ANIMATION: ART & INDUSTRY

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in 1946 because "I got tired of being told what to do". Adams worked as a background artist at Schlesinger under the name Charlotte Darling. Martha Segal remembers that she spent a lot of time smoking cigarettes in the ladies' room. She would try to convert her fellow workers when they went to the bathroom and collect money for causes. Segal says, "I never took her seriously." (Telephone interview, May 1995.) A manuscript that may shed more light on Herb Sorrell's politics is his unpublished autobiography in the UCLA Special Collections Library. The working title is *Sometimes You Can Pick Your Friends.*

16. John Canemaker, "David Hilberman", published in *Cartoonist Profiles,* no. 48 (December 1980). Canemaker wrote that Hilberman said he had been a communist before the war, but "the strike itself was not communist-led." Hilberman talked about his life, including his trip to Russia, at an ASIFA-San Francisco event honoring him on 13 May 1990.
17. "Ward Kimball", interview by Klaus Strzyz. Phone interview, 7 April 1990. Logan later read for errors a version of a conference paper that contained the quote. The paper he read was presented at the Society for Animation Studies Conference at Rochester Institute of Technology in October 1991.
18. The booklet was the subject of an article by Harold Heffernan called "Suggested Don'ts for Film-Makers" and circulated by the North American Newspaper Alliance. It ran in an unidentified San Francisco newspaper dated 6 October 1947, p. 8. The article was reprinted in the December 1990 *Release Print by* Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. The editor said somebody had sent him the article without telling him where it had come from.
19. *Fourth Report, Un-American Activities in California, 1948, Communist Front Organizations* (Sacramento: California Legislature, 1948), p. 192. Maurice Rapf also worked on the film as a writer, but because he was on contract with Disney his name did not appear in the film's credits and so did not appear in the California Legislature report. He was given credit for his work on the film in the *Hollywood Quarterly,* vol. 1, no. 4 (1946), which ran a feature article on the film. He was also given credit in vol. 2, no. 3 (April 1947), which ran an update on the film's distribution success on p. 305. In a letter to the author dated 1 September 1996, Rapf says, "That script took about six months to prepare. Hubley and Eastman were in uniform and working for the Air Force unit at the Hal Roach studio. We met only once a week – weekends – when Phil and John were free. The project and the teaming of Lardner, Eastman, Hubley and me was arranged by the Hollywood Writers Mobilization which was an offshoot of the Screen Writers' Guild, headed by Robert Rossen, for the purposes of producing a variety of writing projects for agencies of the government seeking to further the causes of the war."
20. Etcheverry's interview of Scott dates from the 1980s. Tom Sito says that in the Special Collections Library at California State University, Northridge, there are documents regarding the animation unions in New York and Los Angeles, including a pamphlet written by Bill Scott on why people should not join IATSE.
21. Schwartz, The Hollywood Writers' Wars, p. 253
22. Bill Melendez was interviewed at the Society for Animation Studies Conference at Cal Arts in Valencia, California, 24 October 1992. Faith Hubley, in a letter to the author dated 23 July 1991, confirmed the rumor, but according to Hubley the rumor mill put the sum at $35,000. Charles Solomon in *The History of Animation* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p. 222, mentioned the rumor.
23. David Raksin testified on September 20,1951, (82) H 1348-6-B, pp. 1682–1695. He named 11 people. Bill Scott in Paul Etcheverry's interview said, "Several minor figures ... assistant animators and so forth" also left UPA for being "disloyal".
24. Charles Dagget refused to name names on September 17, 1951, (82) H 1348-6-A, pp. 1488–1491, but on January 21, 1952, (82) H 1375-7, pp. 2459–2487, he named names.
25. Telephone conversation, 23 March 1993.
26. The discussion on the purge in Canada is based to a large extent on information found in Forsyth Hardy, *John Grierson* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), pp. 154–155, and Gary Evans, *John Grierson and the National Film Board of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 240–258.
27. Hardy, *John Grierson,* p. 156.
28. Hardy, *John Grierson,* pp. 156–163.
29. Evans, *John Grierson,* p. 262.
30. Evans, *John Grierson,* pp. 258–265.
31. Telephone conversation with Don McWilliams, 1 December 1993. He mentions McLaren's connections with communists in *The Creative Process: Norman McLaren.*

Cohen, Karl. "Blacklisted Animators". *Forbidden Animation: Censored Cartoons and Blacklisted Animators in America.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997. 155–191. Edited. Published with permission of McFarland & Company Inc.

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Clay Animation and the Early Days of Television: The "Gumby" Series

Michael Frierson [1994]

The advent of television, which began its first period of sustained growth in 1948, is cited as a chief cause of the decline of the Hollywood studio system that began during the 1950s. This drastic upheaval had the unlikely effect of returning clay to the mass audience after decades of relative obscurity.[1]

Film studios, panicked by the threat of competition from television, at first tried to buy their way into the medium. But under scrutiny for antitrust violations, and recently ordered to divest themselves of their exhibition outlets by the Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Paramount, et al.* (1948), the major studios were prevented by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from making significant inroads into television ownership. The studios opted for the technological "quick fix" of Cinerama, Cinemascope, Vistavision, and 3-D, as well as an increase in color film production – in an effort to make their product more attractive than that of television.

They also searched frantically for budget-cutting measures to take in their operations. With their relatively high production costs per minute, the cartoon production units of Hollywood studios were targets for reduction throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Warner Bros. cartoon production for 1949–1952 averaged 30 films a year, but one decade later (1959–62) that number had fallen to 20 films a year. Ultimately, the cartoon units were closed down: Columbia/Screen Gems' in 1949, MGM's in 1967, and Warner Bros.' in 1969. The studios also began syndicating their animated product to television as part of a package that included feature films. This move ultimately brought cartoons to any local television station in search of program material to fill the dead spots in the local kiddie hour.

The Growth of Children's Programming

While theatrical exhibition was declining in the 1950s, television was beginning to exhibit a greater sophistication in its programming strategies, including an emerging understanding of how to

program for children. "The Howdy Doody Show", which ran on NBC from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm Saturday evenings from 1947 to 1960, generally is regarded as the first children's television program; however, the first children's show to have a profound impact on networks, producers, and advertisers was "The Mickey Mouse Club", an hour-long show scheduled for 5:00 pm weekdays, that first aired 10 October 1955.

The show was a remarkably astute move for all the parties involved. In 1951, ABC-TV, which had emerged from the NBC Blue radio network but lacked the capital to take advantage of the growth of television, had merged with United Paramount Theatres, the newly divested arm of Paramount that was flush with capital and already worried about the decline of moviegoing. Disney, searching for capital and publicity for its new amusement park, Disneyland, saw ABC-Paramount Theatres as the solution on both counts. ABC-Paramount bought roughly a one-third interest in Disneyland, and Disney began to produce "The Mickey Mouse Club" as a break-even proposition that was little more than a vehicle for advertising the new park and the entire Disney product line. ABC gained a broad family audience through the high visibility of the Disney characters and the first television run of Disney theatrical cartoons.[2]

What was truly remarkable about "The Mickey Mouse Club", however, was the way it transformed children's advertising on television. Cy Schneider, the account executive for Mattel Toys at the Carson/Roberts Agency, points out that "[i]n 1955 there were no recognized brand names in toys. Household names such as Mattel, Hasbro, and Fisher-Price were unknown to the consumer. An adult buying a toy for a child went into a conventional toy store and asked for something appropriate for a six-year-old girl or a nine-year-old boy or perhaps the fad product of the particular season, if there were one. (Imagine doing that today at a Toys-R-Us.) Since children had limited exposure to specific toys, even they hardly knew what to ask for."[3] "The Mickey Mouse Club" changed all that because, "[f]rom 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm on weekdays, the show dominated the airwaves, and every Wednesday from 5:30 to 5:45 when Mattel played their three commercials, 90 per cent of the nation's kids were watching the first toy commercials ever put on film".[4] The astounding success of the Mattel "Burp Gun" during Christmas 1955 – a product featured in those ads – was testament to the newfound power of television for children. With the Burp Gun, Mattel more than doubled its overall sales volume in one year, and the symbiotic relationship between networks, program producers, and advertisers of children's products was forged.[5]

As television grew phenomenally in the 1950s and the recycling of studio cartoons became absurdly repetitious, broadcasters looked for new programming sources to fill the lucrative and expanding children's market. The search for cost-efficient program material – cheap shows that delivered large audiences of children to advertisers – gave rise in 1957 to Hanna-Barbera's application of the limited animation techniques that were rediscovered by the animators of United Productions of America (UPA), an unforgivable crime in the eyes of many animation fans. Television made household names out of Hanna-Barbera characters – Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Pixie and Dixie, the first cartoon

stars born not in movie theaters but in the broadcast medium.

At the same time that Hanna-Barbera began reshaping cel animation, clay had its first chance in many years to re-establish its audience; television programmers were eager to try out anything on kids as long as the "cost per thousand" (the price advertisers paid to buy 1,000 viewers) was reasonable. In this speculative climate, driven by television's hunger for programming, clay animation brought forth its first television superstar, an offbeat character who represents a convergence of the forces shaping children's television in the mid-1950s: Gumby.

Gumby, Art Clokey, and his Mentors

Art Clokey is the sculptor-filmmaker behind the blue-green clay star of the 127 "Gumby" episodes produced between 1955 and 1971. (Three more films were produced in the series that did not feature Gumby.) "Behind" is an appropriate word here, because Clokey invested a large measure of his personal philosophy and creative energy in each episode. Transferring the bedtime stories he told his children to film, Clokey presented Gumby and his horse and sidekick, Pokey, in creative six-minute episodes that refrained from indulging in the cynicism and violence Clokey disliked in classic Hollywood cartoons.

Television provided Clokey with the opportunity to explore not only a different medium but also a message quite different from that of traditional theatrical cartoons. Gumby embodies a simplistic ethic of fair play and kindness toward his fellow animated creatures. He is forever good-natured, open, caring, and happy. With his tiny mitten hands, bell-bottom legs, and whimsical pompadour (suggested by a high school portrait of Clokey's father with a cowlick), Gumby is almost irritating in his utter cuteness.

Gumby's unwavering sense of goodness is the logical outgrowth of his creator's lifelong interest in religion. Clokey believes that Gumby is a reflection of the underlying innocence and idealism that have permeated his relatively sheltered life. Clokey was born on 12 October 1921 in Detroit, the son of Arthur Wesley Farrington and Mildred Shelters Cairnes. He was raised a Christian Scientist, lived in a foster home with a woman spiritualist, and was adopted by a devout Episcopalian, Joseph W. Clokey, a composer at Pomona College in Oregon. Clokey studied to become an Episcopal priest before attending film school at the University of Southern California (USC) in 1951. In the mid-1960s, along with the Beatles and a large percentage of the population of Southern California, he explored the burgeoning self-awareness movement through a number of groups. "I explored ways to become a better director by getting into all kinds of self-awareness. Encounter groups, psychotherapy, Esalen. You name it, I tried it", he says.[6] Clokey's continuing interest in Eastern philosophy is evident in his 1975 film *Mandala*, a work with spiritual overtones in which a camera takes a seemingly endless journey through a long series of richly detailed, sculpted clay archways. Clokey says, "I attempted in *Mandala* to suggest a time- and mind-expanding experience, the evolution of consciousness, by orchestrating deep cultural symbols from the collective unconscious". Moreover, Clokey believes that part of Gumby's appeal also comes from our collective past: the appeal of clay is universal, the clay itself being "a symbol of the basic

nature of life and human beings. As I've toured the country with Gumby, I've realized that kids pick up on that. Their fascination with Gumby is a gut reaction to clay – not the character – just to the clay itself."[7]

In 1979, Clokey and his wife Gloria journeyed to India to visit the avatar Sathya Sai Baba and came away confirmed believers. Clokey claims to have seen the guru materialize objects in his bare hands, and is convinced that he eventually will take control of the world's problems because he has supernatural powers. Sathya Sai Baba is also credited with Gumby's resurgence: "I stood there with Gumby [before Sai Baba], and he did this circular motion with his arms. I could see the sacred ash ... coming out of his hand. He plopped it right on Gumby, and when we came home things started to happen across the nation – college and theater tours. The episodes started appearing on TV again, sales of the Gumby toys began to pick up, and then Eddie Murphy did his Gumby skit on 'Saturday Night Live'."[8] Later incarnations of the Gumby spin-off toys reflected Clokey's deeply held beliefs: some models had the Sanskrit word for "love" emblazoned on the chest.

While religious beliefs have shaped the content of Clokey's work, his visual style has been guided by another guru: Slavko Vorkapich, whom he studied under at USC. A Yugoslavian immigrant and a student of painting, Vorkapich came to Hollywood in 1921. Best known for his collaboration with Robert Florey and Gregg Toland on the experimental film *The Life and Death of 9413 – A Hollywood Extra* (1928), Vorkapich wrote a few articles outlining his filmmaking theories (ca. 1930). In his application of graphic art principles to filmmaking, Vorkapich parallels Eisenstein's thinking about "conflicts within the shot" (or "montage cell") when he states: "Like lines, colors and sounds, different motions have different emotional values ... . There are many such fundamental expressive motions and their possibilities of combination are unlimited. To mention briefly only a few: Descending motion: heaviness, danger, crushing power (avalanche, waterfall); Pendulum motion: monotony, relentlessness (monotonous walk, prison scenes, caged animals); Cascading motion, as of a bouncing ball: sprightliness, lightness, elasticity, etc. (Douglas Fairbanks)."[9]

Vorkapich's methods of compressing motion and visual energy into a shot earned him a niche in Hollywood as a montage expert, directing special montage sequences for features, including *Crime without Passion* (1934), *The Good Earth* (1937), *The Last Gangster* (1937), and *Shop Worn Angel* (1938). A 1937 *New York Times* article summarized Vorkapich's methods of montage: "Now, a 'montage', it might be wise to explain, is a panoramic effect in which the events covering a period of time are boiled down to a succession of rapidly paced interlocking 'flashes'... . It is a far different thing from simple continuity cutting and Vorkapich refers to it as 'film ideagraphy.'... In preparing a 'montage', the first task is to ascertain exactly what is to be told. He then writes his own script, listing the central idea involved, with suggestions for expressing them [sic] pictorially."[10]

Clokey says with some reverence, "Vorkapich got down to basics. His theory was that motion pictures dealt only with motion and the illusion of three-dimensional objects created by the director's use of shapes, shadows, colors, and motion. He said if you understand

how to organize those things through camera angles, camera movement, pace, and so forth, you could make any film more interesting. And it happened to me. I got my first job doing commercials for Coca-Cola and Budweiser because people were fascinated with how I could make the screen come alive in ways that other people couldn't."[11] Clokey continued to study under Vorkapich after leaving USC through private seminars that Vorkapich held in his home.

Vorkapich's reliance on fundamental graphic shapes and his concentration of imagery into a kind of visual shorthand is evident in Clokey's abstract animation, particularly in an early work called *Gumbasia* (1955). Clokey notes: "In *Gumbasia*, I filmed geometric and amorphous shapes made from modeling clay of many colors. These shapes moved and transformed to the background rhythm of jazz. I wanted to avoid as much as possible the distraction of recognizable forms in *Gumbasia.* It was an experiment in pure movement, where the whole plane moved out in different shapes this way and that. *Gumbasia* was filled with movements that, when put together, created a feeling."[12]

Vorkapich's tenets, integrated over many years of filmmaking into Clokey's work, are deeply embedded in the "Gumby" series. First, and perhaps most evident, Clokey purposely drew the character designs of Gumby and Pokey from basic geometric shapes, combining simple forms like cylinders, triangles, and circles. This style of character has several advantages for the clay animator. It reduces the time needed to construct a character and simplifies the animation of movements suggested by the narrative. Visually, it offers a cleaner, simplified form for character action and dialogue, regardless of the setting. Moreover, in a medium in which the restraints of simple stories and short running times often require a character's external design to directly objectify its inner state, Vorkapich's "ideagraphy" – making ideas visually concrete and easily identifiable – is clearly useful. For instance, the character designs of Prickle – an erect dinosaur with triangular spines – and Goo – a rounded water droplet with soft locks of hair – visually express what Clokey regards as the two fundamental types of people in the world: "The prickly are the rigid and uptight, and the gooey are easygoing and flowing".[13]

Second, Vorkapich's theories of montage are also evident throughout Clokey's work. In many shots in the "Gumby" series, there is careful attention to screen vectors – the angle and direction that a character moves through filmic space. The careful and creative use of these vectors from shot to shot gives the episodes a seamless, flowing style. For example, in the title – theme song sequence that opens most episodes, there are four shots in which Gumby (or his body rolled up into a ball) moves screen left to right along a vector line; the cuts guide the viewer's eye, using very precise matches in screen direction and screen position. In one shot of this sequence, Gumby glides along the established vector line, standing on one foot. The camera tracks along with him effortlessly. In the background, a series of artfully arranged objects break up the screen space, creating a contrasting, syncopated rhythm and providing a visual counterpoint to the flow of Gumby and the camera. At the end of the shot, Gumby collides with an object and appears to tumble into the next shot – a different location – simply through carefully crafted editing. While

maintaining continuity of screen vectors is commonplace in film editing, the careful construction of these cuts in "Gumby", reflecting Vorkapich's influence, often approaches true artistry.

Jim Danforth *(When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* [1965], *Flesh Gordon* [1975], *Caveman* [1982]), a stop-motion animator who began his career in the Clokey studio after he graduated from high school in 1958, feels that Vorkapich's influence broadened Clokey's filmmaking talents more than it focused his skills as an animator:

> I guess [Clokey] was, and still is, basically a good filmmaker rather than specifically an animator or special-effects person. With his background in film aesthetics and editing, he taught me a lot about editing – much more about editing, in fact, than about animation. Art introduced me to this kinetic, arabesque style of cutting that he'd picked up from Vorkapich.
>
> But once he'd taught me all these wonderful things about editing, the paradox was that, if I started applying them, he'd get real upset. I remember one scene where I had a character fall backwards into the camera lens, block the image completely, then roll away from the camera and stand up in the next shot. I remember Art got annoyed at that – it smacked of some kind of editing, and we were supposed to be animators. Art would still rather be making art films. So he'd toss in some of Vorkapich's philosophy into these little puppet films when he could, but somehow it wasn't okay for us to do it.[14]

After leaving USC and Vorkapich's tutelage, Clokey struggled to find work wherever he could. At a prep school in Studio City, California, Clokey taught everything from art to chemistry and tutored a child whose father happened to be Sam Engel, the powerful producer from Twentieth Century-Fox and head of the Motion Picture Producers' Association. "Sam was fascinated with *Gumbasia,* the art film I'd made under Vorkapich", Clokey recalls. "He said it was the most exciting he had ever seen and suggested I animate clay characters in films for children. He financed the first *Gumby* pilot film, so he's sort of the Godfather of Gumby."[15]

"Gumby" went into production in 1955 and aired on NBC in the summer of 1956. The first five episodes were aired in rotation on "The Howdy Doody Show", beginning 16 June 1956 and continuing through 20 October 1956. Five new episodes premiered between 3 November 1956 and 2 February 1957.[16] Gumby soon got his own network show, which ran Saturday mornings from 10:30 to 11:00 on NBC from 23 March to 16 November 1957.[17] The show was set in Mr. McKee's Fun Shop, with Bob Nicholson, formerly of "Howdy Doody", hosting as Scotty McKee. Clokey's production budget for the clay-animated segments was $650 per minute, roughly half what Hanna-Barbera was spending at the time for a minute of limited cel animation. By contrast, Clokey prided himself on producing full animation – in three dimensions – that capitalized on the inherent advantages of the medium: the movement in space of objects that create their own shadows and perspective; a high level of surface detail, found naturally in clay and in the children's toys used for props and set pieces; and the screen "presence" a three-dimensional character has when photographed at eye level.

Though NBC gave Clokey complete artistic freedom in his animations, the technical simplicity of many episodes reflects the limited budgets and short production schedules under which he worked. Colored gobo patterns thrown on

cycloramas were frequently the only backdrop for an obvious tabletop set. Mistakes were often not re-photographed. Flying objects whose wires are visible, objects that lose registration, and clay that sags over a number of frames were commonly left in the final cut. The pacing of the action is much slower than in the classic Hollywood cartoon. Clokey's rejection of the studio aesthetic of gags, takes, and violence and his reliance on slower pacing did, however, provide one benefit: longer screen time for any given shot. Special effects were usually simple and occasionally obvious to the point of shattering illusions. In *The Small Planets*, the filmmaker resorts to the most basic low-tech special effects: scratching the emulsion off the film to suggest retrorockets firing, and using cotton to suggest smoke. Throughout Clokey's mise-en-scene, miniature objects, dollhouse furniture, small plastic plants, and children's trains, trucks, tractors, and spaceships are prominent. These objects provided simple solutions to the problem of set design.

But, more importantly, the toys and miniatures reflect Clokey's fascination with creating narratives set in a "pretend world", a childlike approach that has obvious appeal for children. For adults and older children, the inclusion of real objects prompts a continuous decoding of the image, a constant comparison of scales and surface features to determine the nature of each object, a search of the frame for identifiable objects. An unconscious set of questions runs through a "Gumby" episode: Is this object clay or not? What material is it made of? How big is it really? Frequently, a mass-produced object of popular culture, or an object of known size and composition, provides the Rosetta stone to decode these questions: Gumby stands on a 45rpm record; Gumby gets entangled in a toy gumball machine; Gumby stands near an egg that has smashed a toy car; the Blockheads hide behind real toy building blocks. Compared with the early work of Will Vinton, whose mise-en-scene is richly detailed and almost entirely made of clay or clay-covered objects, this style looks quaint and unsophisticated, a pastiche that serves only as a backdrop for the narrative. Clokey argues, "Using only clay and clay-covered set pieces gives Vinton's work a certain sophisticated appeal to the intellect, to the artist and adults. Vinton's work is good art. But I'd go crazy, I wouldn't have the patience to do the fabulous things he does. Our stuff has a mass appeal, particularly to kids, because we included real toys and used other materials to dress our sets. We used a mix of media simply to get across a narrative."[18]

Gumby ran only one year on the network. When a management dispute prompted the NBC board of directors to fire the network president, Pat Weaver, in 1957, the ax fell on "Gumby", too, since the series was a pet project of Weaver's. Clokey scraped together the money to buy the rights to the episodes NBC had financed and, rather than paying a distributor 40 per cent of the gross, traveled the country himself syndicating the program in major cities. Clokey was struggling now with two full-time jobs: both producing and marketing "Gumby". While he was trying to continue production on new episodes, Lakeside Toy Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota, impressed with the show's performance in major cities, approached Clokey with a licensing agreement to manufacture Gumby toys. Relying on a strategy as old as Felix the Cat, Clokey

hoped spin-off merchandise would increase the profitability of the animated series and simultaneously increase the popularity of the show.

Gumby toys were a smashing success. Given the immense new marketing power of television to reach into the American home, it was not surprising to find a set of Mickey Mouse ears, a Davey Crockett coonskin cap, and a Gumby doll in most television homes. Lakeside representatives now roamed the country, buying and bartering local spots for their toy line (including Gumby) and using those purchases as a bargaining chip in syndication deals with local stations for the "Gumby" series. The stations received good children's programming at a reasonable rate, and Lakeside cultivated the profitable symbiosis between broadcasting and toy manufacturers that Mattel's Burp Gun had pioneered. With Lakeside handling most of the syndication chores, Clokey was free to concentrate on production.

After "Gumby" had become successful, Clokey was approached by the Lutheran Church in 1959 to produce a series of puppet films illustrating Christian ethics for children. Using articulated puppets, Clokey created the "Davey and Goliath" series from 1959 until 1972. Each episode ran 15 minutes, over twice the length of "Gumby". With two series in production, Clokey employed almost 20 people in his growing operation: 4 storyboard artists, 6 to 8 animators, a camera technician, and 3 people building sets, as well as a battery of people in the front office. Clokey also produced 6 television half-hour specials for the Lutheran Church using Davey and Goliath: "Christmas Lost and Found" (1965), "Happy Easter" (1967), "New Year Promise" (1967), "School ... Who Needs It" (1971), "To the Rescue" (1975), and "Halloween Who-Dun-It?" (1977).[19]

Gumby Resurrected

The revival of Gumby in the 1980s had its roots in the growth of filmmaking courses on college campuses nationwide, the heightened awareness of animation created by the rise of independent animators during the 1970s, the 1974 Academy Award for *Closed Mondays,* and a nostalgia for almost any television show from the 1950s. A low-technology medium, clay has for years shown growing popularity with the independent, low-budget student filmmaker. Riding this initial wave of interest in clay, Clokey made some personal appearances around Los Angeles and toured college campuses in the early 1980s. He was astonished at the enthusiastic response that greeted him. College audiences packed auditoriums and sang the "Gumby" theme song that television had etched into their childhood memories over 20 years earlier.

About the same time, Eddie Murphy brought forth on NEC's "Saturday Night Live" his stand-up foam-rubber version of the green clay hero and the now-famous refrain, "I'm Gumby dammit!" Television's power to highlight, to glamorize, hit full force when it returned a fading animated figure to a high place in the nation's consciousness. Clokey's reaction to the ensuing hoopla was typically low-key. He saw Murphy's act as part of the renewed interest in the lost innocence of the 1950s, and characteristically, he viewed that interest in religious terms: "I never minded the whole Eddie Murphy thing. I've got a good sense of humor, and I think it's a reflection of his true response to the series. We're always being put down today. People tell us, 'You're a lousy person.

You're an inferior person.' But now people are responding, saying, as Eddie Murphy says, 'I'm Gumby dammit!' That means, 'I'm what Gumby represents: an innocent, good, pure person'".[20] Spurred by the free network publicity, sales of "Gumby" episodes on videocassettes and of Gumby paraphernalia revived, and have remained steady.

In 1987, with the Gumby revival in full swing, Clokey signed a deal with Lorimar Telepictures to produce a new series of episodes for national syndication. The $8 million budget was to fund the production of 99 new six-minute episodes. These episodes were combined with some of the older existing episodes to make a syndication package of 65 shows, three episodes per show. With Lorimar's backing, Clokey was able to produce animation with "better sets, large crowd scenes, finely crafted soundtracks, complex computer-controlled camera movements, and other luxuries that were not available when the original series was produced some 21 years ago".[21] Thematically, the new shows parallel the old ones by "stressing positive attitudes and values including consideration, cooperation and the ability to resolve problems without resorting to violence".[22] The package was syndicated in 92 markets around the United States, representing 79 per cent of the viewing audience.[23]

From 1989 to 1992, the studio produced a feature-length film called *Gumby 1.* Working independently, Clokey took the profits, existing sets, and many of the animators from the new series to ensure that he retained complete control of his original script. The crew of 18 animators for the series was pared down to 5, and the 87-minute feature took $3.2 million and 30 months to shoot. The story is "authentic Gumby, through and through", according to Clokey, and revolves around the evil Blockhead's attempts to foreclose on Gumby's barn-studio. Gumby organizes a miniature version of Farm-Aid with his new rock band to benefit the locals. Before the film ends, Gumby has journeyed into the Middle Ages, flown into outer space, and made a music video with his girlfriend. The film is expected to open in the fall of 1993.[24]

Art Clokey, the man who revived clay animation by exploiting its potential in the new electronic medium of television, has clearly played a crucial role in the medium's coming of age. A spiritual person, Clokey brought forth a nontraditional character in a nontraditional medium and managed to survive under the economic demands imposed by television. The durability of the "Gumby" series stands as the best evidence that clay animation is viable and appealing filmmaking, and Clokey's perseverance in finding a niche for his series paved the way for the new generation of clay animators.

Notes

1. John Izod and Douglas Gomery cite a number of other contributing factors. John Izod, *Hollywood and the Box Office, 1895–1986* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 134. Douglas Gomery, *Movie History* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1991), 280.
2. Izod, 163.
3. Cy Schneider, *Children s Television: The Art, The Business, and How It Works* (Chicago: NTC Business Books, 1987), 18.
4. Schneider, 21.
5. Schneider, 22.

6. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
7. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
8. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
9. Slavko Vorkapich, "Cinematics: Some Principles Underlying Effective Cinematography", *Cinematographic Annual*, ed. Hal Hall (Hollywood: ASC Holding Co., 1930), reprinted in *Hollywood Directors 1914–1940*, ed. Richard Koszarski (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 257–258.
10. "He Calls It Ideagraphy", *New York Times*, 5 December 1937.
11. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
12. Louis Kaplan and Scott Michaelsen, *Gumby: The Authorized Biography of the World s Favorite dayboy* (New York: Harmony, 1986), 1.
13. Kaplan and Michaelsen, 4.
14. Telephone interview with Jim Danforth, 28 October 1982.
15. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
16. Personal correspondence with E. Roger Muir (the executive producer of "The Howdy Doody Show"), 6 January 1992. According to Muir, these early episodes included "Moon Trip", "Mirrorland", "Lost and Found", "Gumby on the Moon", and "Trapped on the Moon".
17. Stuart Fischer, *Kid s TV: The First 25 Years* (New York: Facts on File, 1983), 96.
18. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
19. See George Woolery, *Animated TV Specials: The Complete Directory to the First Twenty-five Years, 1962–1987* (Mctuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989).
20. Interview with Art Clokey, 1982.
21. Karl Cohen, "Gumby", *Animation Magazine 2* (Summer 1988): 8.
22. Cohen, 8.
23. Telephone interview with Art Clokey, 28 April 1993.
24. Interview with Art Clokey, 1993.

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Commercial Breaks

Bill Hanna & Tom Ito [1996]

The future looked bright to our growing company during the soaring sixties, and we ambitiously decided to share that vision with our television audience. During the crowded months of preparation for the great leap forward into our own studio, Joe and our writers were also busy with the development of a new cartoon series designed to propel viewers into the ultra-modern world of the twenty-first century. Encouraged by the growing popularity of "The Flintstones", it seemed creatively logical to conceive a show calculated to transport our audience from the first frontier of the Stone Age to the final frontier of the Space Age.

Similar in format to "The Flintstones", the new series would focus on the adventures of another typical suburban family – with one major difference. This new cartoon cast would be launched into a futuristic setting where they would literally become stars in their own inter-galactic society.

"The Jetsons" premiered on ABC in September 1962. The new show featured a well-rounded family who were introduced one by one in our main title song:

Meet George Jetson
Jane, his wife
Daughter Judy
His boy Elroy

In addition, the Jetson family unit included a rambunctious family dog named Astro. He was evolved enough in rover intellect to actually communicate in English with his owners, despite an inescapable tendency to begin every word with the letter "r" – "Rots of ruck!" (Astro's impertinent aptitude for speech would later be adapted for use by another cartoon canine with timid instincts and a ravenous appetite named Scooby Doo.) Completing the household was a robot with maternal instincts named Rosie who was the prototype of hired hardware help.

In general theme "The Jetsons" may appear to be the mere flip side of "The Flintstones", but each series had quite a distinct look, tone, and feel of its own. The visual elements employed in "The Flintstones" were to look as solid in suggestion as the name of their hometown of Bedrock. The paints and colors used in the scenes were generally earthy and warm, and the artwork thick-textured and substantial. Boulders, caves, and primitive implements were all drawn in a manner calculated to project a massive and rounded physical impression of the Stone Age.

While "The Flintstones" were vividly earthy in appearance, "The Jetsons" series, by contrast, was distinctly airy in its overall design. The characters and