Racial and Gender Stereotypes in Two Animated Films: Disney's "Song of the South" (1946) and Avery's "Red Hot Ridding Hood" (1945)

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Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Magdalena Volarević,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **Racial and Gender Stereotypes in Two Animated Films: Disney's "Song of the South" (1946) and Avery's "Red Hot Riding Hood" (1943)** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

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Zadar, 1. veljače 2024.

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1. Introduction

In the 1940s, animators at Warner Brothers, Walt Disney, MGM, and many other studios produced cartoons filled with racial or gender stereotypes and allusions to alcoholism, cross-dressing, sex, gambling, and suicides. For most modern audiences, many of these cartoons are probably appalling; however, they are exemplars of the pervasiveness and institutionalization of stereotypes and discrimination in American culture (Padgett, "History of Banned, Racist and Censored Cartoons"). According to Bivins, the 1940s marked a turning point in one's perception of animation − what was once considered light, children's entertainment soon became a wartime ideological apparatus and escapist medium ("World War II Propaganda and Training Films").

Drawing on Stuart Hall's representation theory, this thesis examines and critically analyses racial and gender stereotypes in two animated films produced in the 1940s: Disney's "Song of the South" (1946) and Avery's "Red Hot Riding Hood" (1943). Bearing in mind that providing the audience with a quick and easy understanding of an idea, situation, or character has always been crucial to successful cartooning, it may not come as a surprise that stereotypes became the key element in the world of animation. These simple yet powerful preconceived notions, however, utilize the strategy of splitting and serve to maintain the status quo (Hall, "Representation" 58).

"Song of the South" is a hybrid film that blends animation and live action. It stirred up controversy from the very beginning and is one of the best documented films in animation history about the public's anti-racist response (Cohen 59). The film was criticized for its romanticized representation of plantation life and stereotypical portrayals of African American characters, leading to reinforcement and perpetuation of the white supremacy ideology.

"Red Hot Riding Hood" is an animated short that is a retelling of the "Little Red Riding Hood" tale. It brings sexuality to form female characters. "Avery brought the heroine and her wolf from the European forest to the Hollywood nightclub and transformed the fairy tale into a caricature of American courtship" (Orenstein 112). While deliberately subverting the conventional notions of gender roles and marriage, Avery also reinforced the new gender stereotype of the time − a pin-up girl.

The thesis employs a methodology that commences with an introduction to the term "animation", followed by a chapter delving into the definitions and exploration of the connection between ideology and stereotypes. The subsequent chapter offers a brief historical overview of animated film development with an emphasis on films produced in the 1940s. This, along with biographical information and a brief examination of Disney's and Avery's animation styles, aims to enhance comprehension of "Song of the South" and "Red Hot Riding Hood". Following the definition of the narrative and stylistic aspects of the mentioned films, the primary focus of the thesis centres on analysing the characters, specifically their stereotypical representations. The analysis shows how important stereotypes are to the construction of social realities and maintaining social order. However, they are not permanent and change as society's perception of the "Otherness" changes. Finally, the closing chapter of the thesis reiterates the key arguments.

2. What is animation?

2.1. Definition

There are many antithetical opinions among animators as to what the meaning and role of animation are. Their opinions are opposing because most of them focus solely on one of its aspects, whether it is technical, physiological, or philosophical. According to Bordwell and

Thompson, the main characteristic that distinguishes animation from other artistic forms (namely live-action filmmaking) is the specific kind of work done at the production stage. Live-action films usually capture people and objects in real, life-sized, three-dimensional places. The standard recording speed for films is 24 frames per second. However, rather than shooting action in real-time and space, the movement in animation is composed by photographing a sequence of drawings and objects frame by frame (370). Because of this, many dictionaries and animation professionals define animation as "the art of making inanimate objects appear to move" ("Encyclopædia Britannica" *Animation*) or ". . . the creation of moving images through the manipulation of all varieties of techniques apart from live action methods" ("ASIFA Statutes").

Some scholars define animation from a philosophical perspective. Charles Solomon suggests that animation creates an "illusion of life through the illusion of movement" (9) and Paul Wells argues that it "can redefine the everyday, subvert our acceptance of our existence" (11). Just as these animation historians have opposing approaches to animation, so do animators. Disney's animating style blends real-life setting and movements with magical elements, aligning closely with Solomon's understanding of animation. In contrast, animators at Zagreb School of Animation believed that to animate is "to give life and soul to a design, not through the copying but through the transformation of reality" (Holloway 9, qtd. in Wells 10). For them and animators such as Norman McLaren, Vladislav Starevich, and Jiri Trnka, the aim of animation is to push the boundaries of ordinary and mundane. These animators experimented with puppets, stop motion, shapes, and musical elements to create innovative animated films. This dichotomous perception of animation is implicitly explored in chapters that describe Disney's and Avery's animating styles.

2.2. Types of Animation

Bordwell and Thompson distinguish several types of animation, the most famous of which is drawn animation. Even though animators sketched and photographed groups of cartoon images from the beginning of cinema, the significant development of traditional hand-drawn animation occurred in the 1910s when transparent, rectangular sheets of celluloid known as “cels” were introduced. Cels allowed animators to draw characters and objects on different celluloid sheets. Those sheets were layered on top of an opaque painted setting. Animators could also place other cels containing figures and objects in varying positions over the same opaque painted setting. When photographed, it produced an illusion of movement. This method advanced the animation, reduced its production expenses, and proved to be time-saving. The most famous cartoon shorts featuring characters such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Betty Boop, Popeye, and Mickey Mouse were made with cels (371).

Another type of two-dimensional animation is called cut-out animation. It combines flat puppets with movable joints and/or flat paper shapes to make pictures. The animator manipulates the cut-out images, frame by frame, to generate the illusion of movement. Movement can also be produced by altering the solid forms slightly, frame by frame. For example, stop-motion animation is produced by arranging, photographing, repositioning, and then again photographing objects to make a collection of images that create the illusion of movement. According to Bordwell and Thompson, the animation of these three-dimensional objects falls into three categories: clay, model, and pixilation. In clay animation, artists sculpt objects and characters of clay or plasticine, move them very slightly in between exposures, and photograph (371). Aardman Animations, renowned for its use of clay animation, created arguably the most famous clay characters of all time – Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep.

Similarly, puppet animators use various figures attached to bendable wires or joints. The puppets are slightly repositioned and photographed for every frame. When these photographs are sequenced, they create the illusion of movement (371). Wes Anderson's "Isle of Dogs" (2018) and Guillermo del Toro's "Pinocchio" (2022) are examples of successful feature-length puppet films in recent years.

Pixilation is a type of animation in which objects and/or people are filmed in real, three-dimensional spaces. Just as clay or puppet animation, this type of animation utilized the stop-motion filming technique – for the exposure of one frame, the actor remains still; he/she then moves a part of himself/herself a little, then remains still again. When photographed and sequenced, an illusion of movement is created (371-372). The most awarded animated short to date is in fact the one that employs pixilation – Juan Pablo Zaramella's "Luminaris" (2011) that won 324 awards.

Nowadays, the most common animating type is computer animation. This type of animation uses computer graphics to manipulate animated images. The most recent crucially acclaimed and award-winning animated films that utilize CGI animation are Disney's "Toy Story 4" (2019), "Soul" (2020), and "Encanto" (2021).

3. Ideology and stereotypes

Until the 1980s, iconography and the ideological influence of animated films were "largely overlooked because of the cultural understanding that these films are just for children, somehow existing outside of ideology and ideological influence in a realm entirely constructed by fantasy and innocence" (Mastrostefano 6). Mythic understanding of animation as entertainment solely for children was established in the 1950s and 1960s with the emergence of TV. Before this, animated shorts and films were created for the general public, and this is why it was so easy to transform them into an instrument for the dominant ideology of the time.

Ideology is one of the key terms when addressing issues such as representation practices and stereotyping. To understand and place into perspective films, which are analysed in the following chapters, this term must first be defined.

The term "ideology" was introduced by French philosopher Destutt de Tracy in 1796. He wanted to develop a "science of ideas" − a branch of zoology that would tie together political, economic, and social issues. Soon, however, the term was given a negative connotation. Since de Tracy opposed monarchism and unreservedly supported republicanism, one of his opponents was Napoleon, who wanted to discredit him and his work. "In Napoleon's use, ideology became a dismissive epithet for proponents of abstract theories not based in or appropriate to human and political realities" (Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity 5). Over the years, however, the term has been used to explain various practices, states, and relationships, leading to no "single adequate definition of ideology" (Eagleton 1). To illustrate the variety of meanings the term may signify, scholar Terry Eagleton created a comprehensive list of sixteen definitions that are in current circulation. Some of them are listed below:

- "the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life";
- "a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class";
- "ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power";
- "false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power";
- "that which offers a position for a subject":
- "forms of thoughts motivated by social interests";
- "identity thinking";
- "action-oriented set of beliefs" (1-2).

These definitions show just how necessary and influential ideologies are in our social realities, in understanding the world around us, and in positioning ourselves within it. Stuart Hall argues that "ideologies do not consist of isolated and separate concepts, but in the

articulation of different elements into a distinctive set or chain of meanings" (Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes" 81). When these beliefs, ideas, and practices are shared by the majority of the people in a particular society, the ideology becomes dominant. These beliefs regard questions such as economy, race, gender, etc. They are continually and repeatedly presented in our day-to-day lives, thus becoming "natural", "common sense", and "normal". They materialize through language and social practices that are operated by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as schools, churches, media, sports, literature, political systems and parties, etc. ISAs serve to disseminate a country's doctrine, interpellate individuals affected by it, and maintain the existing social order (Hall, "Representation" 42).

To organize the vast amount of information we receive through our senses, we group pieces of information in a purposeful way based on their shared traits and our past experiences. Stereotyping functions similarly – it is a cognitive process rooted in the need to categorize and simplify the world, which "allow[s] easier and more efficient processing of information" (Hilton and Hippel 240). However, stereotypes exhibit selectivity by focusing on the most distinctive group characteristics, offering the greatest differentiation between groups, and displaying minimal variation within the groups themselves (Hilton and Hippel 240). Moreover, they "reduce people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature" (Hall, "Representation" 258).

As stereotypes are taught and shared among groups of people, they can also be perceived as social constructs. The relationship between ideology and stereotypes can be seen in how an ideology reinforces or perpetuates stereotypes. Stereotypes are often used as a tool for validating and legitimizing prevailing social and power dynamics within a society (Hall, "Representation" 258). Hall argues that "stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power" ("Representation" 258). The dominant group uses its power to direct it against the subordinate or excluded group(s). This exclusion is achieved through the means of

ISAs, which serve to reduce, naturalize, and continually repeat differences to symbolically fix the boundaries between the dominant group and the excluded one(s) and, more importantly, to maintain the social order and legitimize dominant ideology. Stereotypes also utilize a strategy of splitting in a way that differentiates "normal" and "acceptable" ideas, beliefs, and behaviours from "abnormal" and "unacceptable" ones, thus symbolically fixing the boundaries and excluding everyone different ("us" versus "them") ("Representation" 258). Instances of employing this strategy are apparent in the utilization of criminal stereotypes associated with African Americans[1] or the portrayal of gender roles in leadership positions.[2] Both stereotypes serve an ideological purpose by legitimizing discriminatory actions, marginalizing certain groups and thus maintaining existing power relations. The following chapter provides historical and societal context for racial and gender representations in the 1940s.

4. Animated Film History Overview

Since historians often trace animation back to cave paintings,[3] Paul Wells argues that "animation, in one form or another, has almost always been with us" (11). Animation history, indeed, began before the creation of cinematic apparatuses and the invention of motion pictures. Wells provides an example from Lucretius's "De Rerum Natura" (70 BC), a didactic poem that describes a mechanism that creates the illusion of movement once hand-drawn images are projected onto a screen. The Renaissance introduced flipbooks – small picture books that, when flicked, usually showed the performance of sexual acts. The emergence of the first cinematic apparatus took place in the 19th century with the development of motion devices such as the phenakistoscope, zoetrope, kinematoscope, and praxinoscope. However, these devices were often used solely for entertainment, which resulted in animation being artistically and technologically fully utilized and widespread only after the birth of cinema (Wells 11-12; Pikkov 17).

Identifying the first animator is challenging, given that multiple enthusiasts conducted experiments in this field (Pikkov 17). French director Georges Méliès was an enthusiast who discovered that time and space can be manipulated, which led to the creation of stop-motion animation. He also introduced important cinematographic techniques such as double exposure, dissolve, fade-in, and fade-out. American producer James Stuart Blackton used Méliès's stop-motion technique and produced "The Enchanted Drawing" (1900), a silent film that became the forerunner of animated films. Other notable pioneers are French animator Émile Cohl and American newspaper cartoonist Winsor McCay. Even though Winsor McCay's "Little Nemo" (1911) is sometimes referred to as the first animated short, most film historians agree that Cohl's "Fantasmagorie" (1908) is the first fully animated short film.[4] However, McCay is credited with creating the first American cartoon star – "Gertie the Dinosaur" (1914) (Solomon 14-17).

A few years after Gertie was introduced, Max Fleischer, an American animator, film director, and inventor, patented the rotoscope – a device that allowed animators to achieve more realistic movements. Fleischer's ingenuity and entrepreneurship resulted in the production of the first cartoon that used a soundtrack − "My Old Kentucky Home" (1926). However, since the sound was not completely synchronized with the film, Walt Disney's "Steamboat Willie" (1928) is considered to be the first animated short film with synchronized sound. Disney also produced the first cartoon in three-strip Technicolor – "Flowers and Trees" (1932), and the first cartoon to use the multiplane camera – "The Old Mill" (1937). He also produced the first feature-length animated film in the drawn animation technique, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937) (Solomon 30-49). The 1980s brought computer use into the field of film production. Disney's "TRON" (1982) was the first feature film to use computer animation; however, it incorporated only 15 minutes of partially computer-manipulated images for a total of 96 minutes of running time. The first animated feature created completely via computer was Pixar's "Toy Story" (Bordwell and Thompson 372-373).

4.1. Racial and Gender Representations in the 1940s

The 1940s marked a turning point in how animation was perceived. As the decade was overshadowed by the horrors of World War II and its consequences, animation stopped being regarded as entertainment primarily for children. During the first half of the decade, it became an integral part of the communication ideological state apparatus that served to promote dominant ideology by producing feature-length films and animated shorts filled with anti-German and anti-Japanese overtones. The aim was to re-establish the ideological belief of American superiority and boost public morale, which resulted in the creation of many propaganda animated shorts such as Tex Avery's "Blitz Wolf" (1942), Disney's "Der Fuehrer's Face" (1943), "Education for Death - The Making of the Nazi" (1943), Warner Bros.'s "Spies" (1943), "Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips" (1944) and "Daffy's Draftee" (1944) (Lenburg 5-6). However, the cultural icons of the United States were not animalistic characters but women, namely Rosie the Riveter and pin-ups.

Rosie was a fictional character designed by the U.S. government to persuade women to support the war and replace their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons by working in factories, offices, and military bases. During this period, women abandoned their traditional roles of stay-at-home moms, whose primary job was to take care of their children and homes. Unfortunately, very few animated films represented this change due to the film industry's overemphasis on patriotism and patriarchal virtues. Moreover, women were often portrayed as wanting to reassume their traditional roles after the war ended. According to Hartmann, women's working motivation was never represented as intrinsic but rather as getting their husbands back home as soon as possible and creating a better world for their children (23).

In addition to Rosie, another representation of a woman emerged – the pin-up girl. She was carefully designed by the U.S. government to boost soldiers' morale. Despite being

represented as provocative and flirtatious, she was a faithful sweetheart waiting for soldiers to come back home. If not for the country, she was the girl worth fighting for. The most popular pin-up girls of the time were Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth, and Jane Russell, whose sex appeal made them very popular with soldiers overseas (Frank, "The History of the Pin-Up Girl").

Pin-ups often made appearances in Tex Avery's work. MGM's anti-German propaganda animated short, "Blitz Wolf" (1942), directed by Avery, centres around the significance of the pin-up girl for the war effort. This animated short is also a parody of Disney's "Three Little Pigs" (1933). Big Bad Wolf is represented as Adolf Wolf, who plans to invade the state of "Pigmania" and the three little pigs' houses. During the battle, Wolf tries to destroy Sergeant Pork's house and fires an artillery shell against it. However, Sergeant Pork quickly reaches down for the Esquire magazine, opens it, and shows the centrefold image of a pin-up girl to the shell. The shell stops its trajectory and starts wolf-whistling. It goes back and returns with other shells, which, after seeing the image, drop down and become deactivated. Avery's cartoon shows that besides being an image for domestic consumption by military personnel, pin-up imagery and sexual connotations were transformed into military energy or patriotic arousal (Kakoudaki 339-340). In other words, her sex appeal was represented as a threat to the enemy and thus exploited as an advantage against them. Tex Avery excessively used the pin-up girl for this role. His Red represents an object of sexual desire, appealing not only to soldiers but to every man.

Just a decade earlier, African American actors portrayed subordinate roles of buffoons, simpletons, and faithful servants. According to film historian Donald Bogle, such stereotypes were used to emphasize African American inferiority and to amuse white audiences (4-5). However, during WWII, the U.S. government started promoting positive, non-stereotypical representations of African Americans as a part of war campaigns (Sperb 67).[5] At the same time, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was meeting with executives

from several big Hollywood studios. Their meetings resulted in an agreement that harmful, stereotypical representations of African Americans should be abandoned (*Thompson and Carew*, "From Blackface to Blaxploitation"). However, this does not imply that racist and/or stereotypical portrayals were actually abandoned. Films such as Disney's "Fantasia" (1940), "Dumbo" (1941), and "Song of the South" (1946) or Warner Bros.'s "All This and Rabbit Stew" (1941), "Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs" (1943), "Tin Pan Alley Cats" (1943), "Goldilocks and the Jivin' Bears" (1944), "Angel Puss" (1944) are filled with racial stereotypes.

Before the analysis of racial and gender representations and stereotypes in Disney's "Song of the South" and Avery's "Red Hot Riding Hood", the following chapter will briefly present Disney's and Avery's biographies with an emphasis on their films produced during the 1940s.

5. Animation geniuses: Walt Disney and Tex Avery

Walter Elias Disney (December 5, 1901 – December 15, 1966) was a famous American animator and filmmaker known for his contributions to and influence on the animation and entertainment industry in the 20th century. He was born in Chicago, Illinois, and spent his childhood near Marceline and in Kansas City, Missouri. He attended McKinley High School and the Chicago Institute of Art. After WWI ended, he started working at the Pesmen-Rubin Commercial Art Studio. It was at this studio that he met Ub Iwerks, who would eventually become his business partner. The two started a company and produced a series of animated shorts for the Newman theatres called "Newman's Laugh-O-Grams". Unfortunately, they went bankrupt, so Disney moved to Los Angeles and, in partnership with his brother Roy, started Disney Bros. Studio. His breakthrough success came with the creation of Mickey Mouse, whose screen debut was in the "Plane Crazy" (1928). In 1929, he created the cartoon series "Silly Symphonies" and one of the cartoon shorts from that series, "Flowers and Trees" (1932), was

the first cartoon to be produced in the three-color Technicolor technique. Moreover, it was the first cartoon to win an Oscar. Disney received another Oscar that same year for the creation of Mickey Mouse ("Walt Disney Biography").

Scholar Jill Nelmes argues that, insisting on "verisimilitude in his characters, contexts, and narratives, [Disney] wanted animated figures to move like real figures and to be informed by plausible motivation" (235). To achieve this, Disney invested in staff and modern machines. His animators undertook various fine art training courses to improve their skills and techniques and to achieve more realistic impressions. To pre-visualize the final product, his studio had a separate story department with specialized storyboard artists who would create a series of comic-strip-like sketches of the shots in each scene with descriptions written below each sketch (Bordwell and Thompson 17). This tool, known as the storyboard, was first created for the "Three Little Pigs" (1933). The advancement of the multiplane camera, first employed in "The Old Mill" (1937), further heightened the level of realism. However, it reached its most compelling application in his first full-length animated feature, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937) (Wells 23).

The success of "Snow White" marked the beginning of Disney's golden era. It continued with "Pinocchio" (1940), "Fantasia" (1940), "Dumbo" (1941) and "Bambi" (1942). The 1941 animators' strike presented a chance for a group of Disney animators to break away. Their aim was to take a bold departure from the realistic style and conventions synonymous with Disney animation, so in 1943 they founded United Productions of America (Wells 100).

The post-war years catalysed and marked a new era in Disney's history – the wartime era. The closure of foreign markets cut off an important source of Disney's income, resulting in financial straits. Despite the re-releases of "Snow White" and "Pinocchio", the studio had to lay off almost half of its total workforce in 1946. To make up for the lost revenue, the production

shifted towards live-action filmmaking, TV production, and amusement parks (Solomon 125). In this period, Disney released one of its most controversial films ever – "Song of the South".

Although some animation historians argue that Disney wanted to create something new and different,[6] it could be argued that his interest in live-action filmmaking was largely based on the desire to keep down production costs. The logic behind it is simple: integrating live-action elements allows animators to create fewer images, resulting in cost reduction and quicker production time. Instead of time-consuming and expensive full-length animated features, Disney used a hybrid formula that resulted in feature films such as "The Reluctant Dragon" (1941), "The Three Caballeros" (1945), "Song of the South" (1946), "Fun and Fancy Free" (1947), "Melody Time" (1948), and "So Dear to My Heart" (1949) (Telotte 142-143).

During his lifetime, Disney won 22 Academy Awards from a total of 59 nominations, 7 Emmy Awards, and received 4 honorary Academy Awards. This remarkable achievement positions him as the most award-winning individual in history ("Academy Awards Database"). Because of this, Disney was praised as the person who "put animation on the map" (Wells 3). Moreover, it led to animation being understood as synonymous with Disney.

There is no question as to whether Disney was a true genius who perfected a specific animation language. Wells identifies fundamental codes and conventions within his animation language, and these include:

- "the design, context and action within the . . . animated film approximates with and corresponds to the design, context, and action within the live-action film's representation of reality";
- "the characters, objects, and environments within the . . . animated film are subject to the conventional physical laws of the "real" world";

- “the construction, movement, and behavioural tendencies of “the body” in the . . . animated film will correspond to the orthodox physical aspects of human beings and creatures in the “real” world” (25-26).

It could be argued that Disney’s prevailing influence overshadowed alternative animation styles that could have expanded the potential of animation and possibly fostered its further development. Some animators, such as Roger Cardinal, argue that “the whole ideal of the animated film is to suppress the categories of normal perception; indeed its logic might even be to suppress all the differential categories, and annihilate the very conditions of rationality” (89 qtd. in Wells 26). This Cardinal’s notion was the guiding principle of another genius – Tex Avery.

Frederick Bean “Tex” Avery (February 26, 1908 – August 26, 1980) was an American animator who did his most famous work for the Warner Bros. and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. He is the creator of many beloved characters, such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Droopy, and Screwy Squirrel. Avery was born and raised in Taylor, Texas. The phrase “What’s up, doc?” was often used by his friends at North Dallas High School. Later, he would use it in Bugs Bunny cartoons. In the early 1930s, he started working at the Walter Lantz studio on Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. While engaging in some office mischief at the studio, a push pin flew into his left eye, making him blind in that eye. By mid-1935, he had moved from Lantz studio to Warner Bros., where he became a full-time cartoon director (“Tex Avery Biography”).

Right from the start, Avery transformed Warner Bros.’s cartoons and the field of cartoon shorts with his inventive directing style. With the support of Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, and Frank Tashlin, he developed the style of animation that is still associated with Warner Bros. animated short films. One of the studio’s challenges at this time was finding ways to match Disney’s success. According to Morris, Avery steered Warner Bros.’s animation style away from a sentimental and magical style reminiscent of Disney, creating films that appealed to both

adults and children (Morris, “A Quickie”). These films, blending exaggerated timing and hectic madcap humour, made his animation style more distinguished. Some of Avery’s most famous animated short films from the Warner Bros. era are “Gold Diggers of '49” (1935), “Porky the Rain Maker” (1936), “Little Red Walking Hood” (1937), “Daffy Duck in Hollywood” (1938), “Cinderella Meets Fella” (1938), “Dangerous Dan McFoo” (1939), “A Wild Hare” (1940), and “All This and Rabbit Stew” (1941). After creating some of the most famous animated characters of all time, he moved to MGM Studios in 1941. Only one year later, his anti-German propagandist short “Blitz Wolf” (1942) got Oscar nomination for Best Short Subject.

While at MGM, he accelerated the pace of his animated shorts even more and co-created new characters such as Adolf Wolf, Screwy Squirrel, Red, and Droopy. Promoting the idea that an artist can do virtually anything in a cartoon, he made a sex object out of Little Red Riding Hood, mocked travelogues and documentaries, and parodied famous Hollywood celebrities, Westerns, modern society, and inventions. Even Disney’s most favourite and successful market, the classic fairy tale, was appropriated by Avery. Fairy tales were a significant source of inspiration for Disney. His animated films offered viewers landscapes filled with adventures and themes about true love, friendship, and courage. Avery, on the other hand, deconstructed them. By creating chaos instead of order, his cartoons represent an attack on Disney’s pathos. His lightning-fast-paced, over-the-top style of animation, layered with puns and visual gags, defies all logic. Even his characters go beyond the usual fall − they are splattered and squished; they literally fall apart; their eyes pop out of the sockets, jaws, and tongues spring to the floor (Lenburg 4). The following chapters will introduce these characters and their representations more closely: first in Disney’s “Song of the South”, followed by Avery’s “Red Hot Riding Hood”.

6. “Song of the South”

“Song of the South” is Disney’s hybrid film from 1946. It is based on two of Joel Chandler Harris’s novels, “Uncle Remus and His Friends” (1892) and “Told by Uncle Remus: New Stories of the Old Plantation” (1905) (Korkis 22). Harris was a 19th-century Georgian reporter and writer. He was best known for his tales of Uncle Remus – a collection of fables, songs, and African folktales. In these stories, Remus is a kind, old, former slave who passes on the folktales and teaches children important lessons about life. Most of the stories are so-called trickster tales. Trickster tales are narratives that often feature an anthropomorphic animal protagonist who needs to rely upon his smarts, charm, speed, and slyness to avoid being ensnared (Encyclopædia Britannica, “Trickster tale”). Harris’s (and Disney’s) trickster figure is called Br’er Rabbit. Even though he is seemingly small and weak, he succeeds in overcoming his foes and thus serves as a metaphor for the enslaved Africans. It is arguable as to what extent Harris understood these tales and their meanings (Harris, “Freedom’s Story”); nevertheless, the readers admired and praised the authenticity of his work, which made him famous overnight (Bickley, “Joel Chandler Harris”).

One of Disney’s favourite childhood memories was reading the Uncle Remus tales, and adapting them into a film was a lifelong wish realization: “Ever since I had anything to do with the making of motion pictures, I have wanted to bring [Uncle Remus tales] to the screen. They have been in my mind from early childhood” (Snead 81, qtd. in Inge 219). In 1939, he acquired the rights to the Uncle Remus stories from the Harris family for $10,000 (Korkis 12). The same year, “Gone with the Wind” had its premiere in Atlanta. Opening with a choir singing a nostalgic southern song, followed by a shot of the Confederate flag flying over Atlanta, this box-hit classic portrayed the romanticized Old South. Disney assumed that this was exactly what the post-war audience wanted to see after the horrors of WWII: a safe, idyllic place where

benevolent and happy slaves and their former masters live harmoniously (Kilgore-Caradec 139-140).

Originally, the film's working title was "Uncle Remus". According to Disney historian Jim Korkis, it was Perce Pearce, the associate producer, who suggested changing the working title to "Song of the South" because it was believed that the new title would have better box office appeal (12-18). However, this new title was not Disney Studios' invention − it was a colloquial phrase that had been used for decades before the film was produced. There is even a racist song called "Song of the South" from 1924 that implicates all black stereotypes of the time (Korkis 86). Considering the foregoing, one might wonder why this decision was made. Korkis asserts that Disney "probably wanted to evade building negative connotation of the Uncle Remus title" (18). However, this assertion suggests the following contradiction – in an effort to distance themselves from associations with racism, Disney Studios decided to change the film's working title to one already connected to racial stereotypes through a song of the same title.

Disney was boldly venturing into the new and unfamiliar territory of full-length live-action features. Willingly or not, he was also venturing into a dangerous racist tumble at the same time the U.S. government was taking preliminary steps to end segregation and racial discrimination (Inge 219). He first hired a young Southern novelist, Dalton S. Reymond, as a script writer. Reymond produced racist and stereotypical content, so Disney hired Maurice Rapf as a co-author to make the script less stereotypical. However, the two quarrelled, resulting in Rapf abandoning the project. Morton Grant, the next co-author, finished the script with Reymond. The cartoon director was Wilfred Jackson, while the live-action director was Harve Foster. Johnny Lee voiced Br'er Rabbit, James Baskett – Br'er Fox, and Nicodemus Stewart – Br'er Bear (Willis, "Technical Information"). Besides voicing Br'er Fox, James Baskett also played Uncle Remus. In 1948, he was awarded a Special Academy Award "for his able and

heart-warming characterization of Uncle Remus, friend and storyteller to the children of the world in Walt Disney's "Song of the South" (Cohen 61). The same year, "Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah", a song written by Ray Gilbert (lyrics) and Allie Wrubel (music), won the award for "Best Song".

6.1. Plot Overview and Critical Response

"Song of the South" is a story about friendship. A wealthy white woman named Sally (Ruth Warrick) decides to spend some time with her son Johnny (Bobby Driscoll) on a Georgia plantation owned by her mother (Lucile Watson). Shortly afterward, Johnny becomes friends with Uncle Remus (James Baskett), an African American who teaches children fables about life and introduces animated characters such as Br'er Fox, Br'er Bear, and Br'er Rabbit. However, Johnny's mother shows no understanding for her child's friend and his fables. She forbids Uncle Remus to tell any stories. This turn of events makes Uncle Remus sad, and he decides to leave the plantation. Johnny tries to stop him, and while doing so, he gets attacked and injured by a bull. Luckily, Uncle Remus changes his mind and returns to the plantation. Upon visiting Johnny, who is unconscious, he starts telling the story about Br'er Rabbit. The story makes Johnny wake up, and he miraculously survives. The film ends with Uncle Remus, Johnny, and Johnny's friend Ginny (Luana Patten) meeting the characters from Uncle Remus's fables, singing, and skipping away into the sunset.

From its very beginning, "Disney was almost universally praised; he was loved by the public, popular journalists and critics, and even academics and "serious artists"" (White 4, qtd. in Telotte 140). However, the critical climate had changed by the 1940s. Even though its animated sequences received high praise, "Song of the South" generated mixed reviews. For example, Ebony magazine stated that the film promotes "strictly lily-white propaganda" and saw the character of Uncle Remus "as the model of how Negroes should behave in white

company" (Cohen 60). Time magazine praised "the blending of two mediums as pure Disney wizardry. Ideologically, [they stated] the picture is certain to land its maker in hot water" (Korkis 62). The New York Times noted that "the ratio of "live" to cartoon action is approximately two to one, and that is approximately the ratio of its mediocrity to charm" (Korkis 62), while PM Magazine defended it, stating that "[Disney] was not trying to put across any message but was making a sincere effort to depict American folklore, to put Uncle Remus stories into pictures" (Korkis 62).

At the film's premiere in New York, dozens of people protested and shouted "We fought for Uncle Sam, not Uncle Tom!" and "We want films on democracy, not slavery" (Korkis 57). The controversy surrounding the release of "Song of the South" can be attributed to the socio-cultural climate in the USA at the time (Smoodin 104). Before the film's release, the U.S. government had made an effort to promote positive, non-stereotypical images of African Americans. It is also possible to assume that the audience did not want to see any "subservient representations [that] undermine . . . morale or echo the white supremacist rhetoric of Nazis" they fought against (Sperb 41).

The National Negro Congress believed the film to be "an insult to the Negro people because it uses offensive dialect; it portrays the Negro as a low, inferior servant; [and] it glorifies slavery" (Korkis 57) so local branches of the NAACP suggested a boycott. Disney, on the other hand, saw the film as a "monument to the [Negro] race", arguing that it takes place after the Civil War and, hence, does not glorify slavery (Korkis 58). However, due to the story's unclear depiction of the time period, it is reasonable to question this statement. The film was reissued in 1956, 1972, 1980, and 1986. The controversy surrounding "Song of the South" deterred further releases in the USA. Nevertheless, the film has been made available in various formats outside the U.S., including Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Argentina, and Brazil (Korkis 65).

6.2. “Song of the South” Is (Not) A Racist Film

Through the years, “Song of the South” has been “read” on various levels. Providing a singular “reading” of the film is challenging, especially when affective components of enduring themes, lyrical scores, and idyllic relationships intersect with a more critical approach and questions regarding the film’s representations (Sperb 9).

The film opens in a nostalgic “carry-me-back” Southern style − a choir sings a song about plantations, cotton, and moonlight, followed by an ambiguous establishing shot. Generally speaking, an establishing shot sets up the context for a scene by establishing time, place, and relevant characters. In “Song of the South”, one first sees an empty rocking chair and feels uncertain regarding its authenticity – is the rocking chair drawn or is it a prop? Is the presented film an animated film or live action? As the story unfolds, the following scenes introduce us to the locale – a big, white plantation house. African Americans live in shabby cabins nearby. Considering that life on the plantation is portrayed as harmonious and idyllic, it prompts questions about the timeframe in which the story unfolds.

Several implications suggest that “Song of the South” is set in an antebellum world. First, the rural plantation is intact – there are no signs of the war ravages in its surroundings, and its owners wear beautiful, immaculate clothing. Second, the shabby cabins, where African Americans are shown gathering around a communal fire, highly resemble slave quarters. If trouble occurs in the mansion, black characters immediately gather around the front porch and sing spirituals. These benign people are portrayed as carefree and happy; they even sing songs on their way to and from the fields. Finally, the act of assigning a black child named Toby to look after Johnny resembles an old antebellum custom where white masters assigned a black slave child as a lifelong servant to a white male child (Inge 224-225).

At the same time, this rural plantation is isolated from the conflicted realities of the reconstruction era. There is no depiction of racism, hatred, hostility, or existential problems. When Mrs. Sally forbids Uncle Remus to tell any stories, he decides to leave the plantation. His departure may give the impression that he is indeed a free man. Despite this act, he is submissive, faithful, and serves only to please his (former) masters. His whole identity is intertwined with his storytelling, and his only job is to entertain white children. Once this has been taken away from him, he loses his purpose and leaves the plantation. Luckily, he changes his mind and comes back to reclaim his position at the plantation. After this, everything falls into place; the "natural order" is re-established, and everyone is happy.

According to Korkis and Sperb, Walt treated the film as just another fantasy with no relation to the real world (Korkis 60; Sperb 55). This may imply the following: as "Song of the South" is simply another fantasy, there may be no necessity for it to depict precise historical information. This implication is precisely what undermines any critical approach when addressing the film. If one considers a film to be "just fiction" or "just fantasy", he/she may be more inclined to embrace the character portrayals, plot, and underlying ideas presented in the film without questioning them. Korkis continues by asserting that Disney never intended to produce a historically accurate film or to reinforce the idea of the black subordinate position, but rather to create light, fantasy entertainment similar to other films produced during the 1940s (63).[7] However, representing a romanticized and sanitized version of plantation life is not only historically inaccurate but also dangerous. By downplaying the harsh realities of slavery and depicting a harmonious relationship between white and black characters, the film reinforces the idea that slavery was not oppressive or exploitative.

By blending magical elements with reality, Disney transformed a real historical period into an unrealistic fantasy set in both the antebellum and reconstruction eras, and at the same time not belonging to either. In other words, "Song of the South" represents a non-existent

romanticized Southern fantasy of moonlight, mansions, magnolias, and its idyllic inhabitants. Just as Disney's Southern world is meant to be an escape for Johnny and his mother from "some vaguely described unpleasantness back home in Atlanta" (Telotte 148), it offered its viewers an escape from the wartime unpleasantness. As Uncle Remus puts it, "Song of the South" is set in "Not your time, not my time, but sometime." More specifically, it is not a historical sometime, but a romantic Hollywood once upon a time.

Korkis stresses the pedagogical aspect of the film, stating that "Disney attempt[ed] to show that children of all races and different social statuses could play together as friends" (67). However, focusing on single instances of interracial bonding and ignoring overall negative racial representations perpetuates a false narrative and leads to reinforcement of the racial status quo. Conversely, Johnny's and Remus's relationship can also be described as "Huck Finn fixation". Inspired by Mark Twain's portrayal of the relationship between former slave Jim and white boy Huck Finn, Donald Bogle proposes that this kind of interracial male relationship "wipes away any fears about tensions between black and white . . . [allowing] the white hero to grow in stature from his association with the dusky black" (140). Just because Johnny does not see Uncle Remus as an obedient and submissive slave does not mean that Remus wants to live on the plantation, serve white masters, and have no identity or opportunities outside the mythical plantation (Sperb 31).

6.2.1. Characters' Analysis: Uncle Toms, Coons, and Mammies

It was already argued that stereotypes are exaggerated and oversimplified characteristics about a person or a group of people that allow classification according to norms of dominant ideology and construct the excluded as "Other" (Hall, "Representation" 245). According to Donald Bogle, racial stereotypes have existed since the beginning of cinema itself. He has identified five main black stereotypes prevalent in American cinematography. These include:

- Toms – "good" Christian black slaves who are frequently "chased, harassed, hounded, flogged, enslaved and insulted, yet they keep the faith, never turn against their white master, and remain hearty, submissive, stoic, generous, selfless and oh-so-kind" (6);
- Mammies – desexualized female house servants, often portrayed as unattractive, fat, bossy, and cantankerous (9);
- The Tragic Mulatto – a mixed-race woman caught between "divided racial inheritance" (9). She is exotic, beautiful, and sexually attractive to white men, yet she does not belong to the world of white or black people. Her inability to fit in is precisely what makes her character tragic;
- Black Bucks – physically big, strong, no-good, "over-sexed and savage, violent and frenzied as they lust for white flesh" (10);
- Coons[8] – "unreliable, crazy, lazy, subhuman creatures good for nothing more than eating watermelons, stealing chickens, shooting crap or butchering the English Language" (8). There are three subcategories of the coon:
  - Pickaninny – a buffoonish child, "harmless, little screwball creation whose eyes popped, whose hair stood on end with the least excitement, and whose antics were pleasant and diverting" (7);
  - Uncle Remus – "harmless and congenial . . . he is a first cousin to Tom, yet he distinguishes himself by his quaint, naive, and comic philosophizing" (8);
  - Pure Coon – "the most blatantly degrading of all black stereotypes . . . lazy, no-account, good-for-nothing, forever-in-hot-water, natural-born comedian" (8).

Two of Bogle's types are evident in "Song of the South": mammy and coons (Uncle Remus and pickaninny subtypes). Hattie McDaniel portrays Aunt Tempy, an archetype of a mammy figure. Tempy is introduced at the film's very beginning − she is driving with Johnny and his parents to Johnny's maternal grandmother's house, where she has been working for

years, presumably as a house servant and a nurse. In the second scene, she is cooking in the kitchen and singing a ballad. Conveniently, Uncle Remus enters the room and sits down at the table while Tempy scolds him for telling stories to children instead of working hard. After Remus compliments her cooking, she decides to give him a piece of pie.

Besides this candied and romanticized representation of the Mammy figure, Aunt Tempy is also a desexualized, middle-aged, obese, nurturing, extremely dark-skinned, and happy woman. She wears drab clothing and a head rag, a common slave outfit during the 19th century. Through exaggerated physical features, clothing, and sociocultural patterns, Aunt Tempy becomes "an antithesis of the [Western] conception of beauty, femininity, and womanhood" (Jewell 36) – an embodiment of difference. Since she does not conform to the Euro-American ethnocentric norm of a woman, she is constructed as the "Other". Aunt Tempy is physically and culturally "Other", juxtaposed against Mrs. Sally, a white and slim Euro-American woman for whom she is working. While Mrs. Sally's actions, behaviour, and ideas are linked to Culture,[9] Tempy's are linked to Nature − she is open in showing her emotions, believes in customs and rituals, is superstitious, and lacks refinement in social life. Even her head rag links her to obscure customs from Africa because the rags were worn in religious ceremonies and special occasions (Jewell 39). All these elements are signifiers of difference and inferiority.

According to folklorist Patricia Turner, the Mammy figure is just a myth since most slaves worked in the fields. "Only the very wealthy could afford the luxury of utilizing the women as house servants rather than as field hands" (Turner 44). This re-imagined and romanticized view of slavery represents slaves as cheerful participants in a cruel regime. For example, Aunt Tempy seems perfectly satisfied with her role in Johnny's family, and there is never a moment when she is not cheerful and playful. Such a representation of the Mammy figure functions on two levels. First, it facilitates the persistence of the patriarchal ideal of an

obedient, passive, genteel white woman through the exaggerated alternative. Second, it creates the illusion that the white family is safe since no man would choose an old, robust, black woman to be his lover (Turner 46).

Both Aunt Tempy and Uncle Remus are stereotypical representations of faithful servants. They are shown only in the context of their relationships with white characters rather than with each other. They lack distinctive characterization that would extend their narrative function and make their appearance more realistic and plausible. Uncle Remus is a perfect example of this assertion since his entire identity is reduced to ensuring his master's well-being and fulfilling his wishes. Other instances of this behaviour may be found in the ways Remus is put in "his place" by Johnny's mother and in the scene when the mother tells him he cannot spend time with Johnny. This shattering experience affects him so deeply that he decides to leave the plantation.

Represented as an always smiling, good-natured, and forgiving slave who, unlike other coon types, is gentle and humble, Remus is an artificially created stereotype that reflects "a fear of black anger regarding centuries of enslavement" (Sperb 37). Just like Aunt Tempy, Remus displays emotions openly, believes in customs and rituals, and serves as a mediator between the worlds of fantasy and reality. Despite acting as a surrogate father to Johnny, he is still represented as "Other" both physically and culturally.

Finally, there is Toby – "the embodiment of the pickaninny" (Sperb 12). According to Sperb, Walt himself used this pejorative term to describe the character who amuses white audiences with comic antics. Toby, with his wide-opened eyes, big mouth, tousled hair, and dragged clothes, is a younger version of the coon and therefore is constantly being subjected to visual gags for viewers' amusement (12). This usage of humour at the expense of a black character perpetuates the stereotype of African Americans as simple-minded and reinforces the notion of white supremacy.

Finally, it can be concluded that ""Song of the South", for all of its technical accomplishments, never quite managed to reconcile real-world borders with the boundary-busting spirit of its hybrid scenes and, as a consequence, for all of its ambitions, . . . never escapes reality itself" (Telotte 151-152).

7. "Red Hot Riding Hood"

"Red Hot Riding Hood" is an animated short directed by Tex Avery and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1943. The cartoon was one of MGM's most popular and profitable animated shorts and was voted 7th of "The 50 Greatest Cartoons" of all time by animation professionals.[10] Moreover, it has inspired several spin-offs as well as influenced other animated and live-action films for years to come (e.g. Jessica Rabbit, The Mask, Droopy cartoons, etc.) (Barrier 414).

Amidst and following WWII, some animators, such as Walt Disney, produced films that offered escapism by employing utopian settings and portraying benevolent characters. Avery's response to the wartime situation manifested itself in the antics of Wolfie, Red, and Grandma. "Red Hot Riding Hood" tackled a theme in a series of subsequent satirical cartoons that was considered taboo at the time – sexuality. According to Jeff Lenburg, the idea originated while Tex was producing Army training films, resulting in the development of soldiers' all-time favourite pin-up animated character – Red (70). Allegedly, while screening the cartoon to the soldiers, they enjoyed it so much that the projectionist had to rewind it and show it again two more times (Cohen 38).

7.1. Plot Overview: Deconstructing “Little Red Riding Hood”

“Red Hot Riding Hood” opens as a traditional, overtly sweet retelling of “Little Red Riding Hood”: “Good evening, kiddies! Once upon a time, Little Red Riding Hood was skipping through the woods” (00:00:17-00:00:23). However, the Wolf interrupts the narrator and refuses to continue: “I’m fed up with that sissy stuff! It’s the same old story over and over. If you can’t do this thing a new way Bud, I quit!” (00:00:52-00:00:59). Immediately, Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma join in: “Every Hollywood studio has done it this way!” (00:01:02-00:01:08). Aghast, the narrator pleases them and recreates the story in a completely different arrangement. He sets the story in the modern and urban setting of Los Angeles. Wolf becomes a sleek, well-dressed, wealthy Hollywood playboy and womanizer. Red becomes a sexy and seductive nightclub dancer working in the “Sunset Strip” nightclub and Grandma becomes “female Wolf” – a voracious man-eater who wants to have sex with Wolf just as much as he wants to with Red. However, neither succeeds in doing so. Eventually, Wolf gives up on women and declares that if he ever lays his eyes on a woman, he will kill himself. This is exactly what happens at the end of the cartoon.

It is obvious that Avery’s world represents the opposite of Disney’s fantasy world, which was elaborated on in previous chapters. While Disney’s animators tried to conjure mystical and fantasy settings that mirror those in fairy tales, Avery abandoned such imagery in favour of urban settings such as nightclubs, bars, and penthouses (Morris, “Goosing” 2). He used a more modern approach by replacing folksy optimism with big-city cynicism. In doing so, he completely deconstructed “Little Red Riding Hood” and proved that a “cartoon could be a medium for adult audiences” (Wells 140).

Besides creating numerous slapstick animated films that entertained children, Avery also engaged in more mature themes that pleased adults. According to Wells, these themes include:

- status and power;
- irrational fears, principally expressed through paranoia, obsession, and re-emergence of previously repressed fears;
- instinct to survive at any cost;
- direct engagement with sexual feelings and identity;
- resistance to conformity and re-evaluation of the point of anticipated identification and empathy for the audience (140).

In other words, Avery preserves some traits of the genre for children, such as talking animals, physical gags, and supernatural events. However, by filling the cartoon with sexual innuendos, he puts an adult theme in place of children's and creates crazy, wilful, and lustful characters instead of cute and morally enlightened ones (Morris, "Goosing" 1). He rejects what Paul Wells calls the "culture of cheerfulness" (140) which is typical for Disney animation. He explores the boundaries of animated films by using gags and self-reflectivity, leading to the disruption of traditional narrative and conventional plot. The narrative in fairy tales is often deterministic and predictable, so Avery uses gags and narrative ruptures to make his world appear more interesting and chaotic (Morris, "Goosing" 2). It could be argued that the action in "Red Hot Riding Hood" is driven by his love for exaggeration in utilizing gags, making the protagonists – "big bad" Wolf, Red, and Grandma – vital elements of the joke.

The protagonists are completely aware that they are cartoon characters existing within a cartoon and freely comment on the action happening around them, for example by holding up a sign (e.g. Grandma holding a sign "Guess Who?") or by addressing the audience directly. By creating self-reflexive characters who address the audience directly, Avery challenges the

assumptions of watching a cartoon. This intervention serves as a reminder to adult audiences that the cartoon they are watching assumes the role of the object, while they themselves take on the position of the subject (Wells 142).

Lastly, Avery also took a satirical stance in the cartoon's final scenes, as there is no happy ending. There is no depiction of romance. His prince charming is the lustful Wolf, who is not interested in having a romantic relationship with Red but rather having sex with her. When his pursuit proves futile, he commits suicide. It could be inferred that Avery intended to avoid producing yet another animated film that reinforces the dominant ideology of the white, patriarchal male. His "Red Hot Riding Hood" discards the idea of morality and questions concepts such as reality, sentiment, logic, and sexual identity. The wolf does not marry the girl; natural order is not restored.

7.2. Characters' Analysis: Dominant Women and a "Phallic Man"

Red is probably one of Avery's favourite and reappearing characters. She first appeared in "Red Hot Riding Hood", followed by "Swing Shift Cinderella" (1945), "The Shooting of Dan McGoo" (1945), "Wild and Woolfy" (1945), "The Hick Chick" (1946), "Uncle Tom's Cabaña" (1947), and "Little Rural Riding Hood" (1949). Michael Barrier notes that she did not constitute a radical departure from Avery's previous works, as he had already incorporated realistically drawn human figures in some of his later Lantz cartoons (413). What distinguishes Red from her predecessors is the fact that Preston Blair animated her without using a rotoscope (Barrier 413). In other words, Red is not based on an actual or singular female body. In creating Red, Blair selected what he considered the finest attributes from several Hollywood pin-up girls, shaping a "perfect female body". Consequently, Red's physical appearance closely resembles Betty Grable's: the same posture, facial features, hairstyle, makeup, and costume. When conversing with the Wolf, her voice resembles Katharine Hepburn's, and when singing,

it bears a resemblance to Lena Horne's. She is a masculine expression of female sexuality, a fantasy figure, created in a "masculine animated space" (Wells 74).

This portrayal of Red may appear reductionist at first. So, what do we know about Red? She is a showgirl and has a lustful Grandma who lives in a penthouse. What about her relationships, interests or education? None of these aspects have been disclosed. Existing merely as a "compilation of sexual features" gathered from several pin-up girls of that era, Red is subjected to extreme forms of reductionism and fragmentation. Her entire persona is reduced to her "relevant parts" – long legs, hips, a tiny waist, and cleavage. Conveniently, her job is to be looked at while dancing seductively, so even her job serves to reaffirm her role as a sexual object. Therefore, it is feasible to deduce: Red = body = sex; reduction to Nature, the signifier of which is her body.

In her performance, Red is wearing red outfits. This colour is associated with danger, violence, passion, strength, desire, and sexuality. These associations perfectly describe Red's character. She is sexy, desirable, and violent towards Wolfie. Her appearance poses a threat to Wolfie, not the other way around. This is shown in Red's opening on-stage performance. First, she is wearing a traditional cloak and hood associated with her character. She is even carrying a basket full of food for Grandma. However, she soon takes off the cloak, throws the basket away, and reveals her sexy, red burlesque costume. By tossing off her cloak, Red repudiates her traditional role and infantile image and embraces a new, sexual, and adult one. The song she sings is Sammy Kaye's "Daddy" from 1941 which serves to reassure her new, adult, sexy role – she knows exactly what she wants: "Hey, daddy, I want a diamond ring, bracelets, everything/ Daddy, you oughta get the best for me/ Hey, daddy, gee, don't I look swell in sables?/ Clothes with Paris labels?/ Daddy, you oughta get the best for me!" (00:02:43-00:03:06).

All protagonists are free to pursue any desire and do not care about cultural norms or social etiquette (Wells 146). They make spur-of-the-moment decisions, creating the dynamics of social relations that are not always easy to classify. Nevertheless, it is still possible to identify a pattern and categorize the characters into the following models:

- inept hunter/superior hunted: Wolfie – Red
- irritating pursuer/fleeing pursued: Grandma – Wolfie (Wells 146).

In the traditional Grimm brothers' tale, Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma are portrayed as naive and trusting, which eventually results in being taken advantage of by the Wolf. They are less intelligent than their male counterparts, thoughtless, passive, in need of protection, and dependable on men to save them. However, Avery deconstructs the traditional story by introducing fluidity to the concepts of gender and power. His protagonists are both traditionally masculine and feminine, both dominant personas and sexually objectified – neither aspect excludes the other. For example, Wolfie is Red's spectator (dominant position), and at the same time he is Grandma's spectacle (sexually objectified character). The same applies to Red – she is not helpless and does not need a hunter to save her. On the contrary, she represents a threat to Wolf. When Wolfie tries to seduce her, she shouts "NO!" and hits him with a lamp. Interestingly enough, while chatting with Wolfie, Red utilizes a highly feminine voice; however, when she shouts and behaves violently – her soft, cuddly voice turns into a man's. It can be inferred that, despite shifting traditional power relations between the genders, even in Avery's crazy universe, violence and attitude are stereotypically associated with masculinity.

One first meets Grandma at the cartoon's very beginning – she is an old, helpless, white-haired woman lying in her bed and wearing pink pyjamas and a matching nightcap. Avery quickly changes this stereotypical representation of a weak and vulnerable grandmother into a more active, assertive, and sexual one. His Grandma lives in a modern penthouse on the top floor that has the huge neon sign "Grandma's Joint: Come up and see me sometime". The sign

is a parodic paraphrase of Mae West's film "She Done Him Wrong" from 1933.[11] This is purposeful, as Grandma is portrayed as a madam wearing a long, tight, red dress, white satin gloves, and red high heels. Such representation challenges conventional expectations of older women as asexual, demure, and passive. She is independent, successful, wealthy, strong, and sexual. She also exhibits some behavioural patterns that traditionally have been attributed to men, such as aggressiveness, sexual conquest and objectification, lust, independence, and determination.[12]

Just as Wolfie sexually objectifies Red, Grandma looks at him as an object merely for sexual pleasure. In classical Hollywood cinema, the spectator typically assumes a masculine subject position, while the woman's figure takes on the role of the spectacle. This is known as the male gaze.[13] Avery satirizes this process by inverting the anticipated male gaze and transforming it into a female one. By representing Grandma as a persistent and dominant pursuer and listing numerous fast-paced gags showing Wolf trying to escape her, Avery enables the audience to laugh at Wolf and everything he represents.

It is possible to argue that both Red and Grandma represent a danger to the Wolf as they emasculate him − Red's refusal to be pursued, along with Grandma becoming a pursuer, "undermines the central construct of traditional male power and control" (Heerspink 14). Since Wolf commits suicide at the end of the film, this sexuality is also represented as threatening to traditional stereotyped representations of a dominant, strong, and powerful man (Heerspink 14). Interestingly, one cannot discern what makes Wolfie so appealing to Grandma. Avery does not focus on any of Wolfie's body parts in the same manner as he does with Red. Therefore, Wolfie is not reduced to Nature. He is, though, reduced to a symbolic representation of an innate sexual desire, which is going to be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Wolfie was the true hero of MGM's first years. He made his debut in an anti-Nazi parody called "Blitz Wolf" (1942) and appeared in eleven more cartoons by 1949 (Cottet, "Characters:

The wolf"). At the beginning of "Red Hot Riding Hood", he is the first one who is "fed up with that sissy stuff!" (00:00:52-00:00:54). According to Heerspink, "the use of the word "sissy" with its connotations of effeminacy suggests the Wolf's search for a more active, driven approach in the story . . . [and] a more "manly", prominent part to play" (11).

According to Paul Wells, Wolfie is essentially "a force beyond character" (147) – he is a symbol of masculine sexual desire, lust, power, and control. To properly express these desires, his body operates outside the laws of physics. For example, upon seeing Red's burlesque act, Wolfie gets stiff as a board[14] and "stretch[es] his arm across the auditorium to pull [Red] . . . off the stage, banging himself in the face with hammers, whistling and pounding on the table, popping his eyes out of his head" (Curtis 215). Avery humorously illustrates how the body might behave if it could genuinely convey the intensity of its emotions. By doing so, Wolfie's body becomes a subject of "manipulation, exaggeration, and reconfiguration" (Wells 188). It transforms into an entirely flexible means of expression, leading to even shape-shifting abilities (e.g. he turns into a car). His body also exhibits other capabilities, such as remaining unharmed and experiencing no pain after falling from the top of the skyscraper. Despite numerous attempts to achieve his "manhood" through sexual conquest, the interplay between Wolfie, Red, and Grandma reveals that Wolfie is subdued by female characters, making his initial wish to obtain a more prominent part to play unfulfilled (Heerspink 13).

According to Michael Barrier, ""Red Hot Riding Hood" ran into such serious objections from the Production Code Administration, that parts of it had to be remade" (414). The problem was not Wolf's lustful desire for Red – Avery toned that down in the production phase, substituting originally planned reactions (panting, sweating, emitting sparks) with less suggestive ones (whistling, howling, eyes popping out). Instead, the focus of criticism was Grandma's desire for Wolfie and Avery's initially envisioned outcome of such a relationship − Wolfie and Grandma get married (the priest being Avery) and have three wolf-cub children. At

the cartoon's original end, they all come to the "Sunset Strip" nightclub to cheer for Red. The existing fragmentary evidence strongly indicates that the Production Code Administration disapproved of this ending, not only deeming it too suggestive of bestiality but also for its mockery of marriage (Barrier 414).

8. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to provide a better insight into American animated films during the 1940s and to deconstruct stereotypical racial and gender representations by critically analysing two animated films produced in the decade stricken with World War II and its aftermath. The 1940s marked a turning point in one's perception of animation − what was once considered light, children's entertainment soon became a wartime ideological apparatus and escapist medium (Bivins). Studios began to produce animated propaganda films and, at the same time, provide audiences with an escape from war horrors by producing nostalgic, romanticized melodramas. Both Avery's "Red Hot Riding Hood" and Disney's "Song of the South" are ideological by-products of such socio-cultural and historical circumstances.

Avery deliberately created a character that resembles soldiers' favourite pin-up girls. Conferring Stuart Hall's theory of representation, it was argued that by over-accentuating her sex appeal, Red has undergone an extreme form of reduction to her body, leading to fragmentation and stereotypical representation. As Paul Wells puts it, she is a product of male fantasy and a superficially created sex symbol that is "contextualized in a masculine animated space" (74). Nevertheless, Avery has also created a crazy world of socio-sexual uncertainty where traditional monolithic assumptions about gender roles and identities came into question, resulting in several transgressions and contradictions. He played with the power relations between the genders, which resulted in the creation of characters that are both independent personas as well as sexually objectified – neither excludes the other.

Red is not only sexually objectified but also tough and self-reliant. During Wolfie's pursuit of Red, Grandma steps out of her traditional role as an elder, asexual woman and appropriates Wolfie's sexual appetite. By carefully representing Grandma as a persistent adherent admirer and listing numerous fast-paced gags showing Wolfie trying to escape her, Avery enables the audience to laugh at Wolfie and everything he represents. However, it is important to point out that even in this crazy Avery's world, both Red and Grandma represent a threat to Wolfie as they emasculate him. Since Wolfie commits suicide, their sexuality is represented as threatening to stereotypical notions of masculinity.

Radically different from Avery's short, Disney's "Song of the South" is an escapist hybrid film. Enthralled by the success of "Gone with the Wind" and its nostalgic utopia-like world, Disney adapted Joel Chandler Harris's 19th-century tales about cheerful blacks and benevolent whites. Throughout the thesis, emphasis was placed on the challenge of providing a singular interpretation of the film because affective components of enduring themes, lyrical scores, and idyllic relationships intersect with questions regarding the film's representations (Sperb 9). It was argued that antebellum and reconstruction histories are merged into a non-existent fantasy Old South world that reflects Hollywood's tendency to romanticize history. Furthermore, it was inferred that the three stereotypes (Mammy, Uncle Remus, and picaninny) collectively reinforce ideological notions of black submissiveness and white supremacy. By downplaying the harsh realities of slavery and depicting a harmonious relationship between white and black characters, the film reinforces the idea that slavery was not oppressive or exploitative. For these reasons, even with its financial success and technological achievements, the film faced boycott in 1946 and remains one of Disney's most controversial films to date.

Notes

[1] For a more comprehensive understanding of this racial stereotype, see Devine and Elliot “Are Racial Stereotypes Really Fading? (1995); Madon et al. “Ethnic and National Stereotypes: The Princeton Trilogy Revisited and Revised” (2001); Nosek et al. “Pervasiveness and Correlates of Implicit Attitudes and Stereotype” (2007).

[2] For a more comprehensive understanding of this gender stereotype, see Koenig et al. “Are Leader Stereotypes Masculine? A Meta-Analysis of Three Research Paradigms” (2011); Baker “Stereotyping and women’s roles in leadership positions” (2014); Castaño et al. “Why Can’t I Become a Manager?”- A Systematic Review of Gender Stereotypes and Organizational Discrimination” (2019).

[3] See Thomas “The Art of Animation” (1958); Heraldson “Creators of Life: A History of Animation” (1975); Azéma and Rivère “Animation in Palaeolithic Art: A Pre-echo of Cinema“ (2012).

[4] See Crafton “Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928” (1993) and Beckerman “Animation: The Whole Story” (2003).

[5] For example, “Henry Browne, Farmer” (1942), “Bataan” (1943), and “Negro Soldier” (1944).

[6] See Solomon “Enchanted Drawings: The History of Animation” (1994); Inge “Walt Disney’s Song of the South and the Politics of Animation” (2012); Korkis “Who’s Afraid of the Song of the South? And Other Forbidden Disney Stories” (2012).

[7] Korkis refers to “Gone with the Wind”.

[8] A dehumanizing term: an abbreviation of the word raccoon (Hornby et al. 372).

[9] Politeness, learning and knowledge, belief in reason, and refinement of social life.

[10] See Beck “The 50 Greatest Cartoons” (1994).

[11] “Why don’t you come up sometime and see me?”

[12] See Spence and Helmreich “Masculinity and Femininity: Their Psychological Dimensions, Correlates, and Antecedents” (1978); Eagly “Sex Differences in Social Behavior: A Social-Role Interpretation” (1987); Thompson and Zerbinos “Gender Roles in Animated Cartoons: Has the Picture Changed in 20 Years?” (1995).

[13] For a more comprehensive understanding of the male gaze see Mulvey “The Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975).

[14] A deliberate phallic allusion.

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Song of the South. Dir. Wilfred Jackson and Harve Foster. Prod. Walt Disney. RKO, 1946. Film.

Red Hot Riding Hood. Dir. Tex Avery. Prod. Fred Quimby. MGM, 1943. Film.

9. Racial and Gender Stereotypes in Two Animated Films Disney's "Song of the South" (1946) and Avery's "Red Hot Ridding Hood" (1943): Summary and key words

The 1940s marked a turning point in how animation was perceived. As the decade was overshadowed by the horrors of World War II and its consequences, animation stopped being regarded as entertainment primarily for children. Animation strives to swiftly communicate ideas and stereotypes are a key element in achieving this goal. However, they can be detrimental as they reduce individuals or groups to a few traits and perpetuate inequality. Drawing on Stuart Hall's representation theory, this master thesis examines and critically analyses racial and gender stereotypes in two animated films produced in the 1940s: Disney's "Song of the South" (1946) and Avery's "Red Hot Riding Hood" (1943). Disney's animators produced a hybrid film with elements of fantasy and a utopian setting as a form of escapism, yet they also portrayed stereotypical black characters, contributing to the perpetuation of white supremacist ideology. On the other hand, Avery's response to the wartime situation manifested in the antics of Wolfie, Grandma, and Red – the stereotypical representations of Hollywood playboys and pin-ups.

Key words: Disney, Avery, "Song of the South", "Red Hot Riding Hood", Stuart Hall, stereotypes

10. Rasni i rodni stereotipi u dva animirana filma: Disneyjevom “Song of the Southu” (1946) i Averyjevom “Red Hot Riding Hoodu” (1943): Sažetak i ključne riječi

Četrdesete godine prošlog stoljeća označile su prekretnicu u shvaćanju animacije. U vremenu obilježenom Drugim svjetskim ratom i njegovim posljedicama, ona se prestaje smatrati zabavom isključivo za djecu. Stereotipi su ključni element u prenošenju ideja zbog čega se učestalo koriste u animiranim filmovima. Međutim, oni mogu biti štetni jer svode pojedince ili skupine ljudi na nekoliko pojednostavljenih osobina čime pomažu u održavanju nejednakosti istih. Polazeći od teorije reprezentacije britanskog kulturnog teoretičara Stuarta Halla, ovaj diplomski rad analizira rasnu i rodnu reprezentaciju u dva animirana filma iz 1940-ih: Disneyjevom „Song of the Southu“ (1946) i Tex Averyjevom „Red Hot Riding Hoodu“ (1943). Disneyjevi animatori stvaraju hibridni eskapistički film smješten u utopijsko okruženje koje nastanjuju stereotipni crnački likovi čime se zastupa ideologija bijele supremacije. S druge pak strane, Averyjev odgovor na ratnu situaciju manifestira se u ludorijama Vuka, Bake i Crvenkapice koji postaju stereotipna utjelovljenja Hollywoodskih ženskaroša i pin-up djevojaka.

Ključne riječi: Disney, Avery, „Song of the South“, „Red Hot Riding Hood“, Stuart Hall, stereotipi