912 and was transferred to an American branch office in Fort Lee, New Jersey where he worked on *The Newlyweds* and *Snookums*: both cartoon series (Bendazzi 10).

[20] As a result of Cohl's cartoon series adaptation, comic artists across America became interested in animated cinema. In fact, Crafton believes that most pioneers of the animated film had previous experience in the popular graphic arts (Crafton 44).

This relationship as pioneered by Cohl is a very important one, which has influenced European, American, Asian and African animation in the 20th century.[21] Comic art furnished an endless supply of story and gag material that was easy to convert into an animated series. Comic strip adaptations throughout America came to be known as the "American Cartoon." It is vital to recognise that this is merely a sub-genre of animation, as can clearly be seen from the multiplicity of early influences and directions during the development process of animation as an art form.

1.2 The Industrialisation Process

In the first decade of American animation a pioneer animator/businessman "laid the foundations for American animation and gave it direction." John Randolph Bray recognised the profit-making potential in the animation industry, at least a decade before Walt Disney created his empire, and set about seeking ways of "rationalising labour, cutting out unnecessary effort and speeding up production time" (Bendazzi 20).

In 1912 new labour-saving techniques were invented by Bray and Earl Hurd.[22] Bray realised that the animation industry could be monopolised and hastily patented the following: the use of printed background scenes (January 1914); the application of grey shades to drawings (July 1914) and the use of scenery drawn on celluloid to be applied over the drawings to be animated (July 1915). Earl Hurd was responsible for patenting another and perhaps the most significant innovation in animation history: the cel process, which "involved the drawing of characters

[21] At the SABC, Johann Roos (Scenic Services manager at the SABC) together with Butch Stoltz created many comic strips featuring well designed and developed characters some of which were published in Afrikaans newspapers and magazines. These comics were seen by the producers from the children's department who immediately saw the immense potential for the creation of animated/puppet-based children's programming (see Fig. 15 – 20).

[22] With the exception of McCay, Earl Hurd was considered the best animator in America during that time (1880-1940). He is well remembered for his character Bobby Bumps, who went experienced "daily-life adventures in the company of his inseparable dog Fido. His well structured movies displayed an uncommon visual inventiveness, gentle humour and attention to drawing and stenography" (Bendazzi 21).

on transparent celluloid sheets, which were then applied over painted background scenes" (Bendazzi 20-21).[23] These patented items were crucial to the development of animation internationally and changed the manner in which artists approached the medium.

In 1914 the Bray Studios were founded solely for the purpose of creating competition, securing commissions, fostering technological developments and generating as much capital as possible. Bray's ingenuity and wiliness were evident during World War I as he swiftly began marketing government-funded instructional and training films to the American soldiers.[24] The Bray studio originated the "assembly line" method of production that the Disney studio was later to perfect, with the work being divided and compartmentalised under the control of animators responsible for supervising assistants and helpers.[25] This hierarchical structure within the studio was established with the intention of abandoning the traditional, typically arduous method of animation production, thereby enabling commercial competition with the live-action genre of film making (Crafton 154).

Between the 1910s and 1920s American animation was believed to be "characterised not so much by valuable productions" (although there were of course the exceptions such as McCay and Blackton), "but by the film-makers' search for devices, technical processes and language" (Bendazzi 23). Bray's studio system resulted in rather unbalanced films in which the continuity of action and composition was faulty and incoherent as a result of each commissioned job being divided amongst a number of artists who failed to work sufficiently

[23] It was this technique of the cel process that aided McCay in completing his third and most prominent film, *Gertie the Dinosaur(Bendazzi 19,20)* It is important to note that many of McCay's processes and techniques were plagiarised by Bray, who then wanted to sue McCay for the use of 'his' patented techniques. However, Mc Cay prevailed and received royalties from Bray for years to follow.

[24] This move was later echoed by the Walt Disney studio during World War II (Bendazzi 20).

[25] In his book, *Before Mickey: The Animated Cartoon 1898-1928*, Donald Crafton explains how Bray's hierarchical system of production was adapted and developed from principles known as '''Taylorism'', named after a pioneer in management theory, Frederick W. Taylor who advocates the use of machines and standardised, mechanised processes to assure uniform, predictable output (162-168). This theory "impacted and influenced the way in which animation was to be created during the early years of film production, and has had lasting repercussions on the organisation of the American animation industry (Furniss 18).

meticulously. Nonetheless, the Bray studio frantically continued to churn out coarse animated work for cinema distributors who were interested only in economic gain.[26]

Donald Crafton writes that

> The animation industry as established by Bray, his trainees and emulators, could have served as an admirable model for enthusiasts of 'scientific management,'[27] the controversial movement that excited industrial leaders and theoreticians and promised to revolutionise industry by taking full advantage of technology and eliciting the native desire of the American worker to better his life. It was in *this* charged environment that the cartoon industry was nurtured. (162)

1.2.2 The Golden Era of Animation: Walt Disney Studios

In "Breaking the Disney Spell," Jack Zipes[28] describes Walt Disney as a magician who "cast a spell on the fairy tale" and through the employment of technological innovation, ingenuity and a thorough understanding of marketing strategies, managed to brand the imaginations of children across the globe. Walt Disney re-invented the concept of the fairytale to such an extent that his "signature has obfuscated the names of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson and Carlo Collodi" (21).

There are numerous scholarly debates surrounding the Walt Disney studio, with some believing that Walt Disney embedded into his narratives insidious capitalist

[26] Animated shorts were screened prior to the live-action feature alongside newsreels, slapstick comedies, endless serials and generally low quality fiction (Bendazzi 24). As a result of this, many studios competed with each other to produce the bulk of the animation screened in theatres.
[27] 'Scientific management' advocated the segregation between management and labourers. With the aim of increasing production, this system of management promoted efficiency of technique, uniformity, and the development of a 'system' as opposed to the individual (Crafton 1993: 163-164).
[28] According to his Wikipedia entry, Jack Zipes is a well known and respected Professor of German at the University of Minnesota who has written extensively on the work of Walt Disney, specifically with regard to the concepts of 'fairytale' and 'Disney ideology'. His lectures and publications on fairy tales has transformed research on this subject matter and exposed their linguistic roots and socialization function. (www.wikipedia.com)

and racist ideologies, whilst others commend his artistic skills and acknowledge that he was a master businessman and animator extraordinaire.[29] The debates are extensive, intense, and ongoing, and serve as testament to the great power and authority that the Disney studio has indeed held in the global animation industry. Walt Disney set very high standards for the industry during the "golden era"[30] of animation, and through the partnership with Pixar, still continues to do so; consequently it should be useful to investigate his far-reaching grip on the American public, and indeed the world, so as to understand the traditions and innovations he handed down.

Walt Disney founded the Disney studio officially in 1928, and from its inception he sought to create a new, precise aesthetic language with which to communicate his ideas to his audiences. According to Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, "Background, costume, character and expression were all designed for a succinct statement: the illusion of life" (23).[31] The studio perfected this technique of storytelling – characterised by flattened colour, illusionary backgrounds, verisimilitude and fluidity of character and motion – in its animated feature-film and short-film making from 1928-48. This advanced aesthetic language was adopted by many South African animators during the early 1940s as it offered

[29] The key texts in these debates are: *Breaking the Disney Spell* by Jack Zipes; *Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies* by Elizabeth Bell; *The Righteousness of Self-centred Royals: The World According to Disney Animation* by Lee Artz; *Is the Mouse Sensitive? A Study of Race, Gender and Social Vulnerability in Disney Animated Films* by Vincent Faherty; *Corporate Disney in Action* and Analysing *the World According to Disney* by Janet Wasko.

[30] The advent of the sound cartoon in 1928 earmarked the nascent era in the history of American animated filmmaking that was later dubbed, 'The Golden Age'. This age of animation peaked in the mid-1940s and continued until the 1960s, when the innovative and new found medium of television overshadowed and ultimately destroyed the traditional theatrical animated short. During these 'golden' years many unforgettable and distinguished characters from a host of different studios graced the silver screen, including the likes of *Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto* from the Disney Studios; *Betty Boop, Koko the Clown, Popeye* and the ever popular adaptation of the *Superman* comic from the Fleischer studio; Walter Lantz's *Woody Woodpecker* and a host of screwball characters from the Warner Bros. studios: *Yosemite Sam, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck* and *Porky Pig* to name a few. These characters concretised the idea of the animated personality and were imbued with charismatic magnetism by their respective auteur (Maltin 219-231).

[31] The notion of 'the illusion of life' is a term coined and mastered by the Disney studio. "It came from new ways of thinking, ways of making a drawing, ways of relating drawings to each other – all the refinements in this language of imagery" (Thomas and Johnston 25). It involved the portrayal of emotions by the characters on screen, which would attain audience involvement through the spirit of life.

artists a formulaic and seemingly fool-proof method of animating that moreover appeared to guarantee commercial success.

Walt Disney, together with his senior staff, also modified and elaborated on the kinetic effects and techniques illustrated in E.G. Lutz's *Animated Cartoons: How They Are Made, Their Origin and Development*. The adaptation included the development of twelve principles: squash and stretch; anticipation; staging; straight ahead action and pose to pose; follow through and overlapping action; slow in and slow out; arcs; secondary action; timing; exaggeration; solid drawing and appeal (see Fig. 21, 22).[32]

These principals allowed animators to relate drawings to one another in a revolutionary manner, while the studio reaped the financial rewards of such life-

[32] These principles governed the manner in which Disney animators brought life to their respective characters and when new artists joined the studio they were taught these principles "as if they were the rules of the trade" (Thomas and Johnston 47). The most important discovery, according to Disney, was the principle of 'Squash and Stretch,' which can be defined as the moving, on paper, of a fixed shape from one drawing to the next where the real-life rigidity of the object is negated. "The squashed position can depict the form either flattened out by great pressure or bunched up and pushed together. The stretched position always shows the same form in a much extended condition" (47-48). The principle of 'Anticipation' deals with the concept of the thought before the action. E.g. Before a man runs his body crouches down, in anticipation, coiling like a spring. 'Staging' is a term that has its roots in the theatre. However, in Disney's case it denoted the placing of a character in relation to the camera in an attempt to get the best out of the narrative or gag. 'Straight ahead/Pose to pose action' is a term that illustrates the manner in which an animator approaches a particular scene/gag. Either he/she draws intuitively, otherwise known as animating 'straight ahead' or alternatively he/she attempts to draw the key frames of action, pose to pose. 'Follow through' and/or 'overlapping action' deals with Newton's laws of motion. Walt Disney was adamant that in order to create a believable illusion one had to animate characters that adhered to the laws of physics and motion. If an object in motion comes to a stop, any appendages, extra parts or accessories will continue to move after the rest of the figure has stopped. 'Slow in and slow out' is a term that illustrates inconsistency of movement. It allows characters movement to not be mechanical and evenly timed out.
Walt Disney believed that all creatures and parts of creatures, moved in circular or semi-circular paths called 'Arcs'. "This discovery made a major change in type of movements animators designed for their characters, breaking with the rigid and stiff actions that had gone before" (62). 'Secondary action' deals with the introduction of extra movement/gesture to further enhance the action already taking place. "The chief difficulty lies in making a unified statement through the drawing and timing of separate, but related parts" (64). The concept of 'timing' is an old one, which was used extensively in vaudeville acts, theatre and in the cinema. However, in animation the term 'timing' took on a slightly varied meaning; the number of in-between drawings from one extreme pose to another would drastically alter the textual flow of the narrative. The principle of 'exaggeration,' as the name suggests, deals with the heightening of the real in terms of facial expression and action. Solid drawing is something all animators to this day practice. It is the essential practicing of life-drawing and being able to master the art of drawing 3-dimensional forms. Finally, the term 'appeal' means "anything that a person likes to see, a quality of charm, pleasing design, simplicity, communication, and magnetism." This quality allows the character to be well liked and received by the audience.

like, detailed animation. These 12 principles became so popular amongst animators that they eventually were adopted by studios and individual artists across America, Europe, Asia and even Africa. English animators Denis Purchase and Gerard Smith came to South Africa in 1948 and 1969 respectively, bringing with them knowledge of the Disney traditions of animating. They, together with Butch Stoltz who studied in the UK, unofficially trained South African animators to animate using these 12 principles in the studio environment.

The 1930s saw the expansion of the Disney studios, and the staff of six in 1928 grew to include 187 employees by mid 1930 and more than 1600 by 1940 (Thomas and Johnston, 23-30). In 1932 Disney signed a contract with Technicolor, which gave him exclusive rights to the three-colour process for a period of three years. The first animated short to be produced in collaboration with Technicolor was a *Silly Symphony* entitled *Flowers and Trees (1932)*, which won an Academy Award.[33]

Disney's search for verisimilitude led to the invention of some ground-breaking technologies, which were employed by studios across America and Europe for decades to follow.[34] The most notable of these discoveries was the Multiplane Camera. This camera enabled animators to create the much-needed illusion of depth by separating layers of artwork, on glass panes, at varying distances from a still camera (see Fig. 23, 24). This mammoth device was used for the first time in

[33] Silly Symphonies is a series of animated short subjects, 75 in total from 1929-39. Unlike the *Mickey Mouse* series, to which it is a sister series, *Silly Symphonies* did not usually feature continuing characters. Donald Duck got his start in a *Silly Symphonies* cartoon (*The Wise Little Hen*, 1934), and Pluto's first appearance without Mickey Mouse was also in a *Silly Symphonies* cartoon (*Just Dogs*, 1932).It is believed that the initial idea for the *Silly Symphonies* came from Walt Disney's composer, Carl Stalling, when in mid-1928 Disney recruited him to write musical scores for the first two Mickey Mouse films, *Plane Crazy (1928)* and *The Gallopin' Gaucho (1928)*. Stalling also developed the concept for Skeleton Dance (1929), which was to form part of the *Silly Symphonies* series (Merrit & Kaufman). These shorts all featured the studios star, Mickey Mouse in 'one shot' comic escapades. "An important function of the *Silly Symphonies* was to provide a place for experimentation, where new techniques or equipment could be employed without risking the popularity of a set of developed characters" (Furniss 114).

[34] The Disney studio can also be credited with the innovation of the 'story-board', which was originally named the 'story-sketch'. The concept was so simple; the story sketch would "show character, attitude, feelings, entertainment, expressions, type of action, as well as telling the story of what is happening" (Thomas and Johnston 197). Another revolutionary idea was the "institution of 'pencil tests' – actually photographing and projecting the rough animation before proceeding with clean-up inking and painting" (Maltin 42).

1937 during the filming of the *Silly Symphony* entitled *The Old Mill* (Bendazzi 65-67). Complementing the development of this camera was Disney's establishment of an effects department (Maltin 52). This was the first time that artists were specifically classified as "effects" animators responsible for pioneering and executing innovative methods of effects production. The optical effects department at Killarney Film studios in Johannesburg (1940-55) was structured in a similar way to the Disney department, and animators and artists were regularly encouraged to introduce new optical effects and techniques.

By 1939 Disney was concerned with making his animation more sophisticated by ensuring subtlety of action, complexity of performance and the development of meaningful character expressions. According to Thomas and Johnston, "the animation became so sophisticated that it was almost impossible to recognise the basic principles. The medium had developed into an art form" (95). This rather contemporary approach to animation culminated in the Disney studio's most accomplished technical feat: a feature length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was showcased on 21 December 1937, three years after its inception. It has occasionally been suggested that Disney was the first person to create a full length animated feature. "However, by the end of 1937, at least three long animations already had been created outside the United States of America: *El Apostol* (The Apostle 1917) by the Argentinean Quirino Cristiani, *Die Geschichte des Prinzen Achmed* (The Adventures of Prince Achmed, 1926) by German Lotte Reiniger, and *Reinicke Fuchs* (aka Le Roman de Renard; Reynard the Fox, 1937) by Russian Ladislas Starevich" (Furniss 115). Nonetheless, these films were not as profitable, memorable or influential as the Disney film.[35]

The success of Disney's feature length animation lay in its seamless weaving together of narrative, imagery, sound and the psychological use of colour in an attempt to capture evocative moods. The film's triumph fuelled domestic rivalry

[35] *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was first budgeted at $250,000 and ended up costing $1.5 million. The film gained an immediate international reputation and generated a substantially large profit for a struggling Disney company after the World War. According to Furniss, in 1938 "it earned an estimated $4.2 million in the United States and Canada alone"; subsequently the film has continued to earn millions more through merchandising (115).

with the Fleischer studio (founded in 1921 as Inkwell studios),[36] and subsequently also inspired film-makers in other countries to mimic versions of the film (Furniss 115). After the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* the Disney studio swiftly began full-scale production on *Pinocchio*.[37] According to Disney, "the two years between [the release of] *Snow White* and *Pinocchio* were years of confusion, swift expansion and reorganisation" within the company. He has described how "hundreds of young people were being trained and fitted into a machine for the manufacture of entertainment which had become bewilderingly complex" (Maltin 57, 58).

It is undeniable that the Disney studio was the leader in animation production in the world during the "golden era" of animation (Maltin, 64). Walt Disney was the founder of an empire and is described aptly by Bendazzi as a "Hollywood producer" whose "cinema is one hundred percent Hollywood – founded on the star system, oriented toward the luxurious packaging of mass products and based on broad stereotypes" (70).

The rich and far-reaching legacy of the Disney studio is a direct result of perfected marketing, distribution and aesthetic strategies, which have guaranteed its dominant position worldwide. Not surprisingly, the emerging South African animation industry of the 20th century was influenced by Disney's dominant model of animation production techniques. For the animators working at the SABC Animation Unit, this dominant model provided a stable yet simple framework from which to create animated programming. In the early years at the Animation Unit, Butch Stoltz had the opportunity to visit the Disney studios in California where he observed the modes of production employed the hierarchical structure within the studio and the many facilities available for animation

[36] The Fleischer studio served as Disney's primary rival in the animation industry during the first four decades. This studio was initially called Out of the Inkwell Films inc. and was founded by brothers Max and Dave Fleischer in 1921 and can be credited with the invention of the 'rotoscope'. The 'rotoscope' is a device, which "enables the animator to trace over live-action filmed movement frame by frame" (Maltin 79-89).

[37] The film *Pinocchio* was another box office success for the Disney studio. The narrative's "full-bodied sense of drama" coupled with technical and aesthetic genius made this film so powerful. Many critics and scholars believe that it was Walt Disney's greatest artistic achievement in the feature film category (Maltin 58, 59).

production. However, it is important to remember that the South African industry, both cinematic and televisual, was also influenced by European animation techniques, as was discussed in the first half of this chapter.

The next chapter focuses on the South African film and animation industry and the aesthetic, cultural and socio-political forces that aided or hindered its development.

Chapter 2:
Animation and Film in Southern Africa

This chapter consists of two sections:

1. The Beginnings of a Film Industry: this half of the chapter outlines the socio-economic and political circumstances within which animation developed as a legitimate form of entertainment. It traces the beginnings of the motion picture industry in South Africa and describes the role of the itinerant showmen and businessmen who developed the studio system, modelled on the success stories of the American industry.

2. The 1940s Onwards: this part of the chapter deals with the industrialisation processes that occurred in South African animation, looking specifically at developments in the major studios during this cinematic era that would later influence the way in which animation was created for television at the SABC.

2.1 The Beginnings of a Film Industry

Giannalberto Bendazzi points out that over the past century "animation has become an imposing trade, creating jobs for hundreds of thousands of people – a ubiquitous art form. The development of this industry underwent cycles and change, often influenced by major historical events" (Bendazzi 6). The South African industry, like its international counterparts, also underwent cycles of change as a result of historical, socio-political and economic circumstances. Thelma Gutsche[38] has produced a comprehensive and solid contextual analysis of the early South African film industry in her book *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940*. The first half of this

[38] Thelma Gutsche is described as being a great South African film scholar, archivist and historian. Her book, *The History and Social Significance of Motion Pictures in South Africa 1895-1940*, was initially completed for her PHD dissertation in 1946 and was only published officially in 1972.

chapter is largely reliant on Gutsche's detailed account of the history of motion pictures in South Africa as her account, in my opinion, gives an encompassing view of early South African cinema through the creation of a theoretical and conceptual edifice.

2.1.1 Early Forms of Entertainment

By the mid-nineteenth century, the South African public enjoyed a wealth of entertainment in the form of circuses, theatres and music halls. These forms of entertainment initially flourished only in the main coastal towns such as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and the inland town of Grahamstown. However, the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly during the 1860s coupled with the "consequent influx of a large quasi-sophisticated population naturally resulted in a demand for amusement" (Gutsche 1). The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 made yet more urgent the need for professional entertainment in the interior towns of Kimberly and Johannesburg.

According to Gutsche, "from about 1890 until 1896 when the first moving pictures appeared, entertainment developed rapidly" (2). Dramatic theatre prospered during the 1890s with British and Italian theatrical and opera companies performing successful shows to appreciative audiences across South Africa.

2.1.2 The Emergence of Peep-shows

The invention of the kinetophone can be credited to Thomas Edison (see Fig. 25). The principle behind this invention involved the rapid, intermittent motion of film past a light. By playing an approximately cued *phonograph*[39] at the same time, "talking-moving-pictures" could also be exhibited. Edison's *kinetoscope*,[40] which

[39] The *phonograph* was also invented by Edison and it was manufactured to reproduce sound, by way of a moving needle, through a cylindrical contraption bearing grooves on the inner edges (Gutsche 7).

[40] Edison, who was already the successful inventor of the phonograph and the electric light bulb, decided to develop the Kinetoscope in 1888. This device was essentially a peephole that ran film around a series of rollers. Viewers activated it by putting a coin into a slot. "By 1891, the Kinetograph camera and the Kinetoscope viewing box were ready to be patented and demonstrated" (Thompson and Bordwell 17). Most of the films only lasted 20 seconds and

was another mechanical, optical novelty, proved to be hugely popular in South Africa and in early 1895 one of these machines was sold in Johannesburg.[41] According to Gutsche the kinetoscope, after its official public release on 19th April 1895, was heralded as "The Greatest Scientific Marvel of the Age" and the "Marvel of the New World". The purchase of this invention earmarked South Africa as one of the first countries to witness motion pictures with sound globally (9-12).

The kinetophone and kinetoscope were undoubtedly the most thrilling and enchanting mechanisms of the time. However, like all mechanical novelty items their popularity waned gradually, in South Africa and internationally, until they were replaced by another novelty being showcased in the early 1890s – "animated photographs" (Gutsche 9-12).

The mid-1890s in South Africa was a particularly harrowing time, culminating in the Jameson Raid, which stirred up tensions that led ultimately to the Boer War. The period witnessed a change in entertainment requests, with Vaudevillian programmes, such as those "purveyed by the *Empire Palace of Varieties* in Johannesburg", gaining popularity (Gutsche 10). It was at these Vaudevillian performances that many itinerant showmen performed lightning sketches (chalk talks) of the sort being presented in Europe and America at the time.

In 1896, brothers Sydney and Edgar Hyman, owners of the above-mentioned enterprise, persuaded the famous conjurer Carl Hertz to conclude an evening's entertainment.[42] Hertz added to his repertoire the current novelty – "animated photograph"'. These photographs were actually short snippets of film, much like

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featured "well-known sports figures, excerpts from noted Vaudeville acts, or performances by dancer or acrobats (Thompson and Bordwell 17).

[41] The mining cities of Kimberly and Johannesburg were brand new and benefited from all the new technologies that often took longer to get accepted in more established cities.

[42] Carl Hertz is of Russian and Polish decent but was born in San Francisco in 1849. As a boy his penchant for conjuring and illusion were evident and "within a few years he attained conspicuous success" becoming one of the most famous magicians of the day. His success took him across the globe. 'Prestidigitators', as they were also named, "enjoyed great popularity in an age conspicuously susceptible to wonder" (Gutsche 11). It is interesting to note that Hertz travelled to Australia in that same year, 1896, to show his animated photographs to enthusiastic Vaudevillian audiences.

the ones used in the kinetoscope. A rickety projector, dubbed the *cinematograph* by Hertz, was the machine used to project the "illusion" onto a gold-bordered sheet, which was dropped from the front of the stage. This equipment worked much in the same way as Emile Reynaud's Praxinoscope[43] mentioned in the previous chapter.

The concept of the 'bioscope' had now been initiated into South Africa, by the showman of the 1890s Carl Hertz as well as by Edison's kinetoscope, and "the silent film, crude and unreliable though its first form, had come to stay," bringing with it "fundamental cultural, moral and social change" (Gutsche 14). Hertz's cinematograph was showcased in all the major coastal and inland towns, almost always to full houses, and served as a foundation for the era of cinema that was about to emerge/prosper/flourish in South Africa (Gutsche 13-14).

2.1.3 The Boer War Period: 1899-1902

The Boer War saw much coverage by way of film and photograph by two competing British companies: The Biograph Company and The Warwick Trading Company. Cameramen were sent to South Africa equipped with a portable camera and fully clad in combat uniform in order to document the war. Thelma Gutsche believes that "the war wrought a complete and thorough change in the pattern" of entertainment. Foreign performance troops were apprehensive about war conditions with even South African artists leaving the country, thereby preventing any "immediate provision for 'legitimate' forms of entertainment" at a time when the public required distraction. Therefore, for the first few months "amateur effort contrived to provide entertainment" with regimental bands, charity concerts, military displays, phonograph concerts and recitals being showcased (Gutsche 49).

The widespread need and appeal for entertainment soon increased, but due to the regression in social conditions, instigating vice and crime, it would be a long time

[43] Reynaud's Praxinoscope differed from Hertz's 'animated photographs' in that the projected images were actually cartoon figures actually hand-drawn onto the film and then projected onto a screen on which the scenery was already painted, unlike Hertz's projection of live-action snippets onto a gold-bordered sheet.

before entertainment could be re-organised on a professional level. In Cape Town and Durban the tension and anxiety of the townsfolk was alleviated by the screening of 'moving pictures' in theatres. The success of these modest entertainments saw small enterprises and showmen begin to meet the demand in other parts of the country.[44] However, at the turn of the century organised entertainment was still largely non-existent.

Cinema was only popularised and made profitable by *Wolfram's Bioscope*, which exhibited largely Boer War documentary films towards the end of 1900,[45] and the Biograph Concerts.[46] These two enterprises monopolised the industry until 1901 when they were overshadowed by other itinerant showmen operating primarily in Durban and Natal.[47] The *Rees and Meyer's Bioscope* established itself in Natal, to be followed by W. H. Baker's *Imperial Motor Pictoroscope,* which gave bio-vaudeville concerts throughout Natal (Gutsche 65).

2.1.4 The First Permanent Picture Houses

The concept of the 'bioscope' had gradually become implanted in the mind of the public and by 1902 it was apparent that moving pictures had cultivated a niche for itself in South Africa. However, it was not until 1909 that the country's first permanent cinema, the *Electric Theatre*, was established and officially opened in Durban (see Fig. 26). Subsequent "picture palaces" were opened in Johannesburg and Cape Town; they often exhibited desultory, mediocre films with little narrative plot or action, produced by relatively inexperienced film makers.

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[44] According to Thelma Gutsche, "an outstanding example of this was the Bijou Orchestra at Durban, organised and conducted by Ernest Lezard, which became a feature in the town" (51).
[45] Gutsche describes Mr. W. Wolfram as a "meritorious itinerant showman". His shows were of a superior quality to that of opposing exhibitor Biograph both in terms of material and physical appearance. Wolfram was also able to show films of the Chinese War, which cameraman, Joseph Rosenthal, left South Africa to take" (52, 54).
[46] W. Hilton Perkin had witnessed the early 'animated photographs' screenings and had noticed that their quality was not very good. In England, days before he was to sail to South Africa, he noticed how the Biograph's exhibition of film was superior. In May 1899 'Biograph exhibitions' began in Johannesburg at the Wanderers Hall as part of the Queen's Birthday Festivities (Gutsche, 38).
[47] Gutsche believes that the reason Natal was chosen as the destination for exhibition was due to three possible factors: "the presence of large bodies of troops; the fact that Durban was the principal war-time sea-port; and also the Natal public's peculiar affection for cinema" (55).

From 1911 to 1913 pioneer and entrepreneur Rufe Naylor was engaged in the production of topical shorts, which were featured on his programmes at the Tivoli Picture Palaces in Johannesburg.[48] Naylor also realised his dream of a "super picture palace," the *Orpheum*, which was situated on the corner of Jeppe and Joubert streets . This "Mammoth Theatre and Picture Palace" was officially opened in 1911, amid much enthusiasm. Unfortunately, during the construction of this theatre, Naylor found himself in financial difficulty and was forced to negotiate a deal with the Union Bioscope Company in order to complete the Orpheum.[49]

The establishment of a new, merged company arose out of this situation: Africa's Amalgamated Theatres. The Orpheum attracted regular patronage and within weeks of opening became Johannesburg's most notable entertainment establishment, prompting voracious competition in the year to follow from the Empire Theatre Co. and later the Carlton Cinema Theatre, which became hugely successful and even snatched patrons from the Orpheum. Intense rivalry of this kind existed throughout the entire "bio-vaudeville" industry and resulted in many companies liquidating. The industry was in dire need of structural re-organisation that could ensure success by establishing a cooperative rather than competitive framework (Gutsche 112-116).

2.1.5 Pioneer I.W. Schlesinger

Isadore William Schlesinger was a Johannesburg-based insurance financier whose success had gained him "a considerable reputation for business organisation and financial acumen" (see Fig. 27). The salvation of the bio-vaudeville industry was placed in Schlesinger's hands, and he saw that the only solution to the problem

[48] Naylor is described by Gutsche as "one of the most energetic and spectacular characters in the history of South African entertainment and ranks as a genuine pioneer of the local cinema industry." Naylor is an Australian national who came to South Africa in 1908, at the age of 26, and set about opening the famous Stadium in Main Street, Johannesburg, before turning his attention to the bioscope industry in 1909 (Gutsche 99). It is important to note that there is no documented evidence of animated material being screened as a pre-cursor to the main features at the picture palaces from 1909-13. reason

[49] The *Orpheum* was described by the press as being "the most magnificent bioscope theatre in the world with 1500 beautiful upholstered arm chairs, spring seats, foot rests, etc. Eleven pure marble statues imported from Rome…" (Gutsche 113).

was a consolidation of interest.[50] "All possible purveyors of 'bio-vaudeville' had to be collected under one aegis, firstly to furnish a remunerative circuit and secondly to control the conditions of the industry, notably charges for admission, salaries for artistes, etc." (Gutsche 117).

Following his purchase of the Empire Building Company, Schlesinger earned controlling interest in both Union Bioscopes and Africa's Amalgamated Theatres Ltd. This monopoly of theatres was launched as the *African Theatres Trust Ltd.* (ATT) in 1913, with a primary responsibility for exhibition. Despite the many difficulties brought about by the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the ATT, which controlled both "bioscope" and theatrical entertainment, continued to prosper and was able to profit from "the demand for entertainment which, though at first variable, progressively increased as this period of hostilities appeared to continue indefinitely" (Gutsche 160).

Schlesinger embarked on a new venture later that same year (1913) with the establishment of the African Films Trust, which served as an international distribution company. He can also be credited with establishing the earliest documented native film production house, which was founded in 1915, called *African Film Productions.* Schlesinger then built an extensive and significant studio in the suburb of Killarney in Johannesburg, which served as an ideal location for "exterior shots" because of the natural environment. This studio was particularly successful and produced thirty live-action feature[51] films (mainly documentaries and historical films) for release between its inception in 1915 and 1919. The company also saw many short fiction films being made in 1916, which wove fictional romance into factual scenarios.[52] At the end of the decade the

[50] According to Gutsche, the causes for this consolidation and expansion of the South African film industry stemmed from a range of causes, primarily the outbreak of the Great War (1914-1918) (311).
[51] According to Mr. Trevor Moses, from the National Film Video and Sound Archives, the term 'feature film' in this context does not have the same definition as present day. These early films ranged anywhere from 35-65 minutes on average.
[52] The disappearance of Continental and British films in South Africa, by 1918 there were hardly any left, resulted in American films dominating the cinemas. There was an urgency on African Film Productions' part to create a series of fictional films as the imported American films being screened at the time were quoted as being 'unscrupulous' and 'indecent' by the public (Gutsche 141).

predominance of the American film industry, which was made possible by the war, posed difficulties for African Film Productions, whose productions – especially fictional films – became increasingly mediocre by comparison (Gutsche 312-320).[53]

2.1.6 The Earliest Animated Film

The earliest animated film in South Africa was produced by African Film Productions in 1915 and was a comedic short entitled *Artist's Dream/The Artist's Inspiration*. The film starred Dennis Sentry, cartoonist for the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Sunday Times*, as the Artist, and star actress Mabel May, who was married to I.W. Schlesinger, as The Girl (see Fig. 28). It was directed by Harold Shaw, who also directed *Die Voortrekkers*.[54] The sophisticated narrative plot revolves around an artist who sketches a striking woman in a park. The artist then envisages a successive series of events in which his drawings come to life in a live action film (Kersh 1997). This film is in essence a sophisticated 'drawtoon' (or lightning sketch/chalk talk) and is a self-reflexive work that challenges viewers' perceptions of reality and illusion and invites them to question authorship. This drawtoon echoed strongly the modes of production and style used by many of the early American animators, including Winsor McCay and James Stuart Blackton.

In 1917, African Film Productions released four more animated shorts: *The Adventures of Ranger Focus, Don't You Believe, Crooks and Christmas*, and *The Adventures of Ben Cockles* (see Fig. 29-31).[55] Regrettably no remnants of these films exist and only a few still photographs survive. Following these animated films, there seems to have been a lull in the industry until the 1940s. According to

[53] Despite the difficulties, African Film Productions managed to revive the fiction film production industry by producing an ambitious rendition of H. de Vere Stacpoole's novel *The Blue Lagoon*, featuring Arthur Pusey and Molly Adair. Gutsche emphatically states that *The Blue Lagoon* "marked the swansong of local fiction film production". The film was released in 1923 and was well received by audiences (322).

[54] *Die Voortrekkers* is one of the oldest dated and existing live-action films to come out of South Africa. The film is described by Gutche as being "a historical epic" and was written in collaboration with Dr. Gustav Preller, an eminent historian. The film was an enormous success both locally and internationally (Gutsche 313-16).

[55] All these films were drawn and directed by comic artist and producer Norman H. Lee (Kersh 1997).

Kersh, the only scholar to research this early period of SA animation, the reason for this lull is still unknown.

2.2 The 1940s Onward

During the 1940s, the animation industry was torn in two directions: on the one hand, traditional hand-drawn cel animation from Alpha Film Studios; and on the other hand, special effects animation from Killarney Film Studios, including optical effects and titling.[56] The animators at the SABC Unit were influenced and trained by individuals who were adept at both of these types of animation, but it is important to note that they preferred the traditional cel animation over the effects animation as they were taught their craft predominantly by animators who worked for Alpha Film Studios (1940-67).

2.2.1 Killarney Film Studios and Special Effects Animation

During the early 1940s, Schlesinger's company African Film Productions was renamed Killarney Film Studios and continued to be a major producer of local film and newsreels for the next two decades to come.[57] Killarney Film Studios created and maintained a separate Animation and Optical Department, run by James Reindorp, which focused primarily on special effects and transitions for the features films and newsreels. The bulk of the department's work consisted of title creation for film studios and live projects, as well as long-running weekly programming.

The facilities and technology available at Killarney Film Studios were archaic in terms of form and function by comparison with the equipment and modern technology being used in America and Europe during the same period (as

[56] According to the senior industrial technician, Trevor Moses, at the National Film, Video and Sound Archives in Pretoria, special effects animation was usually done for the 'opening titles' or 'end credits' sequences in live-action features or shorts. Some of these title sequences were complex, involved and displayed a lot of maturity.

[57] Newsreels and animation distribution were synonymous with theatre complexes and these animated films and newsreels were used as fillers; pre-cursors to the 'main attraction'. This phenomenon happened across the globe with audiences being able to enjoy an entire evenings worth of entertainment (Maltin page 2).

discussed in Chapter 1). Partly as a result, and largely due to the improvisatory methodology they employed whilst working, the staff at the Killarney studios gained insight into the field of special effects. However, for economic reasons innovation and experimentation were suppressed and instead artists were encouraged to follow the client's brief in order to meet the high output demand. As a result South African animation slowly began to forge a niche for itself in the commercial market,[58] culminating in the art form being very successful in the advertising industry during the 1970s when television was introduced.

Despite the lack of "modern" equipment, large budgets or revolutionary technical innovations, Killarney Film Studios managed to flourish and craft highly-developed effects that are comparable to the Hollywood standards of the time, largely due to James Reindorp's dedication to his craft (Kersh 22).

Reindorp was a highly talented and competent cameraman whose responsibility it was to film all the animation. In the laboratory Reindorp had a fixed camera, which was supported on 4 wooden poles (thereby allowing a table top to be winched up and down), 2 fixed lights and an animation motor that was capable of exposing 1 frame every half second using a mercury-controlled switcher system. The camera itself was incorrectly aligned and all the cels on the table top had to be adjusted so that they rested off centre and at an angle to compensate for the misalignment. James Reindorp left Killarney studios in 1946 to join the newly formed Alpha Studios as animation cameraman leaving Benny Mechanik, his assistant cameraman, to run the Animation and Optical Department. The bulk of Mechanik's work consisted in producing titles for the studio's live projects and long-running weekly news programme, African Mirror, as well as optical special effects and transitions (Kersh 22).

[58] The process of creating animation is a laborious one as it entails unwavering precision in order for believable movement to be created. Unlike live-action cinema, the art of animation involves the representation of ideas that are created by raw materials made exclusively of human thoughts. For this reason, among many others, the process of animation requires more production time that its live-action counterpart. According to Bendazzi, for animators of his generation "this slowness has been a very serious handicap; the barbaric need for immediate economic revenue took animated films away from distribution circuits" (xxii).

The studio required improvisation and endless ingenuity from its staff in order to create innovative and memorable special effects. Porcelain letters were displayed on black velvet to create title sequences. Mechanik also created his own mattes for transitions by shooting them in black and white on high contrast film stock. Vaseline was used to create filters, being applied to the camera lens in patterns. Fades were generated manually by "passing the actual negative film through a tray of ferro-cyanide and counting off the exposure time of each frame, then fixing in hypo and hanging on washing lines to dry" (Kersh 22). Twentieth Century Fox bought the studio out in 1955, which finally saw the arrival of a proper animation stand with an adjustable camera for zooms and pans, and portable lights.

2.2.2 Alpha Film Studio and Classical Cel Animation

The biggest studio to produce traditional hand-drawn animation during the 1940s in South Africa was Alpha Film Studio, owned by Bill Boxer of Empire films. In 1947 Boxer persuaded Denis Purchase, an English animator, to relocate to South Africa to produce animated commercials, affectionately called 'drawtoons commercials' for the studio (Bendazzi 395).[59] American and European modes of animation production and even socio-political ideologies greatly influenced the manner in which South African artists approached their work, during the 1940s and for decades to come, as the professionals training and advising South African animators were predominantly foreigners.

Alpha Film Studio ultimately gained full momentum when James Reindorp left Killarney Film Studios in 1946 to join the newly-established studio. Conditions at this studio were also quite old-fashioned because of the fact that no animation equipment was available in South Africa; the animators used cellophane in place of traditional cels. According to Kersh, a laborious spring system had to be created and set up to flatten the wrinkles out of each sheet before every frame was shot; even the imported Winkler animation stand, which was supposed to be state-

[59] This concept of 'drawtoons commercials' echoed the work of famous American artists Stuart Blackton and Winsor McCay as discussed in the previous chapter. According to Kersh, other notable, local 'drawtoons' artists from that time were Keith Stevens and John Garling.

of-the-art with two complex electronic control boards, needed to be serviced every Saturday for it to be in good enough condition for the following week's production. The electronics expert also noticed that the camera itself required a three second delay between frames when engaging in a zoom.

These challenges and frustrations were exacerbated by the fact that the studio desperately needed to purchase both a new animation stand and an optical printer, for which there was, however, not enough money available in the budget. Reindorp then began a lengthy process of innovation, which would eventually culminate in a technological marvel. For 2 years, Reindorp was engaged in intense negotiations with Oxberry, the makers of the finest animation stands in the world, and initiated a design experiment process with the famous company to design a stand that served both functions. Finally, after years of perseverance Mr Oxberry himself came out to South Africa in 1956 to install at Alpha Studios the first animation stand in the world with an aerial image feature for superimposition on live film (Kersh 23). This dual-function animation stand allowed Reindorp and the staff at the studio to streamline their work-flow and production pipe-line, thereby increasing their output (see Fig. 32).

Alpha studios specialised in animated commercials and a popular limited animation form known as the 'drawtoon,' which was essentially a lightning sketch as described in Chapter 1. In order to achieve the required effect seamlessly the scene was first drawn up in pencil, and then erased so that only the animator could see the faint guidelines. Once placed on the animation stand, the animator could then begin inking the sketch, a section at a time, pausing briefly for the cameraman to shoot the images in succession. If the production deadline for the commercial was tight some sections of the sketch would be pre-inked and hidden under the animator's palm until the time came for it to be revealed. Quite a few cartoonists passed through the studios doors as 'drawtoonists', but it was Denis Purchase who created the bulk of the animation at the studio (Kersh 23).[60]

[60] Purchase was later joined by Stanley Pearsall, who had previously worked at the David Hands Company in England.

During its prime the Alpha Film Studio was believed to have produced sixty seconds of cartoon animation per week as well as a plethora of 'drawtoons', all of which was completed by a dedicated team of twelve skilled colourists (Kersh 23). Whilst these figures may not seem as impressive as the American studios, it is remarkable that such an understaffed studio was capable of such a feat (see Fig. 33-37). The studio was moved to Killarney when Bill Boxer died, where it continued producing animated commercials under its own name; it later moved to Irene where it was merged with the Laboratories already there. Denis Purchase remained behind at the Killarney studio until 1967, when he joined Dave McKey Animation Services (Kersh 23).

According to Kersh, from the 1940s onwards, South Africa continued to churn out quantities of animated material for bioscope release, mostly in the form of advertisements and short films to be shown before feature films, until the mid 1970s when the introduction of television snatched the loyalty of cinema-goers of the time.

As this overview of the South African film and animation industry has suggested, the early years of animation history saw the application of various techniques of animation production developed in America and Europe. These techniques included the vaudevillian self-reflexive lightning sketch, the proliferation of optical toys and the development of new distribution venues – cinemas.

During the first four decades of the 20th century, South African animation established a niche for itself as an artistic medium that not only supplied innovative optical effects and titling sequences, mostly for live-action cinema advertisements, but also produced traditionally hand-drawn cel animation for bioscope release. During this cinematic era, animation was directed towards an adult, cinema-going audience ,as opposed to the later shift to children's programming in the televisual era.[61]

[61] The reason for this shift in audience is directly linked to the introduction of television as a distribution outlet in America and the foundations for this shift will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The affinity between animation and advertising emerged as early as 1916, when cinema itself began to flourish in South Africa, and this economically-driven endeavour seems to have remained to the present day in the televisual era.

As noted above, the modes of production used in South Africa were based on the systems created by the Disney model; these modes of production were passed on to animators who later worked with and trained the animators from the SABC Animation Unit.

Chapter 3
Animation in the Context of Television

This Chapter explores the development of animation in a broadcast environment. The first half of the chapter analyses the American system of television broadcast and the way in which animation was restructured and reformatted to fit within the confines of the powerful new medium. The second half of the chapter looks at the four major South African studios that contributed animated material for broadcast to the SABC from 1976-88. These studios were commissioned by the broadcaster to create animated shorts, which supplemented the work done by the animators at the Animation Unit within the SABC, as well as advertisements.

3.1 The Death of the Theatrical Short

The invention of the television set "turned public life newly and sharply toward the mass media, invading everyday life. Television shrank, destroyed, or changed other media, so that the larger role for the mass media was in fact command seized by television" (Comstock 33). This meant that suburban and city dwellers alike were bombarded with advertising, entertainment, news and information within the privacy of their own homes. The birth of television demanded the systematic closure of the cinematic era of animation and forced the art-form into various different directions, initiating new animation traditions and modes of production.

During the 1950s and 1960s animation, as an art form, underwent yet another cycle of change; major studios were party to the 'United States vs. Paramount Inc.' anti-trust lawsuit. This action was brought about by the Justice System and the Federal Trade Commission, who rightly claimed that the studio-theatre chain combinations, held by 5 major studios, limited competition in the industry. The case was heard in the Supreme Court in 1948 and the ruling was in favour of the State. As a result of this verdict major studios were obliged to separate production

from distribution. Vertical integration within the film industry ceased with the sale of theatres.

This involuntary change is believed to have triggered the systematic decline of animation studios in America during the 1950s,[62] relocating the 'cartoon' to an alternative medium and exhibition context: television (Mittell 33-35).

3.2 New Medium: New Aesthetic

In America, television essentially demanded the reformatting of the bygone 6-7 minute, traditional theatrical short into a 30 minute time-slot, with the likes of Disney and Warner Bros. studios having to integrate a series of old shorts to fit within this new time frame. However, this re-formatting was regarded as advantageous for the studios as it caused a distinct difference in the way in which viewers received animated shorts; instead of being a precursor to a live-action film, these shorts now became the main attraction (Maltin 343). Newly-made animation made the transition from its 'classic' theatrical era to a more practical, "reduced" televisual role, pioneered by Hanna-Barbera studios (see Fig. 38-42).

According to Mittell, animation as a medium was to undergo yet another "tremendous cultural shift from its introduction onto television in the 1950s to the establishment of certain central assumptions about televised cartoons that were put in place by the end of the 1960s" (33). Unfortunately, this history has largely been neglected by scholars in the field as television is considered by some to have been "the cartoon's graveyard" (Maltin 337). Paul Wells in his essay "Smarter than the Average Art Form: Animation in the Television Era" challenges the prevailing argument that this move towards reduced animation was to the

[62] Metro-Goldwyn Meyer (MGM) studios shut down their animation unit as early as 1957; Warner Bros managed to survive until 1964. The famous Walt Disney studio, despite the negative effects of the Paramount lawsuit, managed to thrive during these years. Walt Disney recognised the new medium of television as a commercial platform and set about "debuting Disneyland in 1954 as a vehicle by which to use the back catalogue of Disney material, but more importantly, to promote his theme park" (Wells 17). Having essentially defined animation as an art form in America, Disney was averse to adopting the 'limited animation' techniques that television demanded. Instead he continued to develop his brand, using television as just another marketing strategy to promote his theme park, up and coming feature films and merchandise.

detriment of animation as an art form, suggesting instead that the changes necessitated by the much-reduced budgets for production "both created a new aesthetic for animation which fore-grounded its versatility and variety, and reintroduced the public to animation in a way which spoke to the ongoing 'recombinancy'[63] strategies in programming per se" (Wells 15).

3.2.1 Hanna Barbera Studios and Limited Animation Techniques

Hanna-Barbera, the production house synonymous with pioneering a new aesthetic for animation on television, was very successful and produced animated television programming and motion pictures for 45 years between 1957 and 2001.[64] Hanna-Barbera was founded by William (Bill) Hanna and Joseph Barbera, former Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) animation directors, as *H-B Enterprises*.[65] The studio is best known for its dominance in animation in the broadcast arena. This animation is predicated on the concept of "limited animation," which involves "the reduction of animation to its most essentialist form: little animation, no complex choreography, repeated cycles of movement, a small repertoire of expressions and gestures, stress on dialogue, basic design, and simple graphic forms" (Wells 17).

The commencement of a new medium brought with it new economic conditions which ultimately dictated change. John Halas, British-based animation director, anticipated in 1956 that "animation is bound to be greatly stimulated by television in the future," adding:

> [T]he technical requirements of television lend themselves well to animation. The small screen and the necessity for keeping both the

[63] According to Wells, "recombinancy effectively worked as a basic principle underpinning the production of cheaply made cartoons which sought to embrace cross-over audiences and or already established demographics, and became an intrinsic approach within television animation in the US" (25).

[64] It is important to note that whilst Hanna-Barbera takes credit for the innovation of 'limited animation' techniques, the technique was initially utilized in early television series by Jay Ward, who created *Crusader Rabbit* (1949). However, this technique was most heralded in UPA's 1950 short, *Gerald McBoing Boing* (Mittell 38).

[65] *H-B Enterprises* primarily served as a television commercial production company, through which the pair performed freelance work. MGM closed its animation studio in 1957 and *H-B Enterprises* became *Hanna-Barbera Productions* in 1960.

> background and the foreground flat and simple is completely within the province of the cartoon medium…television films can be handled by very small units with every chance of retaining the original concept of ideas (1956: 6, 13). (Wells 18)

Whilst Halas might have been accurate in his prediction, it is important to remember that the 'limited animation' techniques employed by Hanna-Barbera in their early television cartoons stemmed directly from financial constraint. Nevertheless, the studio should be recognised for its ingenuity in terms of approach, re-definition of style and content, and its enthusiastic embrace of the versatility of the art form.

Hanna-Barbera reduced animation to simple story-telling, re-inventing character animation and prioritising dialogue over action and simplicity of graphic style over realistic detail.[66] In South Africa, the animators at the SABC were not very interested in the use of the limited animation technique as they personally preferred to use the classical Disney style of full-form animation, unless restrained by budgetary demands. However, Butch Stoltz did encourage his animators to create stock background cels (coloured) and character templates for the many long-running series commissioned by the Children's department.

The emphasis on dialogue and voice altered the manner in which audiences perceived animation. The intonation and voice dynamics generated by the Hanna Barbera studio's voice artists, Daws Butler, June Foray and Don Messick, played a key role in defining characters, and, according to Wells, "supplanted previous models of largely visual encoding in cartoons, and specifically privileged the nature and quality of the script;" in this way it "allied the cartoon to the model of theatrical performance in early television drama and situation comedy" (23).

[66] Hanna-Barbera cartoons were often criticised as being nothing more than 'illustrated radio' due to the fact that only a limited amount of illustrative movement cycles were used for animation and sound, specifically dialogue, was prioritised over some aspects of the action (Maltin 338; Wells 23; Adamson 140-141).

3.2.2 The Saturday Morning Cartoon

During the 1950s cartoons in America were not perceived by audiences to be solely for children's entertainment and adults and children alike enjoyed cartoons that were screened in late afternoon-early evening timeslots. However, the television industry decided that children were the primary audience for cartoons and animation was temporarily relegated to being a low-budget filler and in this way "culturally devalued". Animations were then scattered across the three major networks' schedules,[67] "often programmed into larger live-action contexts or relegated to the syndicated margins of the schedule" (Mittell 40).

During the late 1950s sponsors, having realised the commercial potential of a predominantly children's audience, looked to target children as the primary consumers and sought to bring more original animation to television. The Hanna-Barbera studio profited from this sudden interest in original animation and promptly gained success by using new cartoons to supplement existing shorts, thereby repackaging the cartoon for television.[68] The studio managed to persuade CBS's John Mitchell, the Head of Sales at Screen Gems,[69] to support the concept of "limited or planned animation" in the creation of two new characters, Ruff and Reddy.[70] The new show – *The Ruff and Reddy Show* (1957-64) – was hosted by Jimmy Blaine and his puppet counterparts and debuted on NBC, on a Saturday morning, in December 1957 (Wells 21-24; Mittell 38).[71] Following the success of

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[67] The three major broadcasters in America are: National Broadcasting Company (NBC), Central Broadcasting Systems (CBS) and the American Broadcast Company (ABC). Although these three commercial networks were established prior to 1946, they only began continuous over the air television broadcasting in 1946 (NBC) and 1948 (CBS and ABC) (ref).

[68] During the 1950s it was profitable for animation studios to sell 'vintage' theatrical shorts to television networks. Terrytoons, Warner Brothers, Columbia and Paramount jumped on the bandwagon and these syndicated shorts were promptly aired on daytime and early evening television schedules. Television programmers were in high spirits as these syndicated shorts were 'top-rated' shows with absolutely no production cost, making them a popular choice for daily line-ups (Mittell 36).

[69] Screen Gems was revived in 1948, to serve as the television subsidiary of Columbia Pictures. From 1958-74, under the command of Harry Ackerman (vice-president of production), Screen Gems syndicated many classic sitcoms for television: *Father Knows Best*, *Dennis the Menace*, *The Donna Reed Show*, *The Monkeys*, and *The Partridge Family*.

[70] The concept for *Ruff and Reddy* revolved around a "cat and dog pairing allied against such villainous counterparts as Scary Harry Safari and the Goon of Glocca Morra" (Wells 21). The producing of an original story of this kind as opposed to re-broadcasting old studio shorts was a risky business.

[71] NBC is one of the three primary broadcasters, along with CBS and ABC, in the United States television network.

Ruff and Reddy the studio released a syndicated program in 1958 entitled *Huckleberry Hound* (1958-62) in collaboration with Kellogg's, and in 1959 an animated take on westerns with *Quick Draw McGraw* (1959-62). The resounding success of these shows contributed to the biggest boom for cartoons in early American television history.

The 1960s brought with it a redefinition of television cartoons: networks were experimenting with original animated programming as a result of the cost-cutting limited animation techniques employed by animators, and producers were appreciative of the immense success of syndicated reruns of old animation. Slowly it seemed as though animation was gaining legitimacy, and ABC affirmed this by airing three animated programmes in their prime time line-up.[72] The most successful of these programmes was *The Flintstones* (1960-66; prime time from 1961-63), a Hanna-Barbera original creation that defied almost all the previously established conventions synonymous with television animation.[73] This satirical look at suburbia was targeted primarily at an adult audience and was largely a success. NBC and CBS followed suit and in the 1961-62 season a record seven animated series were programmed for prime time (Mittlell 44-47).

This penetration of cartoons into prime time was short-lived and by 1963 the only cartoon remaining from 1961 was *The Flintstones*.[74] The reasons for this rapid decline are varied and debatable. Network producers believed that cartoons were incapable of reaching an adult audience, with some reviewers suggesting that the

[72] The two other programmes that were aired are: *Matty's Funday Funnies* (1959-61). This show "consisted of old shorts from the Harvey/Paramount studios, such as Casper the Friendly Ghost and Baby Huey, framed by new animated characters Matty Mattel and Sister Belle, designed by sponsor Mattel (creator of Barbie) for merchandising purposes" (Mittell 45; Schneider 1987:24, 112). The second programme to fit within the prime time schedule was *The Bugs Bunny Show*, which showcased both recycled and new animation from Warner Brothers studio. The new animation was used as bumpers and for framing narratives to the program so that the studio could sustain the market.

[73] "The show was formally structured like a sitcom, complete with single half-hour narrative episodes, suburban setting, domestic plots, and even a laugh track, deriving primary character and situational inspiration from *The Honeymooners*" (Mittell 45). The central narrative is also rooted in the suburban family narratives of two other early 1950s live-action sitcoms: *I Love Lucy* and *Father Knows Best* (Wells 29).

[74] It is important to note that the end of *The Flintstones* on prime time in 1966 marked the end of animated programming on commercial networks' prime time slot until the debut success of *The Simpsons* in 1990 on a new network called FOX (Mittell 47).

subject matter of prime time animation was stale and in need of an overhaul. These assumptions led to the entire genre being reformed and moved to the Saturday morning timeslot. This shift was precipitated by the industry's need to re-capitalize on their expensive prime time investment. CBS led the cartoon exile in 1962 with *The Alvin Show*, which had garnered disappointing ratings during prime time. Competitor studios soon followed suit with ABC moving *Bugs Bunny* and *Top Cat* to Saturday morning line-ups and NBC programming original animations such as *Ruff and Reddy* and *King Leonardo and his Short Subjects* (1960-63) (Mittell 46-48).

Saturday morning line-ups already featured a combination of live-action programming and recycled cartoon shorts, but in 1963 the first cartoon-governed line-up was initiated by CBS. The two-hour block consisted of *The Alvin Show*, *Mighty Mouse*, *Quick Draw McGraw*, and the original *Tennessee Tuxedo and His Tales* (1963-66), and attracted eager sponsors such as Kellogg's and General Mills. The Saturday morning timeslot is described by Mittell as "a comparatively low-risk venture with high potential for long-term profits," as the endless reruns of old shorts and failed prime time animation continued to dominate programming and production costs were almost negligible (48).[75]

In the mid-1960s animation was stigmatised as a genre for children only, and marginalised as an art-form by restriction to what has been described as "the Saturday morning enclave" (Mittell 51). These new assumptions and definitions of the animated cartoon single-handedly affected the manner in which studios and broadcasters, throughout the world, manufactured animation and reproduced it as a genre. This will be elaborated on in the following chapter, which aims to identify how South African television has been influenced by European and American broadcast models.

[75] The lack of production costs coupled with intense niche marketing created leeway for studios to create more original animation for broadcast. In 1965 ABC's *The Beatles* (1965-69) and NBC's *Underdog* (1964-66) were the two biggest cartoon hits. New production continued and in the late 1960s a spate of superhero cartoons were programmed, which caused a lot of controversy due to cartoon violence (Mittell 49)

3.3 Animation Commissioned for South African Television (1976-1988)

Between the years 1976 and 1988 the medium of television began to find its niche within the entertainment industry in South Africa. During these initial 12 years of television broadcasting, the South African Broadcasting Corporation was concerned with the appropriate establishment and growth of the broadcasting structure and its successful integration into the existing radio broadcast model. Despite the lack of direct interest from the broadcaster, many studios and individual artists contributed to the animated works broadcast on television in South Africa. I have listed only the two studios that appear to have made the biggest impact on television during this period: *Dave McKey Animation Services, Annie-Mation* studios and *Glenn Coppens Cartoons.*

3.3.1 Dave McKey Animation Services

Dave McKey was also a key player in the history of South African animation, producing commercials and shorts including the well-known short entitled *The Story of Bath* (Bendazzi 395).

During the early 1960s he joined the National Film Board in Pretoria; it is here that he understudied Nils Svenwall, a famous Swedish artist. He then joined Alpha Film Studios as an assistant animation cameraman, working with James Reindorp. In 1966 McKay was working as the new producer for Ster Films' advertising company called AdFilms. This company, as the name implies, dealt with live action commercials. In 1967 McKay resolved to become an independent artist through the creation of two pilot animated commercials, which he dubbed "Animads." These commercials secured him a contract with Ster Films that protected his full proprietary rights (Kersh 23).

Englishman Denis Purchase was appointed Animation Director at the Dave McKey studio, and together with Gerard Smith, who later headed up the SABC Animation Unit (1986), the studio gained fame as the "major producer of animated cinema adverts in the country, averaging 7000 commercials per annum"

(Kersh 1997, 23). This studio employed a number of highly talented animators, including the likes of Alex Bannon, Butch Stolz, Glenn Coppens and Durban-born Lawrence Moorcroft (Bendazzi 395; Kersh 23).

3.3.2 Annie-Mation Studios

This studio was founded by Gretchen Wilsenach after she left Rent-A-Studio[76] in 1978 in order to produce animated programmes and commercials for a then still nascent television market.[77] During 1978, Denis Purchase and Gerard Smith also joined the studio and together with Wilsenach embarked upon the first big production, for SABC broadcast, entitled *Bobby the Cat*. The 26, 5-minute episodes took two years to complete due to limited staff and funds. During the production of *Bobby the Cat*, the studio was forced to create animated commercials for the SABC in order to remain solvent. These commercials included the famous Simba chips advertisements, Tinkerbell commercials and the Smurfs advertising a major petrol company (see Fig. 43).[78]

The enormous success of these commercials afforded the fledgling studio the capital to employ more animators, and soon Annie-Mation boasted the talents of Butch Stoltz, Riccardo Capecchi, and Henry Neville from Australia.[79] By 1982 the studio was well established and is described, by ex-employees, as professional and well-managed. It was fitted with state-of-the-art animation booths and desks and a Rostrum camera for shooting the animated cels. Wilsenach had also

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[76] Rent-A-Studio was a complete design facility in Johannesburg that specialised in packaging, photography and all aspects of design. There was great demand for animation during the 1970s, and the studio opened an animation unit with Gretchen Wilsenach, Gerard Smith and Denis Purchase joining the team in 1977. The studio served primarily as a service unit to freelance advertising agencies and specialised in commercials for television (Wilsenach and Smith interviews).

[77] The South African Broadcasting Corporation was officially in operation in 1976. (Harris VHS)

[78] According to Gretchen Wilsenach the studio was granted a contract from Belgium to use the trademarked *Smurfs* for the petrol company advertisement.

[79] Riccardo Capecchi is a talented South African animator who mastered his craft at the Civico Instituto Del Cinema D'Animazione in Milan Italy. He moved back to South Africa in 1982 where he worked as an In-betweener for Annie-Mation studios. In 1984 he moved to Durban where he opened Capecchi and Friends (1985), which specialized in commercials and later moved to Los Angeles to work for Disney Studios' gaming department (Capecchi Interview). In 1992 he started Capecchino Animation in Johannesburg, which specialized in commercials: Cadbury Chomp, Pilsbury Green Giant, Simba Chips and Cheeto's. Henry Neville was originally born in Durban, South Africa and moved to Australia to work as an animator for the Hanna-Barbera studio in Sydney before relocating to Johannesburg, South Africa (Wilsenach Interview).

imported a Bellows-lithographic camera for the studio, which allowed for the direct reproduction of line-work onto cels. This camera was identical to the one used by the Disney studios during the Golden Era of Hollywood animation.

During the early-mid 1980s the studio was working on two big projects; *Thandi*, a 30-minute African themed story, and an animated feature of *Jock of the Bushveld*. It was on the pre-production for *Jock of the Bushveld* that talented Belgium born animator Glenn Coppens joined the studio.[80] The pressure of such big projects was crippling and the studio spent a lot of money enlisting the help of animation studios in Amsterdam and Australia.[81] Unfortunately, according to Wilsenach, monetary circumstances and tight deadlines coupled with insufficient staff members caused the studio to close down in 1987, and sadly only a pilot for *Jock of the Bushveld* was made by this time (see Fig.44-46).

3.3.3 Glenn Coppens Cartoons

Belgian-born Glenn Coppens came to South Africa from America in 1982 after having been apprenticed at the famous Disney studios in Burbank, California. In 1983 he was hired to be a studio manager for the production of *Jock of the Bushveld* at Annie-Mation Studios, in Johannesburg. It was at this studio that Coppens got an opportunity to work with some of the best animators in South Africa, who swiftly ensured that an exchange of skills, tricks and modes of production was facilitated.

In 1987, it was decided that *Jock of the Bushveld* was to be turned into a live-action feature film, despite the fact that the animated pilot was already complete. This news coupled with the sudden closure of Wilsenach's studio unfortunately left Glenn Coppens without a job, and he was forced to find work as a freelance animator at the Dave McKey studio, where he animated inserts for film commercials. In 1988 he decided to open his own studio, Glenn Coppens

[80] Glenn Coppens was the student of famous animator Raoul Servais at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Belgium. After working on the pilot for *Jock of the Bushveld*, he saw the potential for commercial animation and went on to open his own studio Glenn Coppens Cartoons, which later evolved into Art in Motion (www.animationsa.org).

[81] Studios in Amsterdam and Australia had access to cheap labour from animators in Malaysia and it is for this reason that Gretchen Wilsenach tried to outsource work. (Wilsenach Interview)

Cartoons, in an attempt to develop the animated commercials industry further. Coppens recognised the lucrative potential of selling advertisements to the national broadcaster and so embarked upon a symbiotic relationship with the SABC. To cope with the immense work load, the studio employed 60 animators/artists and was open for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with employees working 8-hour shifts, three times a day (Coppens interview). Some of the products that Glenn Coppens Cartoons animated memorable advertisements for include the Shipmates Shampoo, the Good and Clean and Fresh washing detergent, Simba chips, Gabriel shock absorbers, Lillets tampons and Emprazil-A cold and flu medication (see Fig.47-50). Despite the long working hours and sufficiency of staff members the studio felt the immense pressure of financial constraints and declared bankruptcy in 1999.

Coppens believes firmly that the growth of the South African animation industry during the late 1970s and 1980s, in the private sector, is directly due to the adoption and enforcement, by many studios of that time, of the British studio management approach. This approach involves the creation of stock animated footage that enables the turn-around time of productions to be expedited.

The very nature of the broadcast medium is such that it provides an outlet for studios to produce regular, episodic work for broadcast. However, this outlet is predominantly a commercial one, tending to exclude experimental or abstract forms of animation from broadcast. During the apartheid era, the SABC was a monopoly, government owned and operated. The political agenda this entailed caused the Corporation to focus its attention on the news and documentary departments, which were ideal vehicles for propaganda distribution. Whilst the Animation Unit's work was not overtly imbued with propaganda, the Nationalist Government's ideology was subtly carried through most of their material; this was often done through the inclusion of 'morals' to the narrative.

It has become apparent that South African animators were involved in the advertising industry from as early as the cinematic era, and that this symbiotic relationship has been fostered over the decades. From 1975-88 animation studios

created many animated commercials for television in an attempt to finance their short films or feature film projects. This was done because commercials are relatively quick and easy to complete and the financial compensation is excellent.

Chapter 4:
The South African Broadcasting Corporation

4.1 The National Broadcaster

It is clear that during the period under review, the SABC was an ideological institution that sought to influence the masses through persuasive/propaganda techniques, by commissioning documentaries, advertisements and children's programming that had a definite 'patriotic agenda' (Teer-Tomaselli 558-560). Because the concepts of propaganda and broadcast programming seem so inextricably linked during the apartheid era in South Africa, it is critical briefly to explore to what extent the SABC indeed used its various media departments as 'persuasive' tools on behalf of the government.

In the first half of this chapter I shall be examining the institutional history of the national broadcaster through a contextual analysis of the following: the SABC vision, broadcast structure and traditions of children's programming, as well as censorship and regulations within the institution. This history of the SABC is crucial to my study of the Animation Unit, as it offers an account of the historical, socio-political and economic contexts during the years 1975-88 and thus introduces the landscape within which the animators operated.

The second half of this chapter explores, in depth, the history of the Animation Unit, with a specific focus on the founders, the modes of production and the working conditions within the Unit. I have refrained from analysing the many works created by the Unit because this study excludes the aesthetic approach to historical research gathering, as discussed in the first chapter. Instead, I have listed chronologically the works that the Unit created for the SABC, including both internal and external commissions.

4.1.1 The SABC Vision

The SABC television service was officially inaugurated on Monday, January 5, 1976 by the Prime Minister, Mr. B.J. Vorster, and from its inception the institution claimed to strive to uphold its vision of broadcasting programming that "informs, educates, entertains and edifies" the public. The facade of 'public interest' was maintained in the 1976 Annual Report, despite the political agenda implicit in the Corporation's call for programming to address the need for "spiritual, economic and military preparedness, of promoting understanding and co-operation between various national groups and of stimulating a spirit of optimism and belief in the future of the country."

According to the Corporation, this "vision" has been sustained throughout the history of the SABC and has informed the aesthetic, narrative, cinematographic and business choices that its staff and independent contributors have made in respect of broadcast material. In reality, this "vision" was merely a propaganda technique to bolster support for the institution, both locally and internationally, and so was never realised under apartheid rule.

4.1.2 SABC Structure

The SABC was structured firstly according to language: the *Afrikaans* and *English* divisions for broadcast. Under each of these divisions there was a further split: the *Operations* and the *Production* divisions. The Operations division employed all the technicians, artists, cameramen, engineers and maintenance workers who are so vital to the creation of programming. The Production division employed all the producers, directors, departmental organisers, script writers and content advisors who are necessary for effective pre-production preparation and programming development. The Corporation believed that it was necessary to separate the Production and Operations divisions as it believed that they were separate entities, superficially independent of one another (see Diagram 1).

Each of these 2 divisions in turn had their own departments. The Operations division included Scenic Services, Engineering and Maintenance, Graphics, Studio Crews and Equipment and Film Crews and Location departments. The

Animation Unit fell under the Scenic Services umbrella, along with Puppet construction, Photography, Scenic Art, Special Effects, Wardrobe, Set Dressing, Set Building, Costume Stores and Hairdressing and Make-up departments. The Production division included Documentary, Magazine, Sport, Drama and Children's programming departments. The basic premise was that personnel from the English and Afrikaans Production divisions would approach the Operations division in order to book times and engage with various technicians, artists and engineers for specific projects. The Animation Unit serviced almost all of the Production divisions but mainly liaised with the Children's programming department, as understandably the latter were enthusiastic about implementing animation in their program briefs.

In the setting-up and implementation of the above-mentioned hierarchical structure, the institution needed to have a simple system that would determine whether a potential employee was to be hired under the Operations or Production divisions. When the Corporation began their hiring process in 1975, employees generally were selected and placed within the organisation based on the following criteria: whether or not they possessed a degree from an accredited University. The Operations division, consisting of technicians and artists, employed personnel who had obtained a diploma or were degreeless, whilst the Production division hired personnel with degrees that did not necessarily have to correlate with their job description. Even though this 'division' was evident, it was not always a steadfast rule. The aim of the policy was to ensure that individuals were placed according to the skills and knowledge they possessed; the broadcaster was also in its infancy and perhaps believed that individuals possessing degrees were ideal candidates for building up a solid Production team. The Animation Unit was not impacted by this hiring policy as animators were hired based on a recommendations by Johann Roos (Head of Scènic Services) or Butch Stoltz irrespective of qualifications.

The 2-pronged design of the Corporation's fundamental structure, however, had definite implications for the Animation Unit. Animation was seen as a technical component of broadcasting and was therefore subsumed under the Operations

division. The reason it was seen as predominantly a technical medium is because animation in South Africa was regarded as a service industry, providing optical effects, titling and advertising services, as previously indicated in Chapters 2 and 3. The Unit should rather have been seen by the SABC as an independent studio functioning within the broadcast structure within the Productions division. According to some of the Unit's employees, had this been the case the Unit would have grown and flourished over the years as it would have been operating independently, fully equipped with its own team of producers, directors, animators, puppeteers and scenic service employees.

4.1.3 The Traditions of Children's Programming at the SABC

As discussed in the previous chapter, animation became increasingly associated with children's programming after the introduction of television in America, and this association has become a global trend. In South Africa it has inhibited the art form somewhat, as children's programs are usually governed by explicit restrictions and guidelines which preclude total creative control and raise questions of authorship. In South Africa this tendency within children's programming was exacerbated by the split between the Production and Operations Divisions within the structure of the SABC.

Since the launch of television in South Africa, the SABC has been consistently apprehensive about the effects of the medium on the child viewer. Consequently the Corporation was mindful of developing programming that was richly layered in educational content. Particular attention was paid to the engaging presentation of children's and nursery programs. In 1977, the objective for children's programming was "to inform and instruct in an entertaining way" (SABC Annual Report 1977). As a result many great programs, like *Wielie Walie* and *Die Kraaines*, were used to "promote good causes such as precautions against veld and forest fires, pollution, road safety, healthy eating habits etc." (SABC Annual Report 1976-78).

The SABC's obsession with the effects of television on the child viewer has been longstanding and is in a way commendable. However, it eventually led to the self-censorship of broadcast material by producers and artists within the institution. In the creation of children's programming the Corporation was keenly concerned with the issue of on-screen violence and what it termed "great emotional tension" (*Sunday Star* 1988).[1] Internally, well-defined guidelines were enforced for local productions in an attempt to "reduce, wherever possible, the incidence and effect of violent actions; it recommends that where there is doubt, the action should be filmed in a way that will allow for alternative editing" (*Sunday Star* 1988). This notion further restricted the animators who, unlike Hanna Barbera, were forced to individuate narrative actions that did not rely on 'physical comedy and brazen violence. Instead, animation developed a wholesome, didactic identity in this country.

4.2 Institutional History

4.2.1 The Beginnings of the National Broadcasting Corporation

In 1927 I.W. Schlesinger, business mogul and the founding father of the South African Film Industry, saw the immense commercial potential of broadcasting and subsequently managed to acquire a 10-year broadcasting license from the government. Schlesinger's African Broadcasting Company (ABC) quickly became the sole radio broadcaster in South Africa, with the odd amateur exception. By 1934 the ABC was both hugely successful and financially stable. However, the government had already keenly agreed upon using the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as an archetype for South Africa's 'public broadcasting' ideal and so began the 2 year demise of the ABC. Parliament officially passed the Broadcast Act of 1936 after a visit and report by Sir John

[1] According to the Producer's guidelines, in the 1988 Sunday Star article, areas to avoid when scripting a program are: the exhibition of "domestic violence, sexual violence, cruelty towards children or animals, excessive and/or pervasive violence, situations of unrest in South Africa, violent motor accidents, necklace murders, violence directed at objects such as cars and personal belongings (context dependent) and lastly vulgar language and the misuse of words that have religious connotations". Specific to children's programming and consequently to animation the guidelines firmly state that "the impression must never be created that violence does not lead to injury". Dangerous situations that children might try to emulate must be avoided, details of criminal techniques must never be screened and the hero/heroine must use only legal methods of attaining their goals (Sunday Star 1988).

Reith, BBC Director-General and on 1 August 1936 the switch-over took place (Head, 140-141). State Broadcasting was unveiled in South Africa in 1936, following the monopolistic establishment of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Initially only radio services were available, which according to Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, were "divided along language and racial lines. These served to draw, and then reinforce, the social attitudes of a segregated apartheid society" (Tomaselli 558).

4.2.2. Training Programmes

In 1974, 2 years prior to the launch of television, the upper management personnel at the SABC were sent to London to observe and "absorb" the medium of television[2]. After a week in London, they travelled to Germany and then France to further observe modes of European television production (Harris VHS). Whilst abroad, the personnel spent most of their evenings, in their respective hotel rooms, viewing live television. The personnel received no formal training or exposure to studio equipment, from their British hosts, at this stage of their visit. The daily itinerary for the first week included trips to the BBC, Thames TV as well as a host of other British studios. The group also had the opportunity of meeting the personnel at the IBA (International Broadcasting Authority). During the second week, they visited Hilversem studios in Holland and television stations in Paris, France and Germany. The aim was to focus on the program content, various genres and the structure of programming according to broadcasting schedules. The contacts established as well as the knowledge gained during this short overseas visit were invaluable to the SABC; in the years to come many trips were made to Europe by SABC representatives and a good working rapport was cultivated.

The hiring process, for the new television arm of the Corporation, began from January 1974-76 and it was mandatory for all the new staff to undergo intensive training where they critically analysed and examined the methods used by the

[2] It is important to remember that the 'upper management' personnel were not at all exposed to the medium of television in 1974 and so this experience of watching television must have been quite enlightening and overwhelming simultaneously.

British Broadcasting Company, Thames Films and English TV. Multiple induction programmes were specifically devised by six industry experts from Britain who also devised specialized courses for the various SABC departmental personnel. These programmes and courses were continually cycled and executed on the SABC premises over a period of 2 years until the “switch-on” in 1976.

The contracted experts were: Mike Leesten-Smith from the BBC, who ran the courses on program directing and producing primarily for the Drama department; Alan Johnston from English TV, who was concerned with all aspects of production management, with the training of production assistants and production secretaries and with everything required for set-up and execution of both location and studio production; Randall Miles, who specialized in lighting for television; Brian Taylor, who was a sound expert; Don McHardy, who attended to the engineering and maintenance staff; and Ian McCray, who trained all the set designers. These experts were contracted to run training courses and mentor the staff for the 24 month period. During this time, many trial programs were made and expensive equipment purchased from Europe and America was tested. It was this rigorous training given by British experts that explains why, to a large extent, the SABC followed the European broadcast model, which I will be discussing in more detail later.

In terms of the Animation Unit, this trial period allowed the artists to explore their art form and rework it to suit the medium of television. Many technical and artistic tests were carried out by the Unit and in 1975 senior animator Butch Stoltz was given the opportunity to travel to Disney Studios in Burbank, California to observe the animators and production pipe-lines.

4.2.3 The Launch of Television

In 1976, 40 years after its inception, the SABC was finally ready to launch another service to the South African public – television. After 10 long years of discussion and dispute at government level regarding the advisability of introducing television as a broadcast medium, South African Prime Minister BJ

Vorster[3] formally opened the SABC (SAUK as it was known in Afrikaans) on January 5 1976 (Harris VHS). At this time the SABC was the only television broadcaster and so dominated the airwaves.[4] To begin with, only one channel was in operation for 5 hours each evening and the broadcast time was equally split between English and Afrikaans programming. This initial channel was later labelled TV1.[5] A second channel was developed and aired in 1982, carrying TV2 and TV3 as split signal.[6] By 1983 an official third channel was launched, so that TV2 and TV3 each had their own channel servicing the Nguni (Zulu and Xhosa) and Sotho (South Sotho, North Sotho and Tswana) language groups respectively (SABC brochure 1987). In 1986 TV4 was launched, providing mainly sports coverage and entertainment.[7] Each channel developed a unique style, character and position in the market.

In 1986 an encrypted channel called M-Net[8] was introduced, a service that competed with the national broadcaster and progressively eroded its monopoly on the South African television market[9]. The programming content of the channel

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[3] The ruling Nationalist party of the time was very concerned with the "deleterious effects" of the new-found medium of television and their decade long debate surrounding these effects resulted in South Africa being the last country to receive television globally (Harris VHS). It is believed that the resistance to institute this medium was due to the government's fear that television would be able to "cultivate communism, liberalism, equality, slanted news and an unbalanced presentation of facts" (BJ Vorster, Harris VHS). This reluctance awarded South Africa the title of being the world's last country "among those of comparable economic development" to receive the television service, despite the new-found medium being showcased at the Empire Exhibition in 1936 (Head 147).

[4] South Africa used the PAL system for colour television, like most Western European countries, and was only the second terrestrial television service in Africa to launch with a colour-only service. Zanzibar, in Tanzania was the first territory to do so in 1973 (SABC Brochure, 1987).

[5] TV1 initially transmitted for 37 hours a week and for the first 2 years it was considered a non-commercial broadcast channel. By 1987, the channel was broadcasting 69 hours of programming per week with 8% of air time being dedicated to advertising (SABC Brochure 1987). According to statistics from 1986, an average of 5 million viewers tuned into TV1 every day.

[6] Both TV2 and TV3 transmitted programming for 31 hours per week with advertising being responsible for 8% of their air time. Statistics from 1986 indicate that an estimated 2 million viewers tuned into these two channels daily (SABC Brochure 1987).

[7] TV4 was on air for 28 hours a week and was relayed on the TV2 and TV3 transmitters after these services shut down at 21h00. The programming line-up included dramas, comedy series, top rated music shows, popular films and a rich mixture of local and international sport and music (SABC Brochure, 1987).

[8] According to Tomaselli in her article entitled *Change and Transformation in South African Television*, M-Net was initially owned by "a consortium of all four of the press houses, and in time, National Press bought out the channel" (559).

[9] The launch of the first 'free-to-air' private TV channel, called e.t.v., added applied further competitive pressure to the SABC and in 1995, M-Net's parent company, Multichoice, also launched its digital satellite TV service (DStv), which expanded satellite television viewership across Southern Africa (Tomaselli 559)

was dominated by films and series largely imported from America. The channel was allocated a 2 hour unencrypted slot (17h00-19h00), known as an "open window," during which time the channel broadcasted its local soap opera, *Egoli* (*Place of Gold*).[10] However, it could not broadcast its own news and current affairs programs, which were still the preserve of the SABC.

4.2.4 *The Shift from State to Public Broadcaster*

It is no secret that during the early 1980s the SABC explicitly supported the Nationalist government in its efforts to combat what was "represented as the 'Total Onslaught' of 'revolutionary forces,' supposedly spearheaded by the African National Congress (ANC)" (Teer-Tomaselli 560). These propagandist tactics were executed particularly through news coverage and documentary and current affairs programming, but the state ideology permeated the entire corporate hierarchy and even the thematic aspects of children's programming.

The SABC was for many years a monopoly under the control of the Nationalist government; during the early years, most of the senior management were members of the Broederbond, the Afrikaner secret society, who acted as television's 'thought police' (Harris VHS). According to Tomaselli, "the government stranglehold over the SABC began to slip towards the end of the 1980s." This was partly because Riaan Eksteen, director-general of the SABC at the time, was not "toeing the party line sufficiently" and was swiftly replaced by Wynand Harmse in 1987 (561). Harmse was designated as the group chief executive, and when he became the head of the SABC, he modified the organization's focus on propaganda and instead emphasized financial stability; a notable shift in the ethos of the Corporation was also evident at this time. By 1991, the structure and hierarchy of the SABC was revisited and had changed; this reorganization led to the development of a "number of separate 'business units,' each with its own responsibility as a profit-making entity" (Currie 1993, 48-49; Collins 1993 87). (See Diagram 2)

[10] It is interesting to note that during the mid 1980s the SABC changed its broadcast structure somewhat by ensuring that 65% of TV1's programming was made up of local productions (Tomaselli 559). A potential reason for this change was because of the impending launch of M-Net, which broadcast mainly imported programming with which the SABC could not compete. For the artists and animators at the SABC, this should have meant that their workload increased and significant attention was paid to their efforts.

This structural change had significant implications within all departments at the SABC, including the Scenic and Décor department in which the Animation Unit was housed. These included a new freedom to create work less scrutinised and censored by upper management, fewer budgetary restrictions and constraints and ultimately happier employees, which always boosts productivity. This re-structuring also ensured that each business unit was equipped with upper management personnel who were accessible at all times and, more importantly, approachable. Unfortunately during this reorganization period rumours were spread about the imminent dismissal of art department employees, and these allegations caused much unease amongst Scenic Services personnel. The allegations stemmed from the decision by upper- management to re-think their original strategy of housing all requisite staff at the SABC. From 1986 some of the staff from the Scenic Services department started seeking alternative employment or started their own businesses, and the department was renamed *Tableau Production Services*. The Animation Unit was not able to appreciate the benefits of the structural change as it was shut down 3 years before the change was implemented, in 1988 – due, in part, to the effects of the above-mentioned retrenchment rumours (Stoltz, Smith and Roos interviews).

Forces both internal and external propelled this major transition period for the SABC, with Harmse describing it as the "most extensive process of change in the Corporation's hitherto 56 year history" (SABC Annual Report 1992 9-10). Internally, the Corporation became an increasingly commercially-driven entity that was divided into "business units with a system of internal cost recovery, and the top-heavy administration were decentralised to each of the business units" (Teer-Tomaselli 561). Regrettably, as had been anticipated, significant staff reductions were in fact implemented at all levels, and remuneration became dependant on personal performance. In 1996 Tableau Production Services and all its sub-divisions were disbanded because it seemed more financially viable for the SABC to outsource and commission work from the many flourishing independent studios in South Africa. Had the Animation Unit not been shut down it would most likely have been closed along with the Scenic Services department. External

forces driving the transition period included numerous pressure groups, spear-headed by the Film and Allied Workers Organization (FAWO) and the Campaign for Open Media (COM).

4.2.2 Embargo on Program Sales

According to Tomaselli, the series of States of Emergency in South Africa between 1985 and 1990 served as a catalyst for rigorous media censorship and overt propaganda (559-560). The SABC responded to the situation by ensuring that their programming was characterised by self-censorship and National Party propaganda.

From a close examination of the annual reports from 1980-88, it is apparent that the philosophy of the SABC during the early 1980s was based on the principle of national security. The perception of the broadcaster as an arm of the apartheid government led the British Actor's' Equity Association to start a boycott of program sales to South Africa. Most European countries (with the exception of France and Germany) also refused to air their programming on South African television. This meant that television in South Africa was dominated by programming from the United States of America, France and Germany.[11] The French and German titles that were imported were mostly dubbed into Afrikaans, whereas the American titles were mostly broadcast in the original English. However, at times the SABC would broadcast an American program, both live-action and animation, in Afrikaans but would have the original English soundtrack available on Simulcast. This simulcast could be accessed via an FM radio service called Radio 2000.[12] The SABC benefited greatly from US importation as many

[11] The availability of US programming was partly a result of a co-operative venture with Universal Studios in 1980 where an episode of *Knight Rider* was filmed in the Namib Desert. As a direct consequence, the SABC received the rights to broadcast American programming syndicated from Universal Studios and through this connection bought material from other studios. It was only after the end of apartheid that the boycott was lifted and European and Asian programming was available for broadcast (Teer-Tomaselli 558-564).

[12] A simulcast is described by the SABC as a "simultaneous transmission of dubbed material on television with the original soundtrack on radio" (SABC Brochure, 1987). Simulcast was available on all four television channels and so catered to different language needs. Simulcasting also meant that special events and sports could be available in 2 languages simultaneously. Some of the series being dubbed and simulcasted included: *Miami Vice, Beverly Hills 90210,* and *Life Goes On (Môre is Nog a Dag)* to name but a few. This also applied to German and Dutch programs dubbed in Afrikaans, such as the Dutch soap opera *Medisch Centrum West*, known as *Hospitaal Wes Amsterdam* (SABC Brochure 1987).

of the program bundles that were purchased provided the Corporation with free animated programs for broadcast. This undermined the role of the Animation Unit somewhat, as international animated programs took precedence over local ones.

4.3 Broadcasting in Developing Countries

The introduction of television into developing countries occurred considerably more recently than its arrival in first world countries during the 1950s. The process of establishing a broadcasting structure is quite complex and requires thorough organisation, attention to financial structures and a fundamental knowledge of the technology required to operate a broadcast facility. It makes sense, therefore, that African countries relied on training and assistance from either the British (British Broadcasting Corporation – BBC) or French (Office de Radio-Télévision Française – ORTF) broadcasting Corporations.

In their book, *Broadcasting in the Third World*, Elihu Katz and George Wedell argue that "the broadcast media, particularly television, in developing countries are in general purveying a homogenised brand of popular culture, either copied or borrowed from broadcasting in the West" (iv).[13] In Asia and Africa, broadcast media are found to be predominantly unitary in structure and directly controlled and often operated by the government (this is the case in South Africa). Reasons for this hegemony are varied but the "original justification for this control was technical" (Katz and Wedell, 42). Resources were limited in terms of frequencies available for broadcast and governments aimed to ensure that their utilisation was strictly controlled for economic purposes. The aims set for broadcasting in these countries, including South Africa, were largely borrowed from Western Europe, "where broadcasting is formally expected to inform, educate and entertain" (Katz and Wedell, 6).

[13] According to Katz and Wedell, "European and North American models were copied in the introduction of broadcasting systems in the developing countries of the world, either because the then colonial power regarded this procedure as axiomatic or because these models were regarded as the only ways in which a modern communication system could be structured" (98).

4.3.1 The BBC Model

In the United Kingdom, the BBC was established according to a public-service model which was designed in 1926 and has remained largely untouched to present day. It is sometimes described as a "static" broadcasting system because of its relative stability. By 1975, when the SABC was preparing to launch its television service, the BBC's television service had been already operating for 22 years. According to Geoffrey Seymour, BBC Overseas Training Organiser, during this time it "pioneered and developed ideas, techniques and systems for the benefit of its domestic audience; but at the same time it accepted the responsibility of sharing its know-how with broadcasting organisations overseas that are similarly committed" (Head 271).

This commitment to training initiatives was useful for members of the Commonwealth, where the BBC was involved either as a consultant or as a physical presence at the actual set-up of national broadcasting services. The BBC provided a wide range of formal and informal training services that cover radio and television production, engineering and technical assistant/operator training, as well as media management and news-writing courses. The courses for television broadcasting began in 1966, prior to which there were only domestic courses run by the BBC Training Staff, and were specifically designed for and marketed to overseas broadcasters. The program lasts for a total of fourteen weeks, followed by a period of up to three months of observation, and is held bi-annually in London for a select group of sixteen participants from across the globe (Head, 270-75). According to Seymour, it covers "all the aspects of planning and production of television programs, in the studio and on location, on tape and on film" (Head 273).

In terms of management, a conference lasting approximately six weeks is held for senior management executives. For middle-upper management there is a "Management of Resources Course," which lasts for eight weeks in London. Although the SABC staff did not attend any of the above-mentioned courses, the Corporation ensured that its employees were fully trained and equipped to handle the broadcast environment. Instead the SABC hired, for a contracted period of

approximately 2 years, 6 British professionals who were proficient in all the fundamental aspects of broadcasting: directing and producing; production management (both location and studio shoots); lighting design; sound design; engineering and maintenance and set design. In this way the BBC model of broadcasting was integrated into the local broadcasting structure in the South African context.

4.3.2 The French Model

The premise upon which the French broadcasting model is based is that of state control of a unitary broadcasting structure. The French model, known as *Radiodiffusion Télévision Française* (RTF 1959-64)[14] and later as the formally autonomous *Office de Radio-Télévision Française* (ORTF 1964-74), is in quite a few respects similar to the British colonial service model. In 1974 the system was radically changed "in response to the ever more insistent demand for a reduction of government control" (Katz and Wedell 66).[15] The solution that was conceived entailed the complete "dismantling of the highly centripetal structure of the ORTF into six distinct and independent units, each responsible for only one part of the previously unified structure."

This re-organized model was not copied by the SABC or the French colonies in Africa in large part due to the political and institutional framework within which African broadcasting systems tended to operate. However, despite there being no transferal of a French structural form, South Africa adopted important knowledge about the technology of broadcasting from the French. Katz and Wedell write that "the importation of complex technology brings with it many associated constraints and needs: engineering and production staffs must often be trained in the country

[14] The RTF had the status of being a Civil Service department, which meant that it was financially and politically dependant on the State. Its annual budget was dictated and monitored by Parliament. In terms of practicality, all financial propositions and "operations within the RTF required the prior consent of the Ministry of Finance, accounting had to conform to Civil Service rules laid down in 1862, while salaries were held down to levels current throughout the State sector " (Thomas 8).

[15] Within the RTF and ORTF, not unlike South Africa, there was much political interference with television being used as more that just a tool for propaganda: it developed into an instrument for the government. As was the case during the Nationalist Party rule in South Africa, many French documentary film-makers and journalists were manipulated with some even losing their jobs because there was suspicion of Communist sympathisers within the broadcast structure (Thomas, 13-19).

from which the equipment is imported" (67); the methods and systems of working are also imported, along with an ongoing dependence on the exporting country for spare parts and additional training initiatives.

In 1972 a statute was passed explicitly outlining the new aims and missions of the 'national public service' of French Broadcasting. "These were: to respond to the needs and aspirations of the population regarding information, culture, education, entertainment and all the values of civilization" (Thomas 39). Furthermore, the broadcasting structure was to ensure that French culture be spread worldwide and, with the above-mentioned aims in mind, was to take care that the quality of the French language and culture be preserved. It is evident then that there are many parallels that can be drawn between the French statute and the initial SABC vision.

South Africa adopted some aspects, nuances and aims of both British and French broadcast models, but it is of great consequence to bear in mind that once this hybrid model was instituted the SABC set about asserting its own judgements, thereby amending the organisation of broadcasting to accommodate the political, religious, cultural, economic and educational needs of the country. This manoeuvring of broadcast structures ensured that South Africa had both developed a unique model of its own whilst maintaining the high international standards of quality and professional performance that were taught during the two year training initiative undertaken by the BBC in collaboration with the SABC.

4.4 The Animation Unit

In 1975, the SABC created an Animation Unit which was headed by Butch Stoltz and later by Gerard Smith (see Fig. 51-54). The primary focus of the Unit's work at the broadcasting corporation was creating content for children's programming, consisting of animated entertainment inserts and special effects. Celebrated works produced by the pair include the likes of *Wolraad Woltemade*, *Bremenstad se*

Musikante and *An Introduction to Dickens*.[16] The Unit was responsible also for the creation of illustrations for Afrikaans children's programs such as *Haas Das se Nuuskas*, the *Wielie Walie* opening logo, *Kraaines* opening logo, *The Invisible Grisibles* and the *Cabbages and Kings* opening logo. Stoltz supervised the production of *Oceano Jollo*, *Wolraad Woltemade* and *Die Bremenstad se Musikante*, which were all 5-minute animations, and animated both cartoon as well as live action inserts for the series on Charles Dickens. In addition, the Unit was utilised for the creation of the opening logos for adult series such as *Uit and Tuis*, *Dokter Dokter*, *Nommer Asseblief* and *Sing and Die Drie van der Merwes*.

4.4.1 The Founders

The Animation Unit was initially headed by Butch Stoltz in 1975 and later by Gerard Smith in 1984. The pair worked together at the Unit from 1979 onward, when Smith joined the Unit, and had a good working history. The Unit, however, would not have existed without the tenacity and foresight of Johann Roos, who in many ways can be credited as the person who brought animation to television in South Africa.

4.4.2 Johann Roos

Johan Roos, Head of Scenic Services, was the person responsible for the birth of the Unit itself. He began his career in the advertising industry, where he worked his way through the ranks, at various companies, and eventually was promoted to Art Director. His penchant for comics led to his later involvement in the publishing industry. He published 36 of his own comic strips, in various Afrikaans magazines, because he believed that imported, English comics were flooding the market in South Africa and that there were definite prospects for Afrikaans comic strips (see Fig. 55-60). Roos became quite a businessman and eventually established his own publishing company, which bought titles such as *Outspan* and *Dagbreek*. He saw these titles as outlets in which he could continue to publish comic strips. In 1974 Roos heard from his political contacts that the SABC was

[16] According to Crafton this genre of puppet film was largely "unexploited in America" (237). However, the likes of Jim Henson and his Muppets on *Sesame Street* (1969) became hugely popular amongst children and adults alike within America and indeed globally. Sesame Street combines education and entertainment, much like the SABC, and uses a combination of live-action and animated inserts to supplement the Muppet skits.

interested in starting a television broadcast facility and so he approached the SABC for a job.

Johann Roos was interested in the development of an animation/comic department within the Corporation, which he wanted to manage. Unfortunately Dr. Schutte, the Head of Television Services and later the CEO, did not seem sold on Roos' suggestion as he, together with the board members, could not see the connection between comic strips and animation and television. Instead, Schutte suggested that Roos attend the Producers course being run by Mike Leesten-Smith at the Goudstads College.[17] The course ran for approximately 3 months, during which time the participants had the opportunity to create a full-length drama and variety program. After the course was completed, Roos decided not to accept the offer at the SABC in the capacity of Producer as the salary being offered was too low. Dr. Schutte personally asked Roos to accept the offer as the Corporation was trying desperately to assemble a group of personnel with the relevant artistic, business and technical skills necessary for television broadcasting, and Roos seemed like a good all-round candidate. After much negotiation and deliberation, Roos was appointed as the Head of Television Centre. His responsibilities included the running of all the studios, scenic services, generators and the news departments.

4.4.3 Butch Stoltz

Butch was christened Matthys Andries Stoltz and was born in Johannesburg in 1937. He adopted the name Butch after "Butch Jenkins," a famous child star of that time, who displayed the same enthusiasm and flair as he did. Stoltz was a very creative child who spent his days drawing pictures. However, as he became older he grew tired of sketching static pictures and as a result embarked upon a journey of exploration to discover how to make them move. Stoltz's early inspiration came from the classic Hollywood films as well as the Disney, Fleischer and Warner Bros. studios' animations that were created during the Golden Era of animation in America (Stoltz interview 2008).

[17] The various training courses were held at Goudstads College because the SABC had not as yet finished building their television center broadcast facilities. The senior management personnel were housed in a blue prefabricated building on the lawn outside where the building is currently situated, whilst new employees were being trained (Roos Interview).

Stoltz spent his youth gathering knowledge about the processes and equipment involved in the production of an animated film from various books he had read and critically examined. By the age of 12, he was adept in the art of animating and even had his first cartoon published in the *Germiston Advocate* in 1949. When Butch was 14 years old he made contact with Denis Purchase, at Alpha Film Studios, and asked him if he would mentor him. Purchase declined as he was adamant that Stoltz should learn animation techniques directly from British studios, with their apprenticeship system and reputation for professionalism, and this gave Butch the necessary resolve to succeed in the industry (Stoltz interview 2008).

On January 4th 1955, after having worked briefly as a sound controller for SABC Radio, Stoltz left South Africa and moved to the United Kingdom, for a period of 3 years, in order to learn and fine-tune the skills involved in animating and studio productions. His first apprenticeship was with Polytechnic Film Studios in Taplow, from January to December. As a novice animator, his job was initially to assist senior artists with television commercials. He was then allowed to produce several advertisements of his own: *Mr. Therm, Remington Razors* and *Robertson's Marmalade*. During the year of 1956, he joined George Merino Productions, in London, in the capacity of apprentice.

George Merino was an ex-Walt Disney employee, who can be credited for the effects animation on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. At this studio, Butch was afforded the opportunity to assist senior animators who were working mainly on commercial animation. Stoltz's last period of apprenticeship was with Guild Television Services in London from January to December in 1957. Here, he produced a *Rinso Soap Powder* advertisement on his own. The three years spend abroad enabled Butch Stoltz to gain a comprehensive understanding of the methods and practices of studios in London and allowed him the freedom to put his theoretical knowledge of the art form into practice (Stoltz interview 2008).

Stoltz returned to South Africa in Dec 1957 and immediately joined Alpha Film

Studios, where he created and produced “film advertisements of the week” for cinema release, and designed and helped to build sets for live-action advertisements with Bruce van Staden. In 1968 he left Alpha Film Studios and joined Panorama Films in Pretoria where he started the animation division, producing retail drive-in cinema advertisements. Stoltz remained at Panorama until approximately1973, when Thys Heyns, one of the owners of the studio, decided to resign. He followed Heyns and worked with him for 2 more years. The new company *Heyns Films* was understaffed and Butch found himself carrying most of the workload. Fortunately, around the early 1970s there was talk of television being introduced and this peaked Stoltz’s interest as he had always been a big fan of the medium (Stoltz interview 2008).

In March 1975, Johann Roos (HOD Scenic Services at the SABC) interviewed Stoltz for the position of Animation Unit Manager. Roos had heard of Stoltz’s immense talent for animations and illustrations from Pieter de Bruyn (Head of Television), who had contacts at Panorama films where Stoltz had been working. Roos was delighted at this suggestion and promptly hired him. Thus in April 1975 Stoltz joined the SABC in the initial capacity of illustrator. His first job was to design their opening logo that was used for the first public test-broadcast from the Rand Show-grounds in Johannesburg. In 1976, he received the Artes award for the best contribution to Scenic Services and in 1979 was given the opportunity to visit the Disney Studios together with colleagues Cherry Stoltz, Koos Theron and Hannes Odendaal to gather knowledge and contacts. Stoltz left the SABC from 1979-80 and joined Annie-Mation Studios, where he worked on animated advertisements such as *Mazda 323* and *Harpic*. He returned to the SABC in 1980 and continued to produce animated material of a high standard for broadcast until 1986, when he resigned. After the SABC, Stoltz opened his own business and continued to do freelance work commissioned for television broadcast, such as the *First World Rugby Cup* promotion as well as animated advertisements such as *Citruseal*, *Mum for Men* and *Simba Chips*.

4.4.4 Gerard Smith

Gerard Smith was originally from St. Albans in the United Kingdom, where he created special effects on the optical printer. He moved to the Anson Dyer studios in 1965, where his artistic aptitudes saw him rise through the ranks quite quickly. From my interview with Smith, it seems as though John Halas, from the famous Halas and Bachelor Studios in London, took control of the Dyer studio in 1966. Smith was unimpressed with the change of management and decided to accept a job in Brussels with Belvision studios instead. At Belvision Smith worked as an animator on the following films for cinema release: *Asterix and Cleopatra*, *Pinocchio in Outer Space*, *Tin Tin and the Prisoners of the Sun*,[18] and the beginning of *Lucky Luke*. During the production of *Lucky Luke* Smith left Brussels and travelled to Munich and Hamburg where he worked for a short period of time (Smith interview). During the interview Smith recalled that, after his experience in Germany, he was preparing to leave the world of animation in order to focus on his other passion – Geology.

Smith was intent on this career change, and having already completed his A-levels in Geology, embarked on a journey to Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1969, in order to participate in a Geological Survey being done at the time. Whilst in South Africa, Smith studied medicine for 4 years before abandoning that degree and instead focussing on a BSc degree in Physics before once again gravitating back towards animation in the 1970s.

After apprenticing at Dave McKey Animation Services and working as Denis Purchase's assistant for 8 months, Smith's determination and natural talents coupled with his strong working relationship with Purchase aided the studio in gaining fame in the competitive South African commercials industry. Smith was part of a very skilled group of animators resident in the studio: Denis Purchase (head animator), Butch Stoltz (freelance animator to this studio), Elsabie De Jager (inker and painer), Ruth Farber (inker and painter), and Sydney Charmer

[18] The original French title of this film translates directly as *Tin Tin and the Temple of the Sun* (Smith Interview).

(assistant).[19] Dave McKey imported the Higashimo animation camera from Japan and ensured that he was the operator for all commercials and shorts created by the studio. In 1978, Smith left the studio and joined Rent-A-Studio as a resident animator in the studio's newly established animation department. Together with Gretchen Wilsenach, Smith then joined the newly formed Annie-Mation studio, where he worked on *Bobby the Cat, Rachel De Beer* and a series of commercials commissioned by the SABC. In 1979 Smith heard that the Unit at the SABC was looking for animators and he promptly joined Butch Stoltz.

4.4.5 Working at the SABC

According to Smith, the only reason the Animation Unit was created was because of the government mandate to support all the various aspects of the arts for television broadcasting. Stoltz agrees to an extent, but maintains that the SABC, for the first 15 years of its existence at least, assumed that it was feasible and more economical to have all requisite services under one roof.

The Animation Unit had its humble beginnings in a blue pre-fabricated building that stood on the lawn outside the SABC building, where the parking lot to the main building is currently located. Initially the Unit consisted of Butch Stoltz alone, and he, together with his only assistant Shelley Panton-Jones, was responsible for the management, production development and output. The temporary office had no camera facilities and all the camera work was serviced out to James Reindorp, on a freelance basis, from his home darkroom in Orange Grove. The office did have all the animation equipment that was required besides animation desks, which were made for the Unit according to Butch's instructions by the carpentry shop at the SABC (Stoltz interview).

[19] Mr. Charmer was of African descent, which during the Apartheid government's regime meant that he was segregated from English speaking people, especially in a work environment. It is therefore very interesting that Dave McKay employed him as an animator/assistant as almost all the studios comprised of mainly male, white artists (Smith Interview).

The primary role of the Unit was to create animation for Afrikaans children's programming,[20] and the team set about working on the logos for the long-running and popular *Wielie Walie*, for which they later animated various inserts (Smith interview). Interestingly, the inspiration for Wielie Walie's loveable characters Karel and Sarel came from cartoon sketches created by Johann Roos and Butch Stoltz, which were later turned into popular comic strips.

In 1976 the Unit was moved inside the main building and, located adjacent to the Scenic and Décor department, acted as a service facility rather than a structured department. The substantial Graphics department flanked the Unit on the other side, and because of the sheer volume of its employees, managed to aid the Animation Unit, which was initially understaffed, by providing background artists and colourists (Smith interview). By 1978 additional staff members had been engaged by the Unit: Gerard Smith, Rudy Koopmans, Cherry Stoltz and Jerry Hille (trained in Canada). Some years later Gerrit Knipe joined as a junior animator along with Johan Gericke, Revalle Beaton and 2 other assistants. The exceptional set-building department ensured that Stoltz and his assistants had good quality drawing desks, tracing tables and layout boards, and the SABC provided the Unit with a Nielson Hordell animation camera unit,[21] which was operated by the animators themselves because no specialised cameraman was recruited by the Unit.

The facilities at the SABC were superb and on a par with international standards. Stoltz therefore had unlimited access to the téleciné department, flat-bed suites and SABC studio space. The volume of work given to the Unit was moderate and

[20] Verna Vels (creator of *Liewe Heksie*) and Louise Smit (producer and director of *Liewe Heksie*) worked in the Children's Programming department as Organizer and Producer respectively. They are described by many as being energetic, enthusiastic and very creative women, who established a very good working relationship with both Roos and Stoltz (Stoltz and Roos Interview 2008).

[21] Peter Nielson is the engineer responsible for the Nielson Gordel animation stand at the SABC. He worked with Oxberry for quite some time, making Oxberry equipment and re-budging it. He managed to design a column counter-system, which meant that the animation stand had only one, giant, upright column instead of 2 like the previous model. The camera that was used with this stand at the SABC was an Oxberry camera. However, Nielson eventually engineered his own camera, which was similar to the Newman-Sinclair Camera (Smith Interview). According to Johann Roos, acquiring this animation stand was quite a logistical nightmare as it was mammoth in size and had to be transported from the Film Board in Pretoria to the SABC in Auckland Park. Once at the SABC, this animation stand had to be kept in the basement with air-conditioning and a solid floor (Roos Interview 2008).

quite regular, though at peak broadcasting times there was a sense of pressure felt within the Unit. This was partly due to the fact that the SABC was still establishing itself and its various departments; the primary concern of the Corporation, from 1976-80, was to create a continuous, uninterrupted stream of broadcasting material that was always according to scheduled and broadcast on time without error. The Unit was therefore sometimes under pressure from producers due to the oftentimes tight broadcasting deadlines dictated by management (Smith interview 2008).

The animators at the SABC were very interested in the development of new scripts for animation and whenever they had some free time they generated new characters and stories. Unfortunately time constraints and regular work routines meant that they were not completed and thus never broadcast. There would probably have been greater scope for creative work available to the animators had they been allowed to participate in the generation of scripts and programming content in the Production division. Unfortunately, the Unit was usually kept segregated from the Production division, which meant that there was little to no communication or interaction between the two departments, apart from liaison between producers and departmental organisers. Any scripts that were generated by the Unit had to be passed up the chain of command in the Production division, which usually resulted in delays due to stringent formalities and excessive paperwork. This, coupled with the fact that the SABC was not hiring additional staff for the Unit, is the reason why minimal expansion occurred within the Unit. Despite the bureaucracy, however, Stoltz and Smith with the help of Johann Roos managed to influence greatly the producers and organisers of the Children's programming department, drawing on their fascination and love for animated characters and puppets (Stoltz and Roos interviews 2008).

Smith believes that the reason for the lack of development and formal hierarchical structure within the Unit was partly due to the fact that the SABC was not particularly interested in establishing a fully-fledged animation department.[22]

[22] According to Johann Roos, the 'upper management' personnel at the SABC were not interested in the on-goings at the Animation Unit as they were not knowledgeable about the medium and were not able to relate to the many processes involved in creating animation either. They resolved

Through my research I have uncovered two possible reasons why the Unit was marginalised and under-used. The first might have been because of the fact that the Corporation was so intently focussed on establishing a solid foundation for broadcasting in South Africa that it understandably neglected the expansion and development of the Unit during the years 1975-88, the most critical period during the set-up of a broadcast model. The second reason can perhaps be seen as stemming from certain misconception surrounding the art-form of animation - involving the denigrated status of animation as a legitimate art form and genre, the classification of animation as being solely for childrens' viewing and the mis-education surrounding the production process involved- thereby making the Corporation's decision to place the Unit under the Operations Division seem justified (Smith, Stoltz and Roos Interviews 2008).

It is disappointing that the SABC did not spend more time analysing the medium of television, specifically the art of animation, before unveiling it in South Africa, because its failure to do so has indirectly hindered the development in South Africa of animation as a legitimate art form suitable for television broadcast. Consequently, the Corporation cultivated and endorsed the existing notion that animation is solely the province of children's programming. This unfortunate notion affected the impressionable South African public, who have continued to misinterpret the art form in subsequent decades.[23]

In 1986 Stoltz resigned from the SABC in pursuit of a career at a private studio, and left Gerard Smith in charge of the Unit, which was by now very understaffed. Smith continued producing animated work for the Corporation for about a year before realising that the future of the unit was looking increasingly bleak. The Corporation's lack of knowledge about the field of animation coupled with its inability to understand and provide the necessary requirements of the medium resulted in the Unit being shut down in 1988. Another factor that influenced the

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to leave Roos to manage the Unit as he saw fit and no questions were ever asked because they had confidence in his ability to manage the Scenic Services department. Despite the initial lack of interest, Dr. Schutte and Mr. De Bruin eventually grew to appreciate the work coming out of the Unit (Roos Interview 2008).

[23] This misconception continues to be the case at the SABC. All the recent commissions for animation have been for the Children's Programming department: *The Magic Cellar*; *URBO-Pax Africa* and Anamazing Workshop's short films.

closure was the Scenic and Décor department's issues with mismanagement, which encroached onto the Animation Unit, causing tension.[24] Smith ran the Unit down in a matter of 7-8 months; he ensured that the animations that were in production were completed and that no new work was taken on by the Unit (Smith, Roos and Stoltz interviews 2008).

The overall atmosphere within the Unit, from its inception, had been one of creativity, inspiration and passion. This was perhaps in part because the internal hierarchy of the Unit was very loose: Butch Stoltz thought of his assistants and co-workers as equal artists with a shared goal. In fact, most of the departments that fell under the Scenic Services adopted this attitude and were often in high spirits despite tight deadlines (Roos interview 2008). The reason for this was that Johann Roos served as mediator between upper management and the Operations and Production Divisions; this meant that none of the artistic and technical staff were bothered by the politics of the Corporation's management.

Roos also used his authority within the Corporation to ensure that all the Scenic Service departments, which he managed, were nurtured in terms of encouraging innovation and exploration of their respective mediums. With experience in advertising and publishing in addition to a penchant for animation, Roos encouraged the Animation Unit to think like advertisers and to market their already adored characters on merchandise such as stickers, mugs, hats, bags and books (see Fig. 61, 62).[25] This knowledge aided the animators in gaining much needed exposure to the general public, and served as a base from which they could pilot their personal projects.

[24] By 1986, the SABC was closely examining their financial records and the results, after a trial period of getting all departments to keep accurate records of expenditure and time, dictated that they needed to re-think their original plan of keeping the requisite staff under one roof. Rumours about this spread throughout the SABC and some of the Scenic Services staff members began putting out feelers for alternative employment or started their own businesses between 1986 and 1995 (Stoltz Interview 2008).

[25] Roos and Stoltz were commissioned by the Army to create an animated mascot for the soldiers. The pair created *Troepie*, a character that has now got iconic status amongst many South Africans. Troepie was marketed within the army in the form of comics, stickers, mugs and other promotional material (Roos Interview 2008).

4.4.6 Modes of Production Employed

In terms of hierarchy, the Unit worked with a group of producers from the Children's Programming department, made up of ex-school teachers who knew relatively nothing about the medium of animation.[26] Jan Horn, Louise Smit and Jan Prinsloo were the producers that the Unit dealt with the most. They commissioned the production briefs, set the budgets and determined the deadlines that the Unit received, and were also in charge of generating the scripts (Smith interview).

The Unit was responsible for the execution of briefs from both the Entertainment and Educational departments, and Stoltz, Smith and their assistants primarily employed the classical mode of production, as designed by Disney. This mode of production seemed appropriate as the output was primarily for commercial audiences and Stoltz had visited and observed animators at Disney Studios in 1979 (See Figure 63-66). However, given the circumstances, Stoltz and Smith were forced to modify the mode of production according to their available resources.[27]

Traditionally, before any production began, preliminary conceptual sketches were created by Stoltz or Smith, character model sheets were devised by senior animators and background layouts were drawn onto paper by the various junior animators and assistants. It is at this stage that line tests were sometimes done; these tests had to be filmed, processed and edited before any changes could be made to the sketches. Sketches that were approved by Stoltz were then cleaned up (re-drawn neatly) and inked before being photocopied or traced onto celluloid. After the transfer onto cels, the drawings were individually hand painted.[28] The

[26] Many teachers were employed by the SABC because the Corporation believed that the medium of television depended on good communication and they believed that teachers were natural communicators (Roos Interview 2008).

[27] According to Roos, who was essentially the SABC's International ambassador because he could speak both Afrikaans and English, the production pipe-line at Disney Studios was phenomenal to watch as there were rows upon rows of animators employed, all with very strict and specific instructions (Roos Interview 2008).

[28] Hand painting cels is a time consuming, laborious process that requires meticulous attention to detail and a thorough understanding of clour palettes and colour mixing. However, at the SABC, the lack of staff forced Stoltz to find alternative assistants to aid in the lengthy production process. Stoltz decided to employ assistants from the adjacent Scenic and Décor and Graphic departments to help with the colouring and layouts of cels (Smith Interview).

completed cels were then ordered and stacked according to the scene they belonged to, so that Stoltz and Smith could begin the mammoth task of filming each cel individually (Smith, interview).

The Animation Unit shot on 16mm film stock, which was processed immediately on site at the SABC's film laboratory. Once processed, the film was viewed by Stoltz ad Smith, together with an editor, who diligently spliced various bits of film together. The completed, edited programme was then put onto tape, ready for broadcast (Smith, Interview). The Unit was instructed to be a 2-D department: no stop-frame or puppet animation was done there as there were separate units for this within the Scènic Services department. However, Stoltz mentioned in his interview that the Animation Unit had a good working relationship with both the Graphics and Puppet departments, for which they animated various inserts at weekly intervals.

4.4.7 Works Produced

Butch Stoltz and his team mainly created animation to supplement Afrikaans children's programs such as *Haas Das se Nuuskas*, *The Invisible Grisibles*, *Oceano Jollo*, *Wolraad Woltemade* and *Die Bremenstad se Musikante*. The Unit also did a lot of illustrative work for children's programming opening logos: *Wielie Walie*, *Kraaines* and *Cabbages and Kings*. For a series on Charles Dickens, the Unit created animated cartoon/live action inserts and was also responsible for the opening logos of many adult series, such as *Uit and Tuis*, *Dokter Dokter*, *Nommer Asseblief*, *Sing* and *Die Drie van der Merwes*.

The following programmes have been documented and catalogued by the SABC program archives (1978-1988):

TITLE	PRODUCER/DIRECTOR	IN-HOUSE OR OUTSOURCED
Uit en Tuis	Nellie Du Plessis	In-House
Racheltjie De Beer	Gretchen Wilsenach	Out-Sourced
Bobby Cat	Gretchen Wilsenach	Out-Sourced
Lion Series Bible Stories No Jacket Required	Hester Ackerman R. Bonthuys	In-House In-House
Wielie Walie	Louise Smit	In-House
Oom Kaspaas en Nefie	Jan Horn	In-House
Liewe Heksie	Louise Smit	In-House
Wolraad Woltemade	Not documented in archives	In-House
Bremenstad se Musiekante	Not documented in archives	In-House
An Introduction to Dickens	Not documented in archives	In-House
Dokter Dokter	Not documented in archives	In-House
Nommer Asseblief	Not documented in archives	In-House
Sing	Not documented in archives	In-House
Die Drie van der Merwes	Not documented in archives	In-House
Kraaines Cabbages and Kings	Not documented in archives Not documented in archives	In-House In-House
The Invisible Grisibles	Not documented in archives	In-House
Oceano Jollo	Not documented in archives	In-House
Haas Das se Nuuskas	Not documented in archives	In-House
Wouter Kabouter	Not documented in archives	In-House

From this list it is clear that the SABC archive has been rather feeble in its attempt to classify and record the fragments of South African television animation history. The list is clearly incomplete and the reason for this disorganisation and curtailment is unknown. My repeated efforts, over a period of more than 10 months, to persuade the SABC Programme Archives to cooperate with me and aid in my empirical research, have been met with repeated dead ends. These missing details might be discovered through active engagement with interview subjects, further in-depth searches of newspapers dating 1976-88, and possibly also through the tracking down of home recorded videos that might still exist in the public domain. Currently, however, this lack of archival information is unfortunate for the state of South African animation preservation; we have already lost most of

the remnants of the precious works from the cinematic era. I sincerely hope that a culture of preservation and respect for animation history can be cultivated in due course in South Africa through regular academic research programs as well as awareness campaigns.

Conclusion

Animation in Post-Apartheid South Africa

In 1991 the SABC board chairperson, Professor Christo Viljoen, assisted in the creation of a Task Group, whose agenda was to study the issue of broadcast regulation. Viljoen released a report, in August of that year, which clearly delineated the role of the broadcaster and covered topics and issues such as "local programming, educational broadcasting, the liberalisation of broadcasting though the issuing of licenses, and, most significantly, the establishment of a regulatory body for broadcasting" (Teer-Tomaselli 562; Louw 1993).

Prior to the 1994 elections there was growing concern that an election undertaken whilst the national broadcaster was under the control of the apartheid government would be neither free nor fair. It was in this socio-political context that the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) was established (Teer-Tomaselli, 562-563). The inauguration of the IBA resulted in a rapid restructuring project, whereby new board members were selected for the SABC and the first democratically nominated Board of Governors was appointed. According to Tomaselli, one of the first tasks undertaken by the IBA was to carry out the "Triple Enquiry" by "convening hearings into, and formulating policy on: the viability of the public broadcaster, local content, and cross-media ownership and control" (563).

The enquiry led to the re-launching of all three television stations and ushered in a new era in South African broadcast history. Today the SABC consists of 3 nationally owned and operated channels: SABC 1 has the largest footprint and broadcasts predominantly in the Nguni group of languages[29] as well as some English; SABC 2 broadcasts in Sotho, Tswana, Afrikaans and English; and SABC 3 broadcasts predominantly in English. SABC 1 and 2 carries the bulk of the broadcaster's public service mandate, with SABC 3 targeting a more "cosmopolitan, sophisticated audience made up of all races" (Teer-Tomaselli 558). The shift in the political regime also served as a catalyst for the many

[29] The Nguni group of languages consists of Zulu, Xhosa, some Venda and Ndebele.

animation training initiatives which took place throughout Africa in an attempt to empower Africans with new media skills.[30]

Final Thoughts on the Animation Unit

At the SABC, the Children's Programming Department made the most use of the Animation Unit. Nevertheless, real-time puppet (marionette) acting was usually favoured over cel-animation techniques because the processes involved in creating these real-time puppet inserts or series are far simpler than any animated film, series or commercial. It is for this reason that the animators from the Unit spent most of their time designing logos, short inserts and titles and credits sequences for existing programs for broadcast. With hindsight, if the SABC had utilised the unit more effectively for the broadcast medium it could have had the potential to export animation and develop it as an art form, by initiating and implementing internal training and apprenticeship programs within the Corporation.

The misunderstanding of animation studio systems and production pipe-lines in South Africa, has been largely responsible for the denigrated status of animation. It seems evident that the Corporation was never really interested in the development of the animation unit into a fully-fledged department, being understandably more concerned with ensuring that all programming was aired punctually. Situating the Unit within the structure of the Broadcasting Authority was, in my opinion, a very good idea, as it placed the art of animation within the government sector. The benefits of this placement *should have included*: the opportunity for growth and development, the prospect of establishing training initiatives within the SABC, and the potential for travel to studios and broadcasting authorities in Europe and America. Unfortunately the Corporation

[30] Some of these initiatives are: The International Animated Film Association (L'Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) known as ASIFA and The National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa (NEMISA). ASIFA is a non-profit organisation that was founded in 1960 in Annecy, France by very well known animators of that time. It now has more than 30 chapters of association located in many countries (www.asifa.net). NEMISA was founded in 1998 and is a South African initiative in collaboration with the Department of Communications. "It provides much needed skills training at an advanced level for the broadcasting industry" (www.nemisa.co.za). The aims of these institutions, in the context of the African continent, are to encourage young Africans and endow them with the necessary skills involved in the art-form of animation. Through this promotion of the medium, there has been an upsurge in talented professionals.

did not recognise the potential of the medium of animation and so neglected to help the Unit to expand into an In-house/Resident studio at the SABC, which would have had the potential to generate income for the Corporation.

Through this research it has become apparent that the Animation Unit at the SABC was merely a peripheral component of the Children's Programming department, slotted into the broadcasting hierarchy somewhere below the Scenic and Décor and Graphics departments. As a result of this deliberate compartmentalisation, the Unit's capacity for development was suppressed, which stunted its potential for expansion. Had the Unit been given the opportunity to grow into a fully-fledged department, complete with production studios, a large, skilled team of animators, artists and producers, it could have developed a continuous body of work created specifically for television broadcast, and it might have cultivated a competitive spirit amongst the private studios operating locally, thereby developing the industry. The closure if the Unit in 1988 could very well have been a premature move on Gerard Smith's part, as his assumption that there was no future for animation at the SABC may have been mistaken. If he or Butch Stoltz had perhaps fought for the Unit's expansion he might have been given the opportunity of managing an Animation department/studio within the newly constituted SABC after apartheid.

Creating animation is a laborious process that requires a lot of financial support and a large group of personnel dedicated to the medium. If the SABC had unveiled television just one decade prior to 1976 and understood the processes required and the advantages of the medium, then the piloting phase could have been completed by 1976 and South African animation would have had a chance of really making an impact on the television circuit.

Observations and Thoughts

Through this research process I have discovered that the foundations of the medium of animation lie in the work of many pioneers between the years 1895 and 1915. These animators were more concerned with the limits of the medium and the magical, participatory nature it possessed, than with the concept of verisimilitude propagated by Disney during the later Industrialisation period. Through this investigation it became apparent also that during these early years of animation production, South African artists were employing much the same techniques as their counterparts in America and Europe.

Once the Industrialisation period in America had begun studios such as Disney and Warner Bros. were able to flourish and develop through the meticulous nurturing of two opposing tendencies; “one toward ‘formula’ and one toward ‘novelty’ – or, in the words of Mark Langer, how ‘imitation of the successful product of one company was counterbalanced by the need to distinguish the product of one company from that of another firm’ ” (Furniss 23). These tendencies, in essence, brought about commercial success for Disney studios and Warner Bros. studios and were adopted by many studios both in America and internationally. This period in animation history is remembered as the time during which the domination of cel animation techniques occurred. According to Furniss, one of the main reasons why paper-based and then cel animation came to dominate the American industry is because these techniques “lend themselves to a central component of 'Taylorism' – an assembly-line method of production” (18). In South Africa, animators were significantly influenced during the cinematic era by this classical, commercial mode of production, and depended on its stability for the production of successful animation.

The end of the Golden Age of animation was marked by the introduction of the television set, which completely shifted the paradigms of city-dwellers across the world. In my research I have discovered that this new-found distribution medium possessed many benefits to the animator as well as the viewer. The possibilities for the art-form became endless and animators were given the opportunity to be able to create a recurrent cartoon series, using characters who were identifiable

and entertaining, capable of developing into well-rounded, iconic personalities. However, the rota nature of the broadcast medium is such that it essentially demanded the reformatting of the narrative plot and modes of production that were previously employed by animators of the cinematic era. Instead the technique of "limited animation" was adopted by American television networks. In South Africa it seems as though these techniques were not widely implemented, as the animators here preferred Disney's "full" animation techniques. The animated series being produced at the SABC were only 5 minute episodes, not 25 minute episodes as in America, and so perhaps did not warrant the change in mode of production.

The goal of this dissertation has been not only to document accurately the history of the SABC Animation Unit but also to provide a contextual analysis through a detailed examination of the epochs, traditions, inventions, innovations and individuals/studios that influenced the manner in which the Unit operated as well as the works it produced and modes of production it adopted. Through this historical account of the SABC Animation Unit and the South African animation industry, I am aiming to encourage more research in the field of animation studies.

Key areas that need to be explored further are:

- The reason for the lack of archives in South Africa for the preservation of animation.
- The examination of studio practices in South Africa during the cinematic era.
- A comparative study of the aesthetics of South African animation vs. American animation.
- An aesthetic analysis of key works produced.
- The development (or lack thereof) of non-commercial animation in South Africa.
- Traditions of the Puppet department at the SABC.
- An in-depth account of the Children's Programming department at the SABC, and the role it played in the development/neglect of the medium of

animation.

- The importance of training initiatives and courses on animation research.
- An exploration into the longstanding relationship between the animation and advertising industries.

Appendix A:

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Project Title: A Historical Enquiry into the Animation Unit, situated within the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC): 1976-1988

Course/Study#: WSOA, Digital Arts, Research Report

City/Country: Johannesburg, South Africa

Date: November 2007

Project Outline:
The focus of this research report is primarily on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Animation Unit it formed, which was set-up and headed by Gerard Smith and Butch Stolz in Johannesburg, 1976.

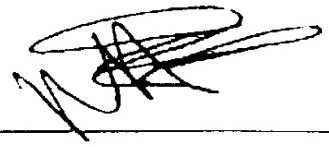
I aim to provide an accurate and thorough account of the SABC Animation Unit through an investigation into how and why this department came into existence, the organizational structure within the unit and an examination of the quality and quantity of the productions created. I propose to uncover the changes that the unit underwent in its short-lived existence as well as to explore the reasoning behind its sudden closure in 1989.

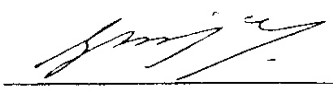
This study focuses on the studios and consequently the individual artists who contributed to the SABC Animation Unit and stresses a documentary/historical approach.

I, (name) Matthys Andries Stoltz, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped : _____
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: YES
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: _____
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): YES

I am aware that as the participant, i am free to withdraw from the study at anytime if i should wish to do so with no consequences.

Signature of Interviewee: 

Signature of Interviewer: 

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I, (name) J.C. Roos, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped or electronically submitted: YES
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: YES
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: YES
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): YES

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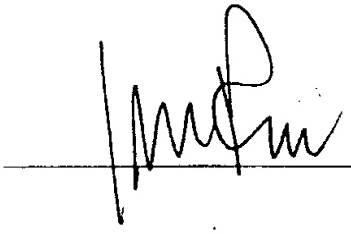
Signature of Interviewee: 

Signature of Interviewer: 

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I, (name) GERARD SMITH, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped : ✓
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: ✓
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: ✓
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): ✓

I am aware that as the participant, i am free to withdraw from the study at anytime if i should wish to do so with no consequences.

Signature of Interviewee: G Smith

Signature of Interviewer: [signature]

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I, (name) Sarionne Kotsh., hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped or electronically submitted: ✓
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: ✓
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: ✓
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): ✓

I am aware that as the participant, I am free to withdraw from the study at anytime if I should wish to do so with no consequences.

Signature of Interviewee: S R. Kotsh.

Signature of Interviewer: 

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I, (name) GLEN COPPENS, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped : _____
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: _____
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: _____
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): _____

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Signature of Interviewee: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

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I, (name) Riccardo Capecchi, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped : _____
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: ✓
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: _____
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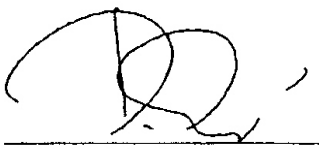
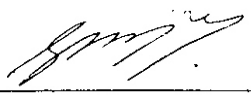
Signature of Interviewee: 

Signature of Interviewer: 

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I, (name) Gretchen W Titzenaal hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped or electronically submitted: ✓
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: ✓
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: ✓
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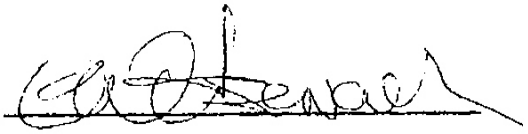
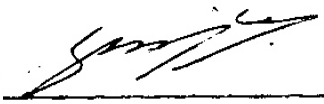
Signature of Interviewee: 

Signature of Interviewer: 

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Date: August 2008

Project Outline:
The focus of this research report is primarily on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Animation Unit it formed, which was set-up and headed by Gerard Smith and Butch Stoltz in Johannesburg, 1975.

I aim to provide an accurate and thorough account of the SABC Animation Unit through an investigation into how and why this department came into existence, the organizational structure within the unit and an examination of the quality and quantity of the productions created. I propose to uncover the changes that the unit underwent in its short-lived existence as well as to explore the reasoning behind its sudden closure in 1989.

This study focuses on the studios and consequently the individual artists who contributed to the SABC Animation Unit and stresses a documentary/historical approach.

I, (name) REVALLE BEATON, hereby consent to my involvement in the above-mentioned research, in the form of an interview, and

give my permission for this interview to be audio/video taped or electronically submitted: N/A
give my permission for my name to be used in the documentation: Yes
give my permission for this audio/video tape transcript to be archived: N/A
give my permission for this information to be made public (if report is published): Yes

I am aware that as the participant, I am free to withdraw from the study at anytime if I should wish to do so with no consequences.

Signature of Interviewee: 

Signature of Interviewer: 

Visual References

Appendix B:

Chapter 1: Animation Roots



Figure 1: Phenakistiscope
Source: Thompson & Bordwell. *Film History an Introduction.* 14



Figure 2: Zoetrope
Source:
http://www.britannica.com/eb/art-52784/Zoetrope-with-six-strips-of-zoetrope-animation



Figure 3: Praxinoscope
Source:
http://courses.ncssm.edu/GALLERY/collections/toys/html/exhibit10.htm



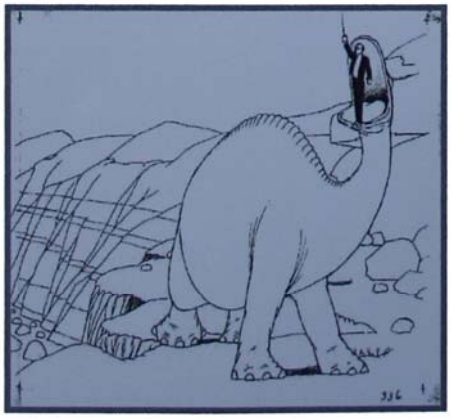
Figure 4: Stuart Blackton performing the Lightning Sketch *Funny Faces.*
Source: Maltin. *Of Mice and Magic*





Figure 5-6: Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland*
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Nemo





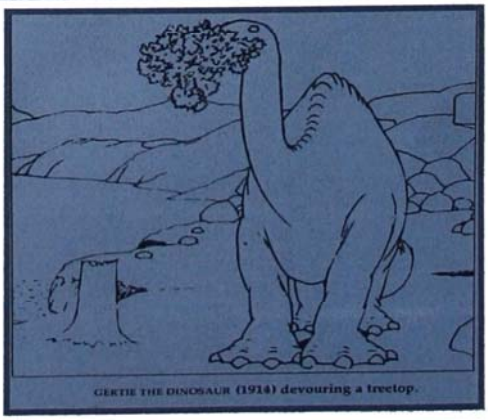
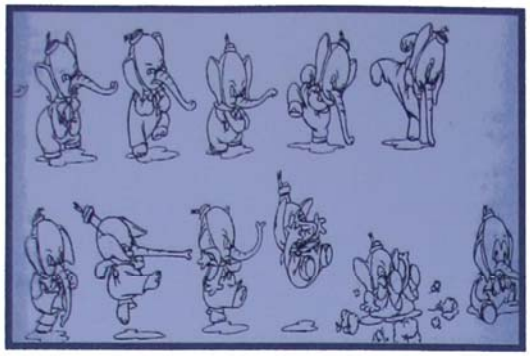


Figure 7-9: The famous Gertie the Dinosaur, created by artist Winsor McCay in 1914.
Source: Maltin. *Of Mice and Magic.* 4





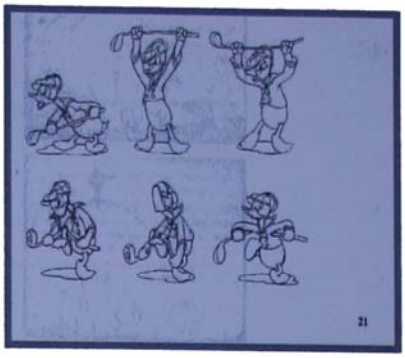


Figure 20: Cover of the TV Wonderland children's comic book created by JC Roos and B Stoltz.
Source: Johann Roos personal collection.

Figure 21, 22: Aspects of Disney's 12 principles of animation displayed through storyboarded image sequences for *Dumbo* and *Donald Duck.*
Source: Thomas and Johnston. *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation.*



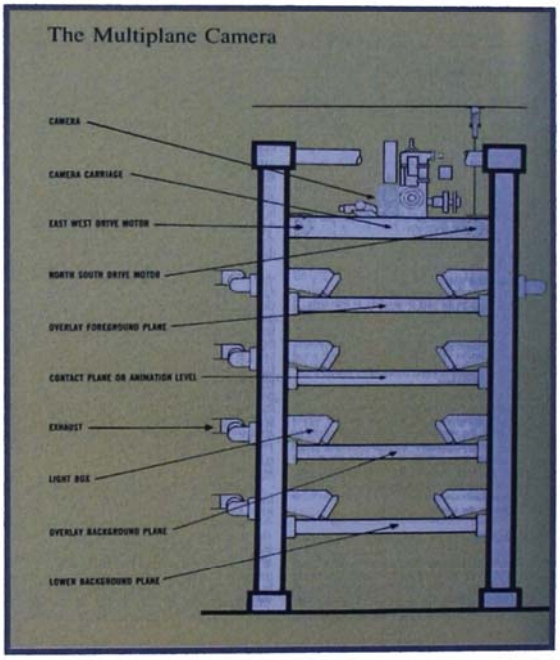
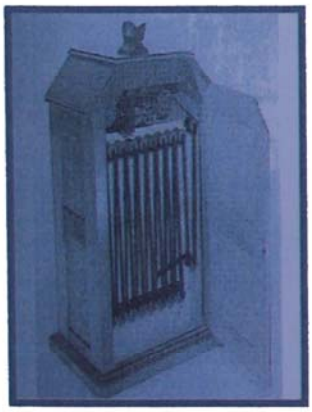


Figure 23: A Scene from *The Old Mill*, which demonstrates the final illusion of depth that the camera creates. This still image is made up of 4 layers of artwork on glass panes.
Source: Thomas and Johnston. *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation.*

Figure 24: T Cross-section of the Multiplane Camera, invented by Walt Disney Studios.
Source: Thomas and Johnston. *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation.*

Chapter 2: Animation and Film in Southern Africa



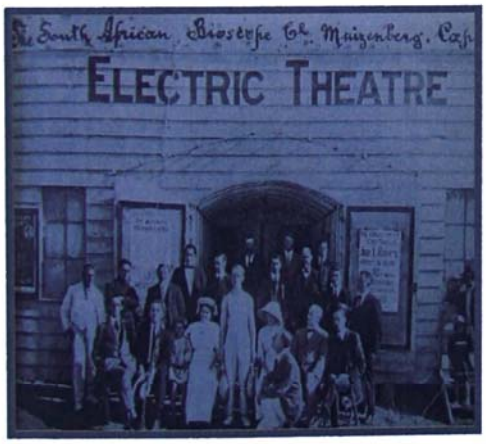




Figure 25: The coin-operated Kinetophone that was essentially a peephole device with film running through a series of rollers.
Source: Thmpson & Bordwell.

Figure 26: The Electric Theatre with patrons posed outside for a photograph (1909) in Durban.
Source: Gutsche. *The History and Social Significance f Motion Pictures.*

Figure 27: Pioneer I.W. Schlesinger.
*Source:*Gutsche. *The History and Social Significance f Motion Pictures*



Figure 28: The first South African animated film "The Artist's Dream" directed by Harold Shaw (1915).
Source: Screen Africa Magazine, Nov 1996.



Figure 29: A still frame from The Crooks and Christmas from Alpha Film Studios 1917.
Source: Screen Africa Magazine, Nov1996.



Figure: 30, 31: From (L-R) *The 'Moving' Adventures of a Camera-man*; *The Adventures of Ben Cockles* both animated shorts from Alpha Film Productions 1917.
Source: Screen Africa Magazine, Nov 1996.



Figure 32(L): James Reindorp with Mr. Oxberry at the unveiling of the Oxberry animation stand in South Africa, which Reindorp designed and engineered.
Source: Screen Africa Magazine, Nov 1996.

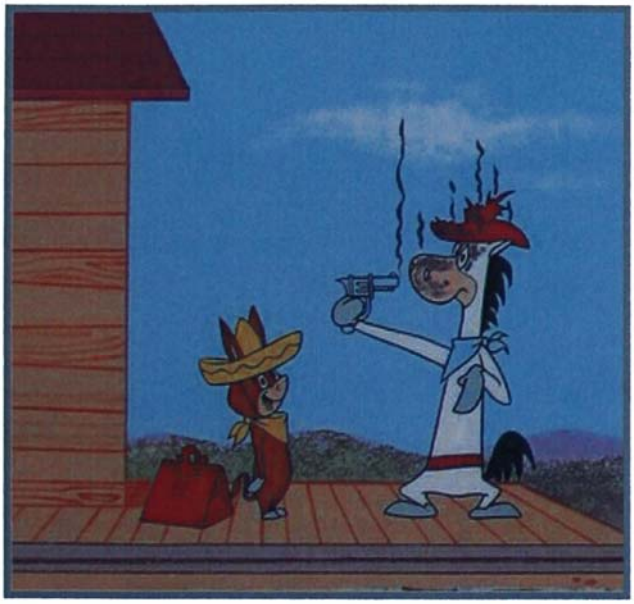


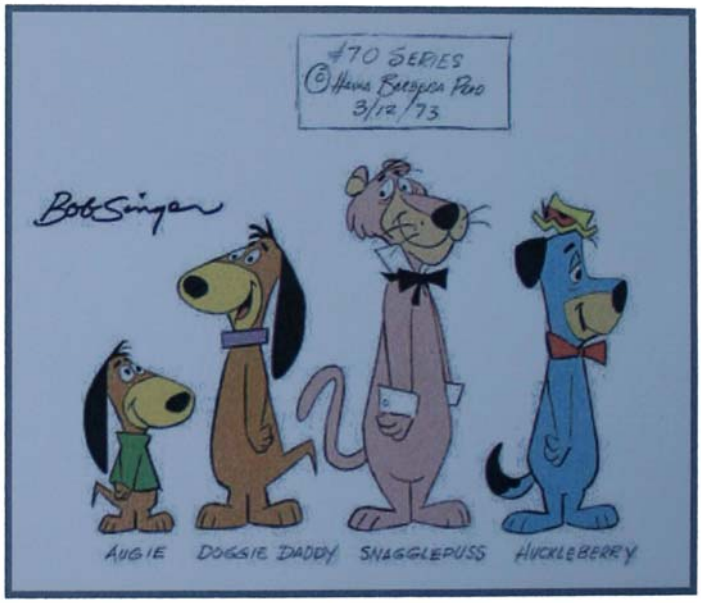
Figure 33, 34, 35 (From L-R): Surviving original stills from Alpha Film Studios' short films and advertisements - titles unknown.
Source: Sarienne Kersh's personal collection of original cels.



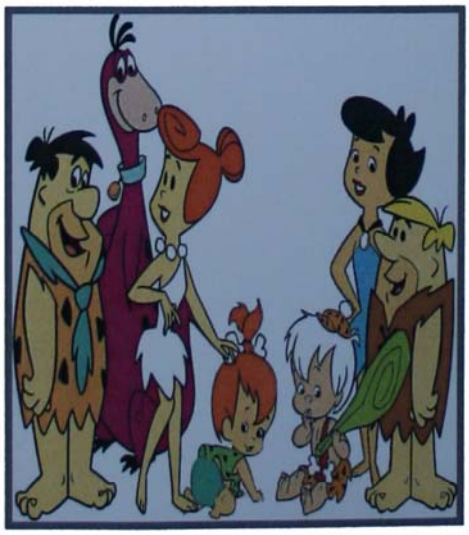


Figure 36, 37 (From L-R): Alpha Film Studios stills continued. An original cel from *The Adventures of Ranger Focus* and an original cel from an advertisement created by the studio, product and title unknown.
Source: Sarienne Kersh's personal collection of cels.









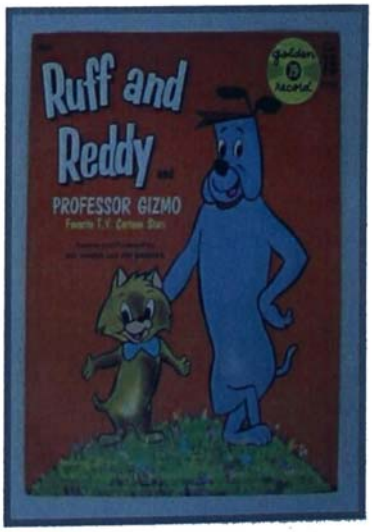


Figure 38- 42: Famous characters created by Hanna Barbera studios from L-R: Quick Draw McGraw, Hanna Barbera character sheet, Scooby Doo, The Flintstones and Ruff and Reddy.
Source: HB Website



Figure 43: An original cel from the Smurfs petrol advertisement created by Annie-Mation Studios during the 1970s.
Source: Glenn Coppens personal collection

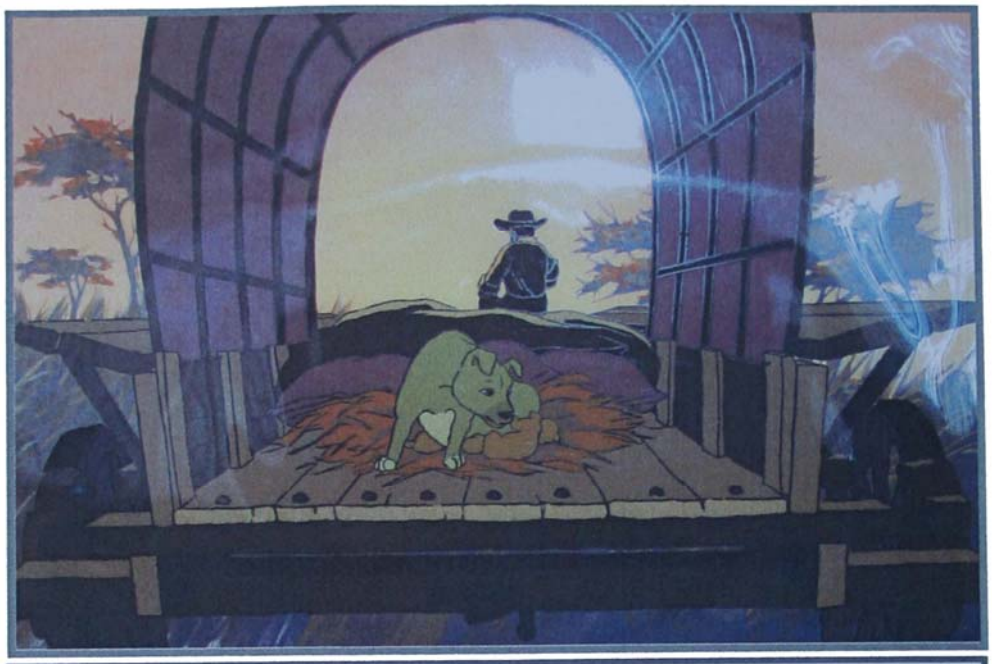
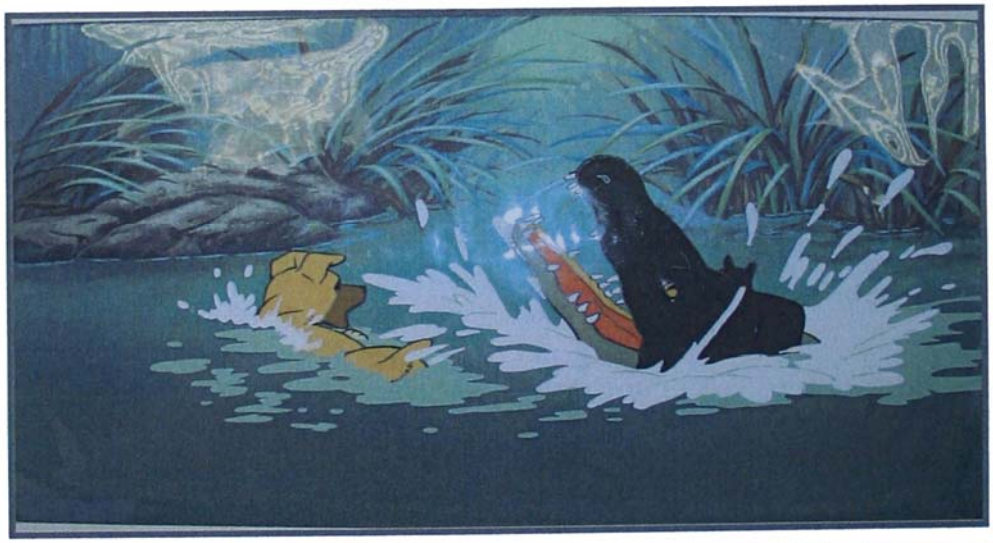


Figure 44, 45 (Above and Below): Jock of the Bushveld original cels.
Source: Glenn Coppens personal collection



Figure 46 (Above) An original cel from the series Thandi.
Source: Glenn Coppens personal collection





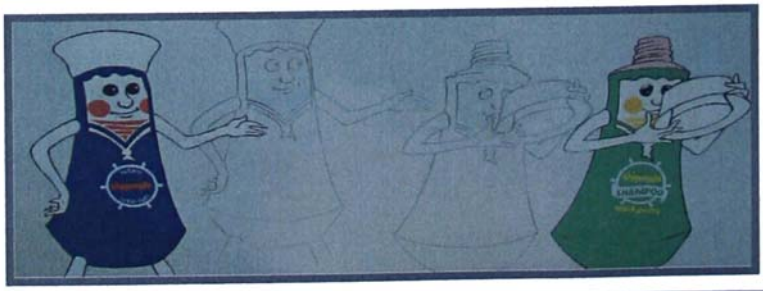
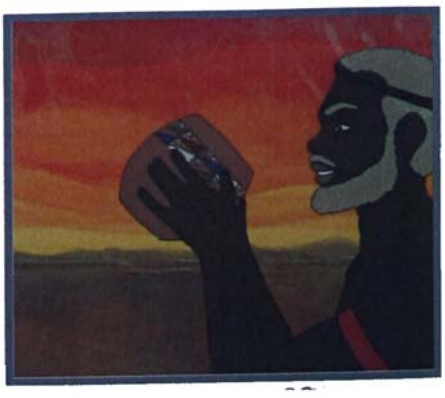


Figure 47,48 (above L-R): Simba Chips lion, Shipmates shampoo advertisements drawn by Glenn Goppens.

Figure 49,50 (L-R): Lillettes tampon advertisrment and an original cel from *Thandi*.
Source: Glenn Coppens personal collection





Chapter 4: The South African Broadcasting Corporation:

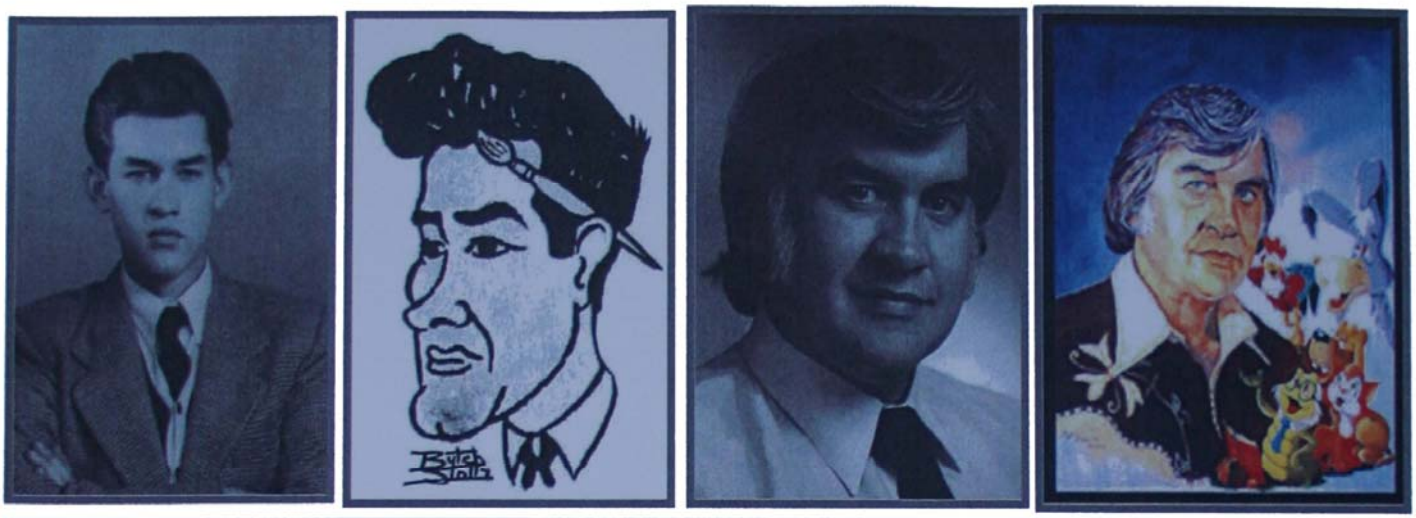


Figure 51-54(L-R): Photograph of Butch Stoltz in 1955, as he was about to embark on his apprenticeships in Europe. Self portrait of Stoltz as a young artist, Butch photographed in 1980 at the SABC, An oil painting of Butch surrounded by the cast of characters that he created.
Source: Butch Stoltz's personal collection



Figure55:
A collection of characters created by Stoltz and Roos on a character sheet.

Figure 56-60:
Original copies of comic strips created by Johann Roos, which were published in local Afrikaans newspapers and magazines.
Source: JC Roos personal collection.

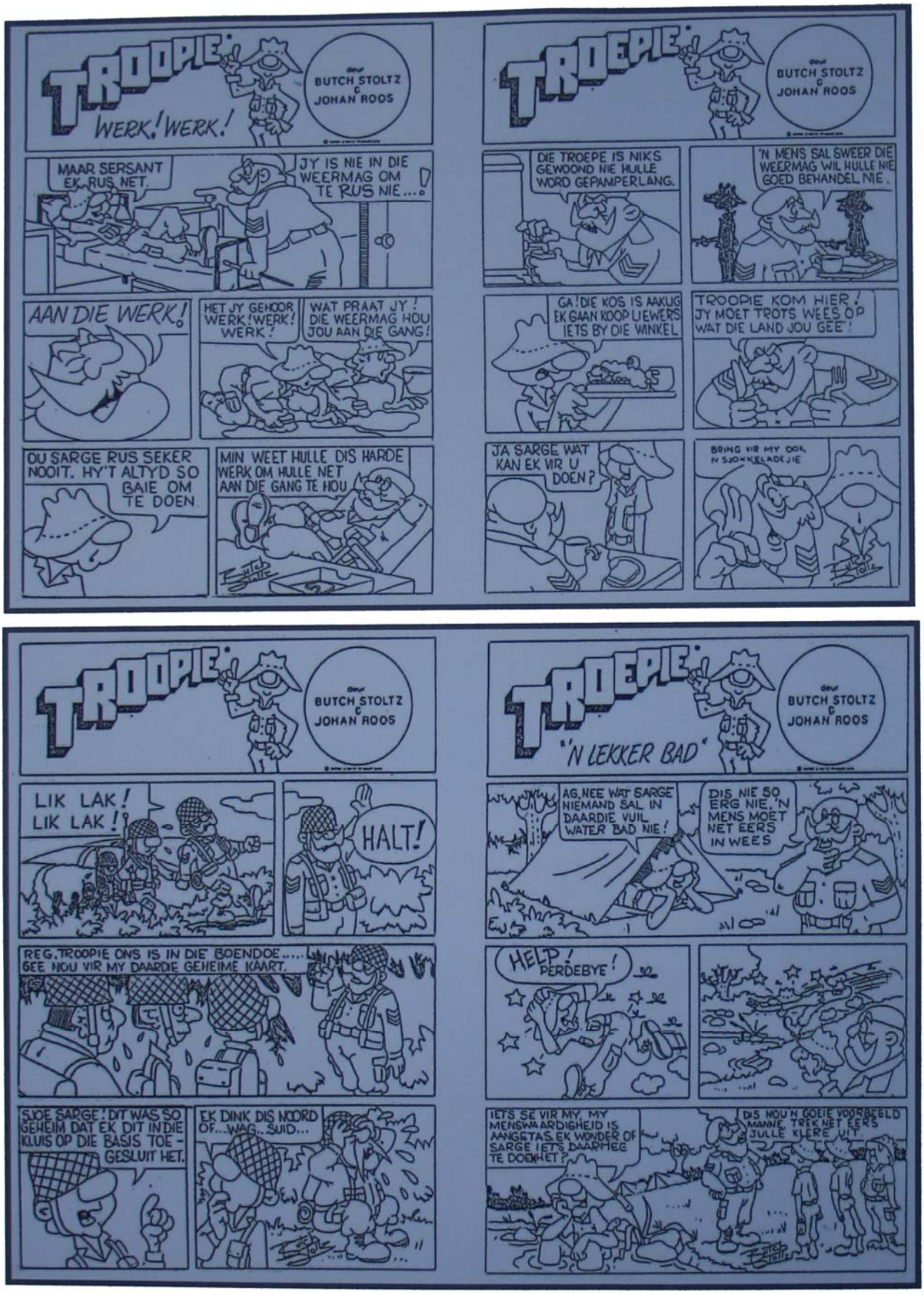


Figure 61, 62: The comic strip Troepie created by Butch Stoltz and Johann Roos for the South African army in an attempt to boost morale and was used extensively as a marketing and merchandising tool.
Source: JC Roos's personal collection



Figure 63-66 (Clockwise from Left): Original cels created for various series by Stoltz and his team at the Animation Unit, background cel of a garden, various original cels, Haas Das se Nuuskas cover art created by Stoltz.
Source: Butch Stoltz's personal collection

Appendix C:

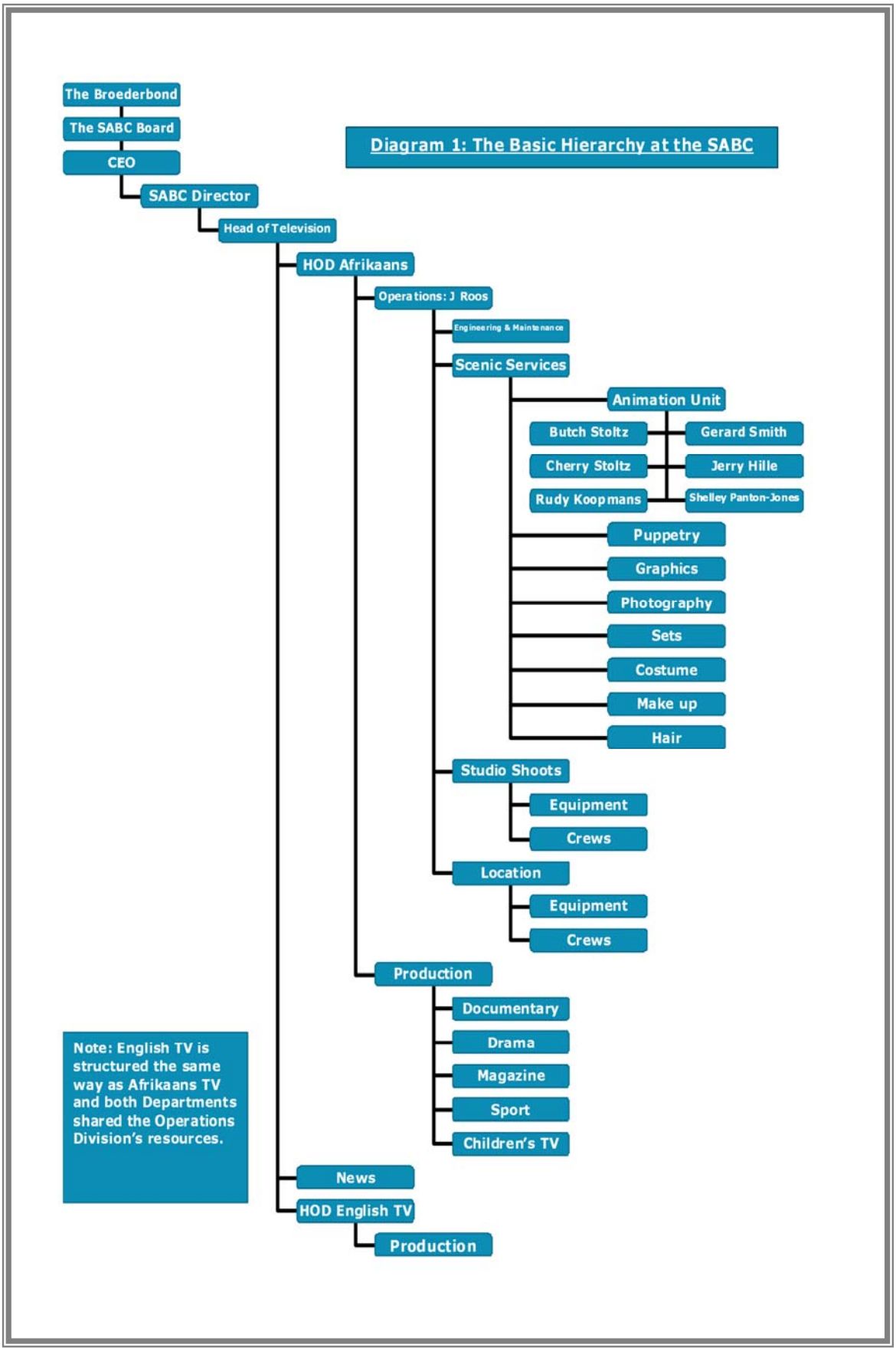
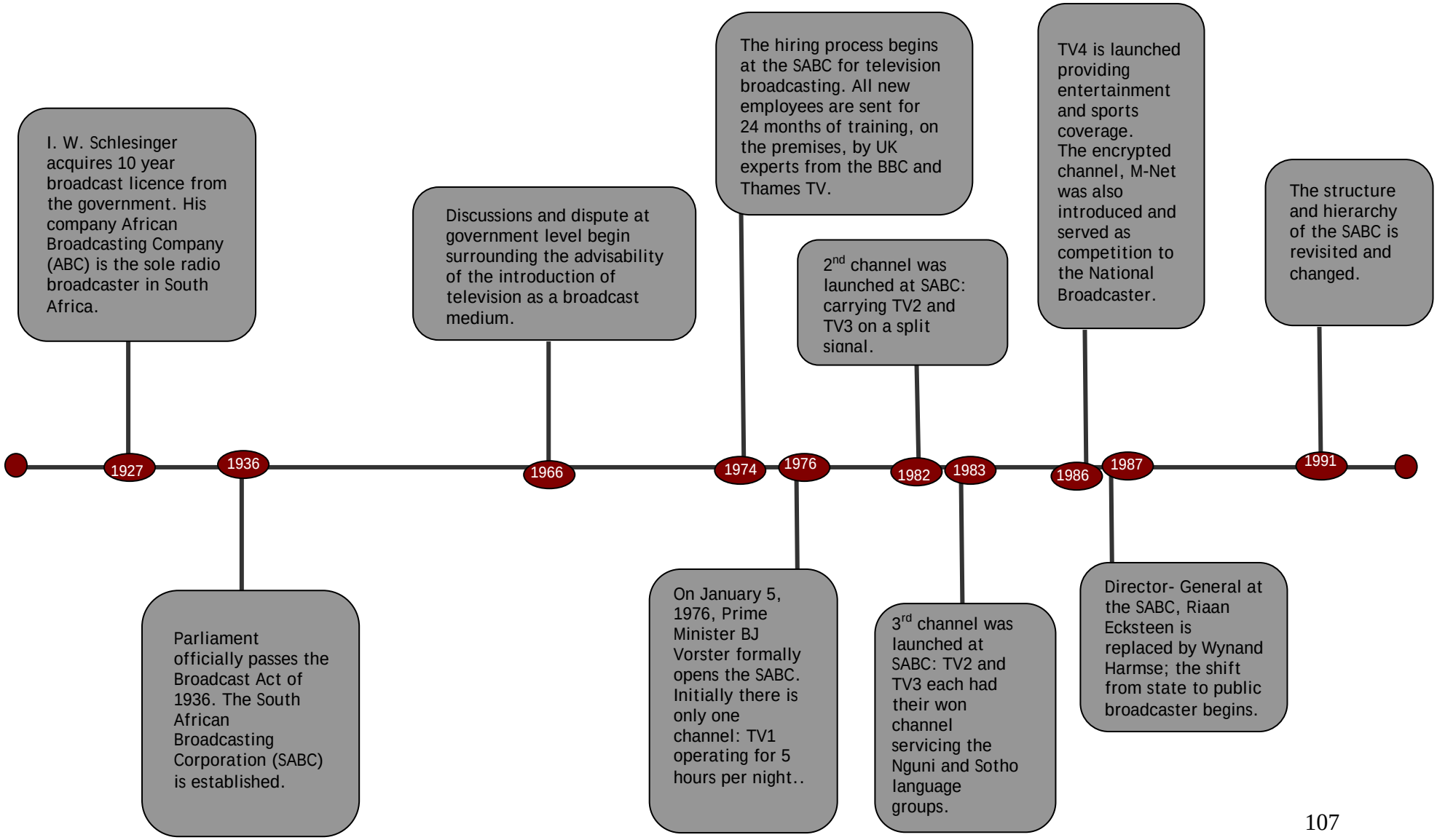


Diagram 1: The Basic Hierarchy at the SABC
The Broederbond
The SABC Board
CEO
SABC Director
Head of Television
HOD Afrikaans
Operations: J Roos
Engineering & Maintenance
Scenic Services
Animation Unit
Butch Stoltz
Gerard Smith
Cherry Stoltz
Jerry Hille
Rudy Koopmans
Shelley Panton-Jones
Puppetry
Graphics
Photography
Sets
Costume
Make up
Hair
Studio Shoots
Equipment
Crews
Location
Equipment
Crews
Production
Documentary
Drama
Magazine
Sport
Children's TV
Note: English TV is structured the same way as Afrikaans TV and both Departments shared the Operations Division's resources.
News
HOD English TV
Production

Diagram 2: Timeline of Institutional History at the SABC.



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