

Animation: How It Has Moved On From Being Goofy

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In more practical terms, there are descriptions from China from around 158AD which refer to a pipe that produces dreams, which was probably an early form of zoetrope or magic lantern – a device which is often pointed to as a precursor of today's animated film.

“This was called *chao hua chih kuan* (the pipe which makes fantasies

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the Second World War disrupted their burgeoning film industries, and animators were still working mainly as auteurs. Famously, the German animator Oskar Fischinger fled Nazi Germany and went to work for Disney on *Fantasia*, only to quit due to creative differences. Credit must go to Disney for creating *Fantasia*, and for recognising the talents of gifted animators like Fischinger, but his insistence on microscopic control kept that talent in a straitjacket. Audience reaction to *Fantasia* was mixed – some thought it was too 'high-brow', and it failed to make a profit. But who knows if it might have been more accessible, not less, if animators such as Fischinger had been given a freer hand.

The Bach Toccatta and Fugue in D minor section from *Fantasia*<sup>vii</sup> shows a glimpse of Fischinger's style, with clear correlations to his own animations. Those of you familiar with Fischinger's work will see his influence – sadly, his original concepts were adapted after his departure from the project, and given to other animators who were more amenable to Disney's methods, so this is only a small hint at what could have been.

## **Alternatives to Disney?**

The Warner Brothers set up shop at around the same time as Disney, and continued with the more anarchic

perceived as a specialist genre with limited appeal.

The animator has complete control over the visual environment. They can choose where any object appears on screen – how long its appearance lasts – what movements it carries out – what colours are featured – what interactions there are between foreground and background elements. This is far more control over the visual environment than other film genres, such as documentaries, and mirrors the full control we have as composers in this area.

have composers who prefer to work in soundscape, in acousmatic, or who combine tape music with live instruments.

By orthodox animation, Wells is referring to the sweatshop model, epitomised by Disney. In many ways, this attempts to replicate live-action, even if there are elements that can only happen in animation (even if we're considering 'live-action' films such as *Lord of the Rings*, the fantastical elements are mainly achieved through CGI animation). Even if we're looking at *Daffy Duck on Mars*, at heart natural physics are stil(l) -0.2 r0.2 (

Having said that, animation has its own categories contained within it, such as the special effects used in live action films – stop motion animation – hand-drawn cel animation – CGI 3D animation. This can be compared to electroacoustic composition, where we

homogeneity of the studio, the vision of the animator is the driving force.

If we compare this to the approaches taken by the electroacoustic composer, we can see several parallels. Both are time-based but have to consider the 'space' being





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