Adult animation (also known as adult cartoon) is a genre of animation geared towards adults and sometimes teens. Works in this genre may be considered adult for any number of reasons. They may be noted for using risqué themes, graphic violence, explicit language, sexuality, or dark humor. Works in this genre may explore philosophical, political, or social issues. Some productions are noted for sophisticated and / or experimental storytelling and animation techniques.

Before the enforcement of the Hays Code , some cartoon shorts contained humor that was aimed at adult audience members rather than children . Following the introduction of the Motion Picture Association of America film rating system , independent animation producers attempted to establish an alternative to mainstream animation . Initially , few animation studios in the United States attempted to produce animation for adult audiences , but later examples of animation produced for adults would gain mainstream attention and success . The most successful animated features produced in the United States primarily for adult audiences were directed by Ralph Bakshi , including Fritz the Cat , Heavy Traffic and Coonskin .

Fox Broadcasting Company has also dedicated an entire evening programming block to adult animation programs , known as " Animation Domination . " In Canada , Teletoon offers up its own Teletoon at Night programming block .

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= = History in the United States = =
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= = = Pre @-@ code animation = = =
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The earliest cartoon series were based upon popular comic strips , and were directed at family audiences . Most animation produced during the silent film era was not intended to be shown to any specific age group , but occasionally contained humor that was directed at adult audience members , including risqué jokes . The earliest known instance of censorship in animation occurred when the censorship board of Pennsylvania requested that references to bootlegging be removed from Walt Disney 's 1925 short Alice Solves a Puzzle . One of the earliest animated pornographic films was Eveready Harton in Buried Treasure , produced circa 1928 . It has often been suggested that the film was produced for a private party in honor of Winsor McCay . Rumors suggest that the film was developed in Cuba years after it was completed , because no lab in New York City would process the film . When a print was screened in San Francisco in the late 1970s , the program notes attributed the animation to George Stallings , George Canata , Rudy Zamora , Sr. and Walter Lantz .

The Motion Picture Association of America , then known as the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association , was established in 1922 as the result of public objection to adult content in films , and a series of guidelines were established , suggesting content that should not be portrayed in films . Until the Hays Code was enforced , many animated shorts featured suggestive content , including sexual innuendo , references to alcohol and drug use , and mild profanity . In the 1933 short Bosko 's Picture Show , Bosko appears to use the word " fuck " , although it has also been suggested that the character is saying " fox " , or even " mug " . The Betty Boop series was known for its use of jokes that would eventually be considered taboo following the enforcement of the Hays Code , including the use of nudity . Betty Boop was initially drawn as a dog , and cast as the girlfriend of another Fleischer character , Bimbo . Betty was redesigned as a human , but the series continued to suggest a love relationship between the two that went farther than the normal relationship between humans and their pets . The short Is My Palm Read contains a scene in which Betty is shown as a child between the ages of four and five , bathing in the nude . In the 1970s , this scene was shown out of context in performances by The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo . Concert audiences were not aware that Betty was supposed to be a baby in the sequence .

Another short, Bamboo Isle, contains a sequence in which Betty dances the hula topless, wearing

only a lei over her breasts and a grass skirt . According to animator Shamus Culhane , Fleischer Studios and Paramount Pictures were shocked by the sequence , but because it was a major sequence , it could not be cut out of the film . Culhane also states that he does not remember any instance in which the film was censored . Betty ? s hula animation was reused for a cameo appearance with Popeye the Sailor in his self @-@ titled animated debut short .

Following the enforcement of the Hays Code , Betty 's clothing was redesigned , and all future shorts portrayed her with a longer dress which did not portray her physique and sexuality . Shorts produced following the enforcement of the Hays Code were also less surreal in nature , and Betty was portrayed as a rational adult .

= = = After the Hays Code = = =

By 1968, the Hays Office had been eliminated, and the former guidelines were replaced by the Motion Picture Association of America film rating system. The lifting of the Code meant that animated features from other countries could be distributed without censorship, and that censorship would not be required for American productions. Some underground cartoon films from the late 1960s were also aimed at an adult audience, such as Bambi Meets Godzilla (1968) and the anti-@-@ war films Escalation (1968) and Mickey Mouse in Vietnam (1969). "Escalation in particular is interesting because it was made by Disney animator Ward Kimball, independently from the Disney Studios . Film producer John Magnuson completed an animated short based upon an audio recording of a comedy routine by Lenny Bruce titled Thank You Mask Man (1971), in which The Lone Ranger shocks the residents of the town he saves when he tells them that he wants to have sex with Tonto. The short was made by San Francisco @-@ based company Imagination, Inc. and directed by Jeff Hale, a former member of the National Film Board of Canada. The film was scheduled to premiere on the opening night of Z, as a supplement preceding the main feature, but was not shown. According to a former staff member of the festival, Magnuson ran up the aisle and shouted "They crucified Lenny when he was alive and now that he is dead they are screwing him again! "The festival's director told Magnuson that the producer of Z did not want any short shown that night. Rumors suggested that the wife of one of the festival 's financiers hated Bruce, and threatened to withdraw her husband 's money if the short was screened . Thank You Mask Man was later shown in art house screenings, and gained a following, but screenings did not perform well enough financially for Magnuson to profit from the film.

= = = Animated feature films = = =

= = = = Ralph Bakshi = = = =

By the late @-@ 1960s , animator Ralph Bakshi felt that he could not continue to produce the same kind of animation as he had in the past . Bakshi was quoted in a 1971 article for the Los Angeles Times as saying that the idea of " grown men sitting in cubicles drawing butterflies floating over a field of flowers , while American planes are dropping bombs in Vietnam and kids are marching in the streets , is ludicrous . " With producer Steve Krantz , Bakshi founded his own studio , Bakshi Productions , establishing the studio as an alternative to mainstream animation by producing animation his own way and accelerating the advancement of female and minority animators . He also paid his employees a higher salary than any other studio at that time .

In 1969, Ralph 's Spot was founded as a division of Bakshi Productions to produce commercials for Coca @-@ Cola and Max, the 2000 @-@ Year @-@ Old Mouse, a series of educational shorts paid for by Encyclopædia Britannica. However, Bakshi was uninterested in the kind of animation he was producing, and wanted to produce something personal. Bakshi soon developed Heavy Traffic, a tale of inner @-@ city street life. However, Krantz told Bakshi that studio executives would be unwilling to fund the film because of its content and Bakshi 's lack of film experience. While browsing the East Side Book Store on St. Mark 's Place, Bakshi came across a copy of R. Crumb 's

Fritz the Cat . Impressed by Crumb 's sharp satire , Bakshi purchased the book and suggested to Krantz that it would work as a film .

Fritz the Cat was the first animated film to receive an X rating from the MPAA , and the highest grossing independent animated film of all time . While the film is widely noted in its innovation for featuring content that had not been portrayed in American animation before , such as explicit sexuality and violence , the film also offered commercial potential for alternative and independent animated films in the United States , as the film offered a mature , satirical portrayal of the 1960s , including portrayal of drug use , political tension and race relations . Bakshi has been credited for playing an important role in establishing animation as a medium where any story can be told , rather than a medium for children . As a result of the acceptance of Bakshi 's features , the director suggested that War and Peace could be produced as an animated film .

Because of the perception that Fritz the Cat was pornographic, Krantz attempted to appeal the film 's rating, but the MPAA refused to hear the appeal. Praise from Rolling Stone and The New York Times, and the film 's acceptance into the 1972 Cannes Film Festival cleared up previous misconceptions. Bakshi then simultaneously directed a number of animated films, starting with Heavy Traffic. Krantz was nervous about showing too much nudity and sexual content, and had several versions of some scenes animated. Thanks to Heavy Traffic, Ralph Bakshi became the first person in the animation industry since Walt Disney to have two financially successful films released back @-@ to @-@ back. Although the film received critical praise, it was banned by the film censorship board in the province of Alberta, Canada when it was originally released.

Bakshi 's next film , Coonskin was produced by Albert S. Ruddy . The film , culled from Bakshi 's interest in African @-@ American history in America , was an attack on racism and racist stereotypes . Bakshi hired several African @-@ American animators to work on Coonskin and another feature , Hey Good Lookin ' , including Brenda Banks , the first African @-@ American female animator . After the release was stalled by protests from the Congress of Racial Equality , which accused both the film and Bakshi himself of being racist , the film was given limited distribution , advertised as an exploitation film , and soon disappeared from theaters .

Bakshi avoided controversy by producing fantasy films, including Wizards, The Lord of the Rings and Fire and Ice. Bakshi did not produce another animated feature film after the 1992 release of Cool World.

= = = Other animated features = = = =

Although some adult @-@ oriented animated films achieved success, very few animation studios in the United States produced explicitly adult animation during the 1970s, and much of the adult @-@ oriented animation produced in the 1980s and 1990s was critically and commercially unsuccessful. Krantz produced The Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat without Bakshi 's involvement, and it was released in June 1974 to negative reviews. Charles Swenson developed Down and Dirty Duck as a project for Flo and Eddie (Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, formerly of The Turtles and The Mothers of Invention) under the title Cheap! The film, produced by Roger Corman, was released in July 1974 under the title Dirty Duck, and received negative reviews.

The film Who Framed Roger Rabbit (1988), distributed by Disney @-@ owned Touchstone Pictures, contains a number of risqué jokes that could barely be seen by audiences, but could be viewed by slowing down laserdisc copies of the film. In one scene, Baby Herman walks under a woman 's dress, raising his hand up her thighs as he passes, and emerging with an extended finger as he brings his hand down. An animator who worked on the film stated that director Robert Zemeckis never intended to censor the scene, as it was one of his favorite moments from the film. Part of the film was animated in England, and one of the film 's British animators drew a sequence in which Jessica Rabbit 's crotch was exposed without Disney 's knowledge. While the image cannot be clearly seen on the VHS, DVD and Blu @-@ ray version of the film, it appeared more clearly on the film 's laserdisc.

Animated films portraying serious stories began to regain notice from mainstream audiences in the beginning of the 21st century . Persepolis , a 2007 adaptation of Marjane Satrapi 's autobiographical

graphic novel, won the Jury Prize at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and was later nominated for an Academy Award for Best Animated Feature. The Iranian government protested the film 's inclusion in the Festival, but later allowed the film to be screened in a censored version, which altered the film 's sexual content. The 2008 Israeli film Waltz with Bashir, an animated documentary involving the 1982 Lebanon War, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

The 2016 film The Killing Joke was the first film in the DC Universe Animated Original Movies series and the first animated Batman film to receive an R rating from the MPAA, with Warner Bros. Animation and Warner Digital Series president Sam Register explaining, " From the start of production, we encouraged producer Bruce Timm and our team at Warner Bros. Animation to remain faithful to the original story? regardless of the eventual MPAA rating? We felt it was our responsibility to present our core audience? the comics @-@ loving community? with an animated film that authentically represented the tale they know all too well. " The film was released in a limited theatrical screening on July 25, 2016.

= = = Festivals = = =

In 1988, San Francisco exhibitor Expanded Cinema screened a compilation of adult @-@ oriented animated shorts under the title " Outrageous Animation " . Advertising the package as containing " the wildest cartoons ever ", the screenings contained shorts produced outside the United States, as well as independently produced American shorts . Reviews of the festival were mixed . San Francisco Chronicle writer Mick LaSalle hated almost everything screened at the festival , with the exception of Bill Plympton 's One of Those Days . In The San Francisco Examiner , David Armstrong gave the show a three @-@ star review and described the films screened as having " some of the rude vitality of the great old Warner Bros. cartoons ? and a good deal of the sexual explicitness denied those old favorites from a more cautious age . "

In 1990, Mellow Manor Productions began screening films under the title " Spike and Mike 's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation " . Founders Craig " Spike " Decker and Mike Gribble promoted their festival by handing out flyers on the streets rather than with traditional promotional techniques . In 1991, Decker and Gribble screened their first " All Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation ", promising " wild and zany films that could never be shown to our ' normal audience ' " . The festival screened newer independent shorts, as well as older shorts such as Bambi Meets Godzilla and Thank You Mask Man. Although the festival promoted works by animators who would later gain mainstream success, such as Plympton, Mike Judge, Trey Parker, and Don Hertzfeldt, many reviewers dismissed the bulk of the programming as shock value.

In 2003, Mike Judge and Don Hertzfeldt created a new touring festival of animation marketed towards adults and college students. The Animation Show brought animated shorts into more North American theaters than any previous commercial festival. Though intended for adult audiences, the programming skewed more towards Academy Award nominated animated shorts and foreign films than it did explicit material.

= = = Television animation = = =

From 1972 to 1974, Hanna @-@ Barbera produced Wait till Your Father Gets Home, an adult @-@ oriented sitcom in the style of All in the Family. The series dealt with subjects such as feminism and the generation gap. In the 1990s, a number of animated television programs appeared which challenged the Standards & Practices guidelines, including The Simpsons, Beavis and Butt @-@ Head, The Critic, The Brothers Grunt, Duckman, The Ren and Stimpy Show, and Rocko 's Modern Life. The Simpsons originated from series of shorts appearing on The Tracey Ullman Show. Because the shorts and television series aired in prime time, the show was not censored as much as programs intended to air on Saturday mornings. In addition to the show 's portrayal of brief nudity and mild language, the series has dealt with mature themes, subjects such as death, gambling addiction, religion and suicide.

As the result of the success of The Simpsons, ABC, CBS and NBC each developed animated

series to air in prime time , but none of the shows were successful . One series , Capitol Critters , focused on subjects such as gun control , interracial violence and political corruption . In his review of the series , Variety critic Brian Lowry wrote that he felt that the series ' approach was " muddled " , and that " the bland central character and cartoonish elements [...] will likely be off @-@ putting to many adults , who won 't find the political satire biting enough to merit their continued attention . Similarly , kids probably won 't be as smitten with the cartoon aspects or look " . The series was cancelled after one month . The Critic was somewhat more successful , but achieved low ratings because of ABC 's sporadic scheduling , and was cancelled by the network . The Fox Broadcasting Company picked up the series , but cancelled it four months later . While Fox allowed The Simpsons to portray animated depictions of the human buttocks , ABC would not allow similar scenes to appear on The Critic .

Beavis and Butt @-@ head was controversial for its portrayal of brief nudity , profanity and violence . Although the series was intended for adult audiences , it was shown in the afternoons , and multiple parents claimed that their children had imitated the show 's characters . The first instance of such an accusation occurred when animal lovers in Santa Cruz , California claimed that someone had blown up a cat after seeing Beavis and Butt @-@ head perform this act on television . In actuality , no such scene had ever been portrayed . When a five @-@ year @-@ old boy in Ohio set his bed on fire , killing his two @-@ year @-@ old sister , critics claimed that the incident was the result of an episode involving fire , although it has never been proven that the boy had ever watched the series . MTV responded by moving the series to a later airtime and adding disclaimers to future episodes stating explicitly not to imitate the actions of the characters , as well as removing all references to fire from the episodes .

Discussions involving a series based upon Trey Parker and Matt Stone 's video Christmas card , The Spirit of Christmas , led HBO to contact Ralph Bakshi in order to produce an animated series targeted specifically toward adults . Bakshi enlisted a team of writers , including his son , Preston , to develop Spicy Detective , later renamed Spicy City , an anthology series set in a noir @-@ ish , technology @-@ driven future . Each episode featuring a different story narrated by a female host named Raven , voiced by Michelle Phillips . The series premiered in July 1997 , beating South Park to television by over a month and becoming the first " adults only " cartoon series . Although critical reaction was mixed and largely unfavorable , Spicy City received acceptable ratings . A second season was approved , but the network wanted to fire Bakshi 's writing team and hire professional Los Angeles screenwriters . When Bakshi refused to cooperate with the network , the series was canceled .

Another notable show that paved the future of adult animation is Space Ghost Coast to Coast which is an animated parody talk show hosted by the 60s Hanna @-@ Barbera cartoon character Space Ghost . It was Cartoon Network 's first original program and also the first television show to mix live action and animation . Though it aired at an 11 : 00 pm timeslot , apart from the mild profanity , sexual references and violence it was not particularly risque like other mature shows at the time . In 2001 , Time Warner established Adult Swim as a programming block on Cartoon Network . Its schedule currently includes original programs such as Aqua Teen Hunger Force and Squidbillies and reruns of syndicated programs such as Family Guy , American Dad! and King of the Hill (all of which had their original run on Fox) . While Adult Swim has been known to air a majority of high impact adult material , there have been some cases where some episodes from certain shows were pulled out of airing schedule for going overboard , one famous example is the animated series Moral Orel . Episodes of this show have depictions of children drinking alcohol and violence against homosexuals .

American audiences have become more accepting of adult @-@ oriented animation through the popularity of American @-@ produced comedic television shows. Dramatic series such as Aeon Flux and Invasion America are less common, and still rarely successful.

Notable examples of this genre include King of the Hill, Bob 's Burgers, Rick and Morty, The Simpsons, American Dad!, Family Guy, Aqua Teen Hunger Force, South Park, Archer, Futurama, Beavis and Butt @-@ Head, Space Ghost Coast to Coast, Squidbillies, and The Ren & Stimpy Show.

In 2000 Energee Entertainment produced Australian Gloria 's House, in a series of The Storm and The Long Weekend characters Dorothy Perfeck (voiced Jean Kittson) and Millicent Perfeck (voiced Michelle Doake), she said appears to use the word fucked and fucking.

= = Europe = =

In 1954, a British studio produced an animated adaptation of George Orwell 's novel Animal Farm. This film is believed to have been one of the earliest examples of British animation, and like the book, is meant to be a portrayal or critique of Stalinism, with characters serving as analogues to figures from the Russian Revolution of 1917.

For many years , it had been problematic to import films that did not meet the approval of the United States Customs Service . In 1972 , the Customs Service refused entry of a short film titled Sinderella , depicting scenes of sexual intercourse between characters based upon Cinderella , Little Red Riding Hood , Puss in Boots , Goldilocks and the Three Bears , and Prince Charming . The film was seized as obscene material , and its distributor filed a court case and an appeal in 1974 , but lost both .

In 1973, Rene Laloux directed La Planète sauvage based on the French science fiction novel Oms en série by Stefan Wul. It has been aired on TV in the U.S. and U.K. as Fantastic Planet, and several DVD editions have been released. Also in 1973, an Italian animated movie King Dick appeared, which became a cult cartoon in the UK. A West @-@ German cartoon short called Snow White and the Seven Perverts (" Schneeflittchen unter die Sieben Bergen ") also appeared. This little film mostly parodies Snow White and has been included as part of other compilation films.

Belgian animator Picha made an entire career of directing animated sex comedy films , such as the Tarzan parody Tarzoon : Shame of the Jungle (1975) , the Stone Age film The Missing Link (1980) , the science fiction satire The Big Bang (1987) and the Snow White parody Snow White : The Sequel (2007) . The first foreign animated film to receive both an X rating and wide distribution in the United States was Tarzoon : Shame of the Jungle . A dubbed version , which featured new dialogue performed by American actors and comedians such as John Belushi , Adolph Caesar , Brian Doyle @-@ Murray , Judy Graubart , Bill Murray and Johnny Weissmuller Jr . , received an R rating . According to distributor Stuart S. Shapiro , the X rating hurt the film 's distribution , but the dubbed version " took the bite out of the film . It lost its outrageousness . " Tarzoon was banned by the New Zealand Board of Censors in 1980 .

In England, Martin Rosen directed two animated feature films based on the novels of Richard Adams: Watership Down in 1978 and The Plague Dogs in 1982. Both films deal with adult themes: Watership Down the negotiation of leadership to organize an exodus away from persecution, and The Plague Dogs on animal testing.

The Wall , an adaptation of Pink Floyd 's concept album of the same name , featured 15 minutes of painstaking traditional animation in addition to numerous live @-@ action sequences ; although the film was not by any stretch pornographic , it was an adult film (with numerous references to drugs , mental illness and sex , along with one animated sequence portraying a character talking out of his rectum and having a scrotum for a beard) and received an R rating when imported to the United States .

In 1986, England produced yet another politically @-@ themed animation, When the Wind Blows, about an older couple whose home undergoes a nuclear attack.

Werner - a German animated film based on the comic book . In an episode of many characters use foul language and flip the bird .

Felidae (1994), based on the novel by Akif Pirinçci, was an animated film about a cat inspecting various mysterious murders in his local neighborhood. The film is notable for graphic depictions of violence, coarse language and a scene where cats mate with each other.

Adult animation is known in Japan as ??????? (adult anime). In both English and Japanese, the word 'adult 'may carry connotations of a sexual nature, but anime on serious topics such as Akira or Ghost in the Shell often get referred to as 'adult 'in Japan as well, even when sex is not a key part of the story.

Animated works of an erotic nature have come to be described in western fandom as 'hentai,' the Japanese word for 'perverted,' while in Japan they are more likely to be referred to as 18???? (R @-@ 18 anime) or ????? (erotic anime).

Some of the earliest manga magazines were aimed at adults, and this provided a prime source as the basis for adult anime works. Weekly Manga Times began publication in 1956, and would be followed by Weekly Manga Goraku (1964) and Manga Action (1967). Anime works based on adult manga include Berserk, Hellsing Ultimate, Maison Ikkoku, Mushishi, Golden Boy, and Tokyo Daigaku Monogatari.

In 1969, Osamu Tezuka and Eiichi Yamamoto released Senya Ichiya Monogatari (??????) the first of a series of three animated feature films aimed at an adult audience. It was dubbed and released in the United States as One Thousand and One Arabian Nights. Osamu Tezuka and Eiichi Yamamoto collaborated on the second film in the Animerama series Kureopatora (??????) released in the United States as Cleopatra: Queen of Sex. The third film Kanashimi no Beradonna (????????) was directed by Yamamoto alone. It was entered in the Berlin Film festival, but did not achieve commercial success.

In 1984, original video animation (OVA) of an erotic nature began to be released, first Lolita Anime by Wonder Kids based on the manga work of Fumio Nakajima, and then later in the year Cream Lemon, a series which proved to be a big hit in Japan. La Blue Girl and New Angel are two other erotic anime to be released in U.S. and Europe in the early 1990s.

1988 saw the release of Akira directed by Katsuhiro Otomo which was dubbed and shown in U.S. theaters , and released on VHS around the world . Its success led to a greater interest in Japanese adult anime in the U.S. , and opened the door for other titles . In 1995 , Ghost in the Shell was released as a feature film , directed by Mamoru Oshii based on the manga by Masamune Shirow . It received critical acclaim in both Japan and abroad hinting further at the possibilities of adult animation .

The U.S. Adult Swim channel has been airing adult @-@ oriented anime series on their Saturday night Toonami block: Mobile Suit Gundam: Iron @-@ Blooded Orphans, Akame ga KILL!, Parasyte, Attack on Titan, Sword Art Online, Kill la Kill, Hunter x Hunter, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Bleach, Deadman Wonderland, Casshern Sins, Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood, Ghost in the Shell Stand Alone Complex 2nd Gig, and Cowboy Bebop. Five of the Japanese TV networks have similar late night anime blocks: Fuji Television 's Noitamina, Mainichi Broadcasting System 's Animeism and Anime Shower, Asahi Broadcasting Corporation 's Wednesday Anime and Yomiuri Telecasting Corporation 's Manpa. The programs aired have included Angel Heart, Genji Monogatari Sennenki and Hellsing.

Starting in 2004, Mahiro Maeda directed a multi @-@ episode anime adaptation of Alexandre Dumas ' novel as Gankutsuou: The Count of Monte Cristo. It was aired on Animax in Asia, and FUNimation in the United States, and received critical acclaim in the anime press.

Although some associate all anime with sexual content , hentai only makes up a very small portion of the Japanese animation industry . As the result of the misconceptions about Japanese animation , some video stores outside Japan have classified children 's anime as for adults only . Many video stores have also categorized all adult @-@ oriented animation as anime , including the works of Ralph Bakshi , the French animated film Fantastic Planet , the Canadian animated film Heavy Metal and the HBO television series Todd McFarlane 's Spawn . In the case of Spawn , Todd McFarlane directly listed anime as an influence , particularly Otomo 's Akira , and stated his hope that the show would help encourage the rise of adult animation on North American networks . This in part lead to the involvement of the Japanese studio Mad House in the production , in an attempt to " combine " the Eastern and Western styles .