Chapter II

Okay, I heard you: A Brief Survey of Tom and Jerry

... even before the first Tom and Jerry cartoon, the cat and the mouse were there, embryonically waiting for immortality.

- Smoodin, Cartoons and Comics 138

What are now called ‘Departments of English’ will be renamed departments of ‘Cultural Studies’ where Batman comics, [T&J cartoons], Mormon theme parks, television, movies and rock will replace Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Wallace Stevens.

- Harold Bloom, qtd. in Will Brooker Batman Unmasked 1.

The motion picture industry was revolutionised by the introduction of sound film and within two years of this innovation spread to animation. Although the first cartoon to use synchronised sound was Max Fleischer’s My Old Kentucky Home (1926). Walt Disney’s Steamboat Willie (1928), the third theatrical appearance of Mickey Mouse is often cited as the first sound cartoon due to its success and popularity.
No discussion on cartoon is complete without a reference to Walt Disney and his contributions. During the early 1930s animation seemed to be divided into two factions: Walt Disney and “everyone else.” Mickey Mouse’s popularity had established the animated character into the ranks of the most popular screen personalities in the world, ranking alongside Charlie Chaplin. For a while it seemed that everything Disney touched was successful. Merchandising based on Disney cartoons rescued a number of companies from bankruptcy during the depths of the Depression and Disney took advantage of this popularity to move forward with further innovations in animation (Smoodin, *Animating Culture* 218-219).

Disney is responsible for the development of the three-strip “technicolor” process in motion pictures (the Technicolor company worked with Disney to perfect the process) and the first full-color theatrical cartoon was Disney’s *Flowers and Trees* (1932). Disney also developed the idea of lifelike realism in animation to a degree that has rarely been surpassed since. His animation production staff, including technical innovator Ub Iwerks, developed the “multiplane camera” to provide additional depth and perception in animation as opposed to the typical “two-dimensional” drawings used to produce animated film. The continuing emphasis on story development and characterisation resulted in yet another smash hit for Disney, *Three Little Pigs* (1933) which is seen as the first cartoon in which characters displayed unique
personalities. This cartoon is still considered to be the most successful animated shot of all time.

Disney had competitors though none were able to topple his studio from the throne of animation until the 1940s. Disney’s greatest competitor during the silent era the Pat Sullivan studio faced its downfall after an uninspired attempt at bringing *Felix the Cat* into the sound medium. Disney’s long-time partner and friend Iwerks left the Disney studio in 1930 to form his own company. Iwerks produced three cartoon series during the 1930s *Flip the Frog* and *Willie Whopper* for Metro Goldwyn Mayer (M.G.M.) and the *Comicolor Cartoons* for Celebrity Productions.

Disney’s competitors, Fleischer Studios operated by Max Fleischer and his younger brother Dave Fleischer produced *Betty Boop* cartoons and *Popeye the Sailor*. Popeye’s popularity rivaled that of Mickey Mouse at times and Popeye fan clubs sprang up across the United States in imitation of Mickey’s fan clubs. However, stricter censorship rules enforced in 1934 required animation producers to remove bathroom gags and risqué humor. The Fleischers in particular had to tone down the content of their *Betty Boop* which waned in popularity afterwards. The Fleischers produced a number of *Color Classics* cartoons during the
1930s that attempted to emulate Walt Disney, but their success was limited.

In 1930, former Disney animators Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising began producing a series of Looney Tunes cartoons starring, Bosko. Harman-Ising parted company with Schlesinger in 1933 and began producing Happy Harmonies for M.G.M. In addition to these studios a number of other cartoon studios thrived during the 1930s.

Walt Disney produced Snow White (1937) the first American feature-length animated movie. However, Disney was not the first to make an animated cartoon longer than the standard one reel. Fleischer Studios produced two-reel Popeye Technicolor feature films, Popeye the Sailor Meets Sindbad the Sailor (1936), Popeye the Sailor Meets Ali Baba's Forty Thieves (1937) and Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp (1939). They also produced an animated version of Gulliver's Travels (1939) that was followed by Mister Bug Goes to Town (1941). The two Fleischer feature films were the only American animated films other than Disney’s until 1959, when UPA released 1001 Arabian Nights. As Disney began to concentrate on the production of animated feature films, he did not personally oversee his short cartoons in the manner that he had before. At M.G.M. directors William Hanna and Joseph Barbera scored a hit with their short film Puss Gets The Boot (1940).
Even as the production of animated cartoon remained confined to the United States and Hollywood, stray attempts were made in different countries including India. The first Indian animated film was *Agkadyanchi Mouj* (Matchsticks’ Fun, 1915) by Dhundiraj Govind ‘Dadasaheb’ Phalke, who was also the founder of Indian cinema. The first Indian animated film with soundtrack was *On a Moonlit Night* (1934) by R.C. Boral. In 1930 the Prabhat Film Company distributed *Jambu the Fox* (the name of the director is unknown), together with *Amrit Manthan* directed by V. Shantaram (Bendazzi 404).

Mohan Bhavnani one of the India’s first documentarians, produced *Lafanga Longoor* (1935) featuring the adventures of a funny little monkey. (It was animated by a German whose name was not released). G.K Gokhale entered the animation scene with the *Superman Myth* (1939). The Madras-- based Gemini Studio produced *Cinema Kadamban* (1947) an eight minute short, filmed by the noted cartoonist N. Thanu.

Regular production of animated films started in India after the opening of a Cartoon Film Unit in 1965, within the Film Division-- a state funded organisation engaged in producing newsreels and documentaries. It enjoyed the expertise of G.K. Gokhale and the American Clair H. Weeks, a former animator at Disney Studio. Their first release was
Banyan Tree, based on a Buddhist Jataka story (Bendazzi 405). By the 1960s the number of films production increased. It included the works of eminent directors like Pramod Pati-- Wives and Wives (1962), Trip (1970) and Abid (1972). It was during these times that Gokhale produced some of his best works such as Tandava (1974), Homo Saps (1966), and Chaos (1969). Ram Mohan scripted, designed and animated many of the cartoon produced by Film Division from 1956 to 1967 including Baap Re Baap (1972), Fire Games (1974) and educational series like Down to Earth.

His The Tree (1991) is a fable about the lifelong, joyful relationship between a man and a tree. V.G. Samant joined the Cartoon Film Unit in 1959 and he produced and directed a large number of educational films including: Law of Nature, Precious Water, Race with Death and others. He made a foray into the entertainment field with The Lion and the Rabbit (1981), a story from the Panchatanrta. Many eminent scriptwriter, designer, animator and director like A.R Sen, B.R Dohling, B.R Shendge, G.H Saraiya, R.A Shaikh, V.K Wankhede, and Arun Gondade were part of the Film Division at various points of time. Women presence was ensured by Shaila Paralkar, Rani D. Burra, and Naina Sabnani (Bendazzi 404-405).

Overall, in comparison with live action production, Indian animation is as a pygmy to a giant and the future of the industry does not seem to be encouraging. In India, animation still remains at the mercy of
the state owned Film Division, whose endeavors are mostly limited to the
productions of educational documentaries. The style of Indian animation
moreover betrays the ethical heritage of local animators and almost always
borrows from western productions and new films referring rich figurative,
pictorial and colourist tradition of the country are limited. To quote a
young Indian animator and journalist, Kireet Khurana: “Animation in India
is still waiting for a Prince” (Bendazzi 407). The production of animated
films was an exclusive industry that did not branch off very often into other
areas. The various animation studios worked almost exclusively in
producing animated cartoons and animated titles for movies. The low-
budget Superman serials of the 1940s used animated sequences of
Superman flying and performing super-powered feats in the place of live-
action special effects, but this was not a common practice.

The exclusivity of animation also resulted in the birth of motion
picture with special effect Stop motion animation. In spite of their
similarities, the two genres of stop-motion and hand-drawn animation
rarely came together. Stop-motion animation made a name for itself with
the 1933 box-office hit King Kong, where animator Willis O'Brien
defined many of the major stop motion techniques used for the next 50
years. The success of King Kong led to a number of other special effects
films, including Mighty Joe Young, also animated by O'Brien that helped
several animators, including Ray Harryhausen, to start their careers. Stop
motion animation reached the height of its popularity during the 1950s with science fiction films. Stop motion developed to the point where Douglas Trumbull’s effects in *2001: A Space Odyssey* seemed lifelike to an unearthly degree (wikipedia online). Special effects continued to develop in a manner that largely avoided cel animation, though several memorable animated sequences were included in live-action feature films of the era. The most famous of these was a scene during the movie *Anchors Aweigh*, in which actor Gene Kelly dance with an animated Jerry Mouse. But except for occasional sequences of this sort, the only real integration of cel-animation into live-action films came in the development of animated credit and title sequences for Alfred Hitchcock’s films, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho*.

Despite strides such as these, the industry began to shift again and the future of the theatrical animated cartoon seemed bleak. With television’s growing popularity, the number of moviegoers began to decline. The medium of television was beginning to gain more momentum. At the head of this change were the duo William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, the creators of *T&J.  

**Tom and Jerry: An Overview.**  
**The Hanna-Barbera Years: 1940-1957.**

This series was started in 1940 by William Denby Hanna (1910-2001) -- a structural engineer of Italian Origin, who was forced out of
academics at the beginning of the great Depression of the 1930s -- and
Joseph Roland Barbera (1911-2006) -- a banker. Producer Fred Quimby
(1886-1965), at M.G.M. paired William Hanna the story man and
character designer with the experienced director Joseph Barbera to
produce the most cherished of all animated cartoon T&J.

Puss Gets The Boot (1940) was the first T&J cartoon to roll out of
M.G.M. studio. It depicted an unnamed mouse being tormented by a cat.
This cartoon also features “Mammy Two shoes” who warns a cat known
as Jasper in the cartoon, that if he breaks one more thing he will be
thrown out of the door. The mouse, Jinx in this cartoon decides to help his
enemy show the door and he succeeds. After the success of Puss Gets
The Boot, the Hanna-Barbera team produced one hundred and fourteen
T&J episodes between 1940 and 1957. Puss Gets The Boot was
previewed and released without much fanfare and Hanna-Barbera went on
to direct other non-cat-and-mouse shots. Many M.G.M. staffers raised
questions about the new cat-and-mouse cartoon. But the pessimistic
attitude towards Jasper and Jinx changed when the cartoon became the
favorite with the theatergoers and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts
and Science, nominated this cartoon for Oscar Awards in 1941.
Producer Fred Quimby reunited Hanna and Barbera to work on the cat and the mouse series. Hanna and Barbera held an intra-studio contest to give the pair a new name. It was animator John Carr who suggested the name *Tom and Jerry*. The Hanna-Barbera pair went on to produce one hundred and fourteen *T&J* episodes of which seven: *The Yankee Doodle Mouse* (1943), *Mouse Trouble* (1944), *Quiet please!* (1945), *The Cat Concerto* (1946), *The Little Orphan* (1948), *The Two Mouseketeers* (1951), and *Johann Mouse* (1952) won the Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Short Subject: Cartoons. *Puss Gets The Boot* (1940), *The Night Before Christmas* (1941), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Mouse* (1947), *Hatch up Your Troubles* (1949), *Jerry's Cousin* (1950), and *Touche, Pussy Cat!* (1954) were nominated for
the same. *Springtime For Thomas* (1946), *That’s My Mommy* (1955), and Muscle *Beach Tom* (1956) were nominated for Annie Awards.

*T&J* remained popular throughout their original theatrical run. By the 1950s the budgets at M.G.M. began to tighten and the box office revenue decreased for *T&J*, especially after the introduction of television. M.G.M. combated this by going to all cinemascopic production of the series. They realised that their re-releases of the older episodes brought in just as much revenue as the new films. Hanna and Barbera’s production unit at M.G.M. was closed down in 1957 and their final *T&J* episode *Tot Watcher* was released on August 1, 1958. Hanna and Barbera established their own television animation studio and went on to produce popular shows such as *The Flintstones, The Jetsons* and *Scooby-Doo.*

**The Gene-Deitch years: 1960-1962.**

In 1960, M.G.M. outsourced the production of *T&J* to Rembrandt Films in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The Czech director Gene Ditch and producer William L. Snyder created thirteen *T&J* episodes, which included *Switchin’ Kitten* (1961), *Mouse Into Space* (1961), *Calypso Cat* (1962), and *Sorry Safari* (1962) among others. Most of the *T&J* episodes of Ditch and Snyder had a surrealistic quality. Their episodes were “unusual and in many ways-bizarre.” The Deitch episodes are considered the worst *T&J* shots (wikipedia online).
The Gene-Deitch team produced only a handful of the original *T&J* episodes. Under them the characters’ gestures were often performed at high speed, frequently causing motion blur. The dialogues were mumbled rather than spoken. These episodes were criticised for the heavy use of reverb s and these were the only *T&J* episodes that did not show the phrase “Made in Hollywood,” at the end of the cartoon. The production details were completely omitted as Deitch’s studio operated behind the Iron Curtains, the details of which are discussed in chapter III.

In 1963, the production of T&J returned to Hollywood. This time M.G.M. turned to Chuck Jones and Goldman. They produced thirty-four T&J episodes that included: Is There A Doctor In The House (1964), Much Ado About Mousing (1964), Tom-ic Energy (1965) and Dual Personality (1966) among others. All the T&J episodes of Chuck Jones carried his distinctive style and a “slight psychedelic influence”-- relating to or denoting drugs that produce hallucinations and apparent expansion of consciousness (Wikipediaonline). The episodes produced by them had varying degrees of critical success.
Jones had trouble adapting his style to T&J’s brand of humor, and a number of cartoons favoured personality and style above storyline. The characters also underwent a slight change of appearance. Tom was given thicker eyebrows, a less complex look and furrier cheeks while Jerry was given larger eyes and ears and a sweeter expression. Their animations never matched the popularity of the Hanna and Barbera originals of the 1940s and 1950s heyday.

**Tom and Jerry: From 1965 to the present.**

From 1965, T&J produced by Hanna and Barbera began to appear on television initially in the United States and other European countries. But most of the T&J episodes were heavily edited when shown on television due to racial sensitivities. The Werhtam syndrome led to a hearing in the U.S. congress and this led to the establishment of a self-regulating Comic Code Authority. The various social and political movements of the period also played a vital role in deciding the future of cartoons. The Jones team replaced Mammy Two Shoe with a slim white woman and the original Afro-American voice track of Mammy Two Shoe by Lillian Randolph was also replaced with an Irish accent, given by June Foray making the voice less stereotypical. Episodes where Tom and Jerry are shown in blackface or shown smoking were usually edited when shown on television. However, in some local telecasts the characters are
retained in their original. The details of the edited episodes of \textit{T&J} are discussed in the following chapters and appendix.

In 1975 Hanna and Barbera reunited and this time went on to produce forty-eight new \textit{T&J} cartoon for \textit{Saturday Mornings} telecasts. These episodes were paired with \textit{The Great Grape Ape} and \textit{Mumbly} cartoons to create \textit{The New T&J/Grape Ape show}. In these cartoons both Tom and Jerry appeared with a red bow tie. The difference this time was that the enemies of the formative years became non-violent pals who went on adventure together. These changes were the result of stringent rules against violence on children’s television, which Hanna and Barbera had to meet.

Filmation Studio in association with M.G.M. produced \textit{T&J comedy show} in 1980. These episodes had a new generation of stars, Droopy Dog, Spike and Barney Bear not seen in the original M.G.M. episodes. The thirty \textit{T&J} cartoons of Filmation studio were different from that of Hanna and Barbera.

One of biggest trends for Saturday morning television in the 1980s and 1990s was the “babyfication” of older, classic cartoon stars. In September 1990 \textit{T&J Kids Show} produced by Hanna and Barbera productions in association with Turner Entertainment appeared in FOX television channel. It featured a young cat chasing a young mouse. As in
the 1970s Hanna-Barbera series, Jerry wears a red bowtie while Tom wears a red cap. Spike and his son Tyke, and Droopy and his son Dripple also appeared in the back-up segments of the show.

In 1986, Ted Turner purchased M.G.M. Turner sold the company a short while later but retained M.G.M.’s pre-1986 film library. The right of \textit{T&J} now rests with Warner Brothers (Warner Bros). \textit{T&J} series in the subsequent years appeared in channels of Turner: T.N.T., Cartoon Network, Boomerang, and Turner Classic Movies. The absence of dialogue in animated cartoons like \textit{T&J} facilitated its telecast in different countries. The episode is well known in India, China, Indonesia, Iran, Thailand, the Middle East, South Korea and Germany.

In India, Philippines, Pakistan, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Russia, and other Latin American countries Cartoon Network still airs \textit{T&J} cartoons. \textit{T&J} was one of the few cartoons of western origin telecasted in Czechoslovakia before the fall of communism in 1989. The BBC usually aired \textit{T&J} cartoons in Britain from 1967 to 2000 to bridge the gap when their schedules were disrupted due to live telecasts. There have been several \textit{T&J}, DVD’s released in Region 1, that is in the United States and Canada. But most of the \textit{T&J} episodes were heavily criticized, and were edited or redubbed before being telecasted especially due to racial sensitivity.
In the United Kingdom, most of the T&J episodes were released in chronological order. Episodes like *The Million Dollar Cat* (1944) and *Busy Buddies* (1956) were not telecasted for unknown reasons. However, most T&J episodes have been edited and the voice tracks of Mammy Two Shoe were redubbed to make it less stereotypical. Despite these edits the series was not free from attacks. *His Mouse Friday* (1951) was completely taken off the air due to racial sensitivity. Some episodes having racist caricature were deleted when shown on television.

In 1993 *T&J: The Movie* produced by Phil Roman, was released in the theaters in United States. This movie shows Tom and Jerry trying to help an orphan girl who is betrayed and exploited by her greedy guardian. This cartoon resembled a typical Disney musical performance and was criticised by literary critics and audiences who felt that T&J was striving for something beyond their reach by trying to introduce mainstream animation to abstract art, classical music and elite subjects (wikipedia online). However, there are a few critics who hope that the film would be reevaluated in the later years and would be considered a significant achievement in the art of animation. The cartoon was also criticised for giving Tom and Jerry dialogue and songs through the entire film.

*The Mansion Cat* produced by Joseph Barbera premiered on the Cartoon Network in 2000. Barbera himself gave voice to Tom’s owner --
whose face is never seen. In this cartoon Jerry is as much a pet as Tom and their owner reminds Tom not to “blame everything on the mouse.” It was followed by Tom and Jerry: The Magic Ring (2001) in which Tom covets a ring which grants mystical powers to the wearer that has accidentally falls on Jerry’s neck. This was the last instance where Hanna and Barbera worked together.

Figure 2.4

Four years later, Bill Kopp scripted and directed two more T&J feature films for Warner Bros: Tom and Jerry: Blast Off To Mars and Tom and Jerry: The Fast and the Furry the latter was based on a story by Barbera. Both these were released on DVD in 2005 starting the
celebration of T&J’s sixty-fifth anniversary. *Tom and Jerry: The Fast and the Furry* was released theatrically in 2006. The *Karateguard* (2005) written by Barbera and directed by Barbera and Spike Brandt was also produced as a part of the sixty-fifth anniversary. Spike Brandt, the Director and animator was nominated for Annie awards.

During the first half of 2006 a new series called *Tom and Jerry Tales* was produced by Warner Bros, and were produced for markets outside the United States and United Kingdom. The Tales is the first T&J episode that utilises the original style of the classic episodes along with violence. In the same year, another direct-to-video film *Tom and Jerry: Shiver Me Whiskers* telling the story of Tom and Jerry having to work together on a treasure hunt was released. *Tom and Jerry: A Nutcracker Tale* was the last T&J episode produced by Barbera before his death on 18th December 2006.

*T&J* began appearing in the comic book form in 1942, as one of the features in *Our Gang Comics* but the production was short lived. The pair has also appeared in a number of video games as well, spanning titles for systems from the Nintendo Entertainment System and Super NES to more recent entries for Playstation 2, X-Box, and Nintendo Gamecube. *Tom and Jerry* are used by the merchandising department to promote kids toys and dresses. A large number of words and phrases that originated in these strips
have become a part of the common vocabulary. Through the years, Tom cat and Jerry mouse has become a part of children’s culture around the globe. The Simpsons characters Itchy and Scratchy are spoofs of Tom and Jerry.

**T&J: The Plot.**

The plot of most T&J episodes usually centers on the bluish-grey housecat -- Tom who leads a pampered life and his attempts to catch a small brown mouse, Jerry who lives in close proximity to him, and the destruction that follows. Tom is quick-tempered and thin-skinned while Jerry is independent and opportunistic. It is interesting to note that the colour of Tom’s fur resembles that of the Russian Blue breed of cats, however no connection of the cold war rivalry has yet been established with this.

Tom seldom attempts to eat Jerry and the reasons for the wild chase are to a large extent not clear. Some of the reasons for this wild chase may be normal feeling of mouse enmity, sense of duty according to his owner, revenge, or competition with other cats, among other reasons. But these observations are open to debate. Both the characters display sadistic tendencies as they take pleasure in tormenting each other but whenever one of the duos appears to be in mortal danger the other develops a sense of consciousness and saves his counterpart.

Tom rarely succeeds in catching Jerry, mainly because of Jerry’s craftiness and cunning abilities and sometimes because of Tom’s own
stupidity. Despite being very energetic and determined Tom is no match for Jerry’s brains and wit. By the iris-out of each cartoon, Jerry usually emerges triumphant while Tom is the loser. At times Tom emerges as the winner, which happens only very rarely, for instance in episodes such as *Hic-cup Pup* (1954) and *Timid Tabby* (1957). Even though the theme of each *T&J* episode is virtually the same, Hanna and Barbera found endless variations of that theme. The episodes of *T&J* are famous for using some of the most destructive and violent gags ever devised for theatrical animation: Jerry slicing Tom in Half, Tom using everything from axes, pistols, rifles, dynamite, poison and so on to try and murder the mouse. Jerry stuffing Tom’s tail in a waffle iron, kicking him into a refrigerator, plugging his tail into an electric socket, hitting him with a mace and so on. Despite all the violence there is no blood shed in any episode.

**Other Character’s in T&J.**

Besides the cat and the mouse there are a few recurring characters who play an prominent role in the cartoon. The first character that deserves to be mentioned in the line of supporting characters is Mammy Two Shoe, a stereotypical depiction of the African-American domestic housemaid. Mammy was voiced by Lillian Randolph in distinctively Afro-American dialect. The main actions of Mammy are inviting people to dinner and going to the market to buy household articles, usually food items. Mammy’s face is never shown and is usually seen walloping the cat with a
broom when the cat misbehaves. Mammy Two Shoe has appeared in over twelve episodes and is one the most renowned cartoon characters.

In the aftermath of the various social and political movements, especially the civil rights and women’s movements of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s the *T&J* cartoons was considered to be politically charged. This was one of the reasons for the removal of Mammy Two Shoe. Comics rely upon visually codified representations in which characters are continually reduced to their appearances and this reductionism is prevalent to a greater degree in superhero comics. They also make use of stereotyped depiction of race and make fun of other ethnic/marginalised communities by reducing them into mere stereotypes. However, this reductionism was extremely questioned especially after the Second World War.

The reign of “household administration” shifted to the hands of a yuppie style young couple by 1954. Tom’s new owner was a thin, strict woman, with a personality similar to Mammy Two Shoe but instead of her dislike for mice she adores it, and punishes Tom for chasing Jerry. Unlike their earlier counterpart the husband and wife were more concerned with the economic situation and cost-effective maintenance of their household than walloping the cat. This strip also gives indications of the rising number of immigrants to the Post-Second World War United States that had secured its position as an economic and capitalist monopoly. This also hints at the
infringing labor problems possibly suggesting the labor unrest during the Rooseveltian era.

Figure 2.5

The cat and the mouse had a new owner from the 1957 episode *Mucho Mouse*. The new owner unlike Mammy was a tall, slim white lady in her late twenties and was busy attending parties. She appears as the owner of the house rather than its mistress and unlike Mammy Two Shoe, she is never seen in working dress.

The Witch in the episode *The Flying Sorceress* (1956) was the first human character whose face was shown. Jennie, the baby sitter, and Nancy are the other human characters.
In his efforts to catch Jerry, Tom often has to deal with an angry, vicious bulldog -- Butch, also known as Spike and sometimes as Killer. Spike appears as the bodyguard of Jerry in a few of episodes. In the episode *Love That Pup* (1949) Spike is shown as having a son named Tyke.

Toodles Galore, Tom’s girlfriend first appeared in the episode in *Tom’s Lover* (1942). Tom has to counter the alley cats, Meathead and Lightning -- who was first introduced as a cat that Mammy had found as a substitute for Tom, but the cat and the mouse duo join hands and force him out of their house. In the late 1940s Jerry adopted a little grey mouse named Nibbles, later known as Tuffy, who usually speaks in a foreign language.

The duckling, Quacker, a friend of Jerry was introduced in the episode *The Little Quacker* (1950). This episode is remarkable for being the only *T&J* episode that showed an entire family depicting the Poppa Duck -- Henry, the Momma Duck and their children, including the Little Quacker. This episode deserves special attention in the sense that it hints at the sexual and reproductive structure within the institution called family, a theme generally absent in comics and cartoons. It also establishes the hierarchial structure within the family and the system of implicit authority that was unknown in the Disney comics which was a “world of uncles and aunts” (Dorfman 42).
Figure 2.6

There are a few instances where the alter-ego of Jerry makes his appearance. These characters are usually preoccupied with fashioning the manners and customs of the characters and are at times retrospective. For instance the devil in *Smitten Kitten* (1952) analyses the love-adventures of Tom and Toodles Galore in episodes like *Springtime For Thomas* (1946), *Salt Water Tubby* (1947), *The Mouse Comes To Dinner* (1945), *Texas Mouse* (1950) and *Solid Serenade* (1946). The devil recalls instances from the above mentioned episodes and says: “Every time he sees a dame, he falls in love. Every time he falls in love, it means trouble- for you” (*Smitten Kitten*). Another character who appears as the alter-ego of Jerry is Muscles
Mouse in *Jerry’s Cousin* (1951). He looks exactly like Jerry, except that he wears a yellow and black outfit with a star at its center and a bowler hat.

The other human character who appears in the *T&J* series is the truck driver in *The Bodyguard* (1944) but as in the case most of the other human characters in *T&J* series, the features of his face are not clear. The canary who appears in some episode including *Kitty Foiled* (1948) is always seen lifting heavy “bowling balls.”

Though there are a lot of supporting characters the action of *T&J* series is focused around the wild attempts of Tom to catch his arch-rival Jerry. All the other characters are marginal and are incomplete without the antics of the cat and the mouse.

**The (Auto)/biography in *T&J*.**

“A large part of any book is written not by its author but by the world its author lives in” and a large part of a text is determined by the age, gender and the socio-cultural background of its creator (Hollindale 23). For instance, it is suggested that Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster’s, *Superman* is a Jew. This question of course is open to debate. It is interesting to note that Superman was created by two Jewish men in Depression-era Cleveland, a time and place that stood between earlier periods of immigration and the impending Holocaust. In *Maus* Art Spiegelman
narrates the story of his parents and their experiences during the Holocaust, only to suggest two such examples.

The elimination of true parents, especially the mother, from the comics has a great personal meaning for Disney. Evidences of these are found in Disney’s *Bambi, Snow White*, and especially *Dumbo* (Dorfman 225). Similarly the Italian influence of *T&J* has great significance as it reminds of the Italian origin of Barbera. There are also other arguable references in the *T&J* series that seem to hint at the life and relations among the trio-Hanna, Barbera and Quimby.

For instance *Jerry’s Diary* (1949) the first flashback episode was part of an exercise to reduce the cost of production. The flashback episodes, though a part of the cost reducing measure, were also a review of the earlier work of Hanna and Barbera. In this episode Tom snatches Jerry’s diary as he reads it. This episode combines events from the earlier episodes: *The Yankee Doodle Mouse* (1943), *Mouse Trouble* (1944), *Tee for Two* (1945), *Solid Serenade* (1946) and *Smitten Kitten* (1952). The episode try to analyse and review the earlier *T&J* episodes and also hint at their attempt to enter into the Hollywood.

There was no doubt about the future of the cat and the mouse, as they had already gained a place for themselves in the hearts of millions of people, especially children around the globe. But the future of the trio--
Hanna, Barbera and Quimby seemed to be in a dilemma, possibly due to certain issues that erupted amongst them. In the 1952 episode *Push-Button Kitty*, the last episode to feature Mammy Two Shoe, she introduces a new mechanical cat called “Mechano.” This act is probably suggestive of the mechanical measures evolved to solve the difference of opinion between the trio, probably over the question of royalty. Though there are no clear indications of this there are enough reasons to hold on to the belief that some serious problems probably financial, were erupting amongst them. In the 1953 episode *Life with Tom*, Jerry shows Tom a letter that states that half of the royalty amount is for him and a flattered Tom and change his heart, strengthening our speculations. There are indications of the growing difference of opinion between the trio possibly over royalty in episodes like *Hic-cup Pup* (1954). The plot of this episode is unique in the sense that in this episode Jerry is defeated and he flees to “south for sake of health” (*Hc-cup-Pup*). This raises question as to whether Quimby, probably tired of the growing difference of opinion amongst the trio, trying to fled to the “south for sake of health.” Fred Quimby soon distanced himself for the *T&J* series.

The references in *Pet Peeve* (1954) where the husband and wife tells Tom and Spike that “something’s got to be done to cut down expenses” and decides that the one who catches Jerry will stay and the other would have to go “as the cost of feeding the two was higher…” (*Pet
**Peeve**. In their frantic effort to catch Jerry, the cat and the dog destroy the house, and eventually they get kicked out. This cartoon was also the first episode where the owner of the house that was not Mammy. This episode suggests about the stringent economic measures at M.G.M. that Hanna and Barbera had to meet. They responded by producing cinemascopic and flashback episodes.

In *Pecos Pet*, released a year later Jerry’s uncle Pecos stays with him while recording a television programme. The mustachioed mouse plays the song “Crambone” on the guitar. But midway through the session the string of his guitar breaks and the old mouse finds Tom’s whiskers as a perfect replacement for the broken string. He pulls off one of Tom’s whiskers. This continues until Tom is left with only one whisker. During the live performance on the television Pecos’ guitar string breaks again. This time he reaches out of the television and pulls off Tom’s only remaining whisker. Based on the plot of these episodes it would not come as a surprise if we raise questions on the relation between the trio. The incidents in these episodes suggest a downhearted Quimby who was exhausted by all means but these assumptions are of course open to debate. It was the last *T&J* episode to be produced by Fred Quimby.

The difference of opinion was settled for the time being with Quimby’s retirement. But they were not permanently put to rest. In the
1957 episode *Tom’s Photo Finish* the production and direction credits at the end of the episode were changed and from this episode onwards it read as “Joseph Barbera and William Hanna” rather than the usual “William Hanna and Joseph Barbera.” One of the reasons for this could be widening discomfort within the team. The story and plot of episodes like *Tom’s Photo Finish* and *The Vanishing Duck* (1958) strengthens our assumptions. (For the story of these episodes see appendix).

In *Tot Watcher* (1958) the last of *T&J* episode Barbera and Hanna rather than the Hanna and Barbera era, the baby crawls away down the road past the police car off into a distance as Tom, Jerry, and the Police officers look on. The crawling away of the baby can be seen as the symbolic refernce to the *T&J* series. The *T&J* series crawled away into a distant land passing the real Tom and Jerry (Joseph Hanna and William Barbera). The series was later taken up by Gene Deitch in a distant land -- Czechoslovakia.

In this section I have tired to give the history of the series and show that like most other comics and animated cartoon the *T&J* series also conveys the likes and dislikes of its creators. The *T&J* series also tried to address the issues that rocked the time of its production. With their craftsmanship, Hanna and Barbera put forth the issues and ideologies that rocked their times subtly, cleverly hiding it beneath the mouse’s glove.
The Scope of the Problem

The popularity of T&J has dramatically grown over the years. To quote an avid viewer of the series: “Regardless of the plot in each episode. Tom scores a multitude of injuries from which he bounces back, yet both he and Jerry seem to remain the best of friends. The essential difference between this and more modern effort is the total lack of maliciousness within characterisation.”

The American people had just witnessed the stock-market crash, the great Depression, and First World War. They talked about these in all its seriousness. On the other Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S. President from 1933 to 1945) created the New Deal Programme to provide relief for the unemployed and for the recovery of the economy. New measures and reforms were introduced in the economic and banking system but the hopes that marked the Rooseveltian era were over-shadowed by the Second World War, the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Nazi atrocities against Jews. And is it any wonder that the American people turned to the Superheroes and anthropomorphised characters to escape from this.

T&J’s popularity is not limited to any particular period. Tom and Jerry are now household names throughout the world. Their popularity and audience have increased especially with the advent of cable channels like the Cartoon Network, Pogo and others. Circulating libraries in the neighborhood often stock complete sets of T&J cartoons. Mostly T&J was
the only children’s animated cartoon that the Indian middle class families bought apart from the popular ACK and parents took great care in preserving these CD’s, DVD’s and comic books.

_T&J_ is still perhaps the most loved of all animated cartoons. There are other equally famous and popular comic strips and animated cartoons like Superman, Batman, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, Tarzan only to name a few. Sennett holds _T&J_ as a part of the “high culture.” Reviewing the 1947 _T&J_ episode _The Cat Concerto_ where Tom gives a piano recital of Hungarian Rhapsody Number 2 by Franz Litz, Sennett says:

... _[The Cat Concerto]_ qualifies as one of the ‘masterpieces of animation’ largely because of its use of classical music, and _The Two Mouseketeers_ (1951) ‘marked a high point in . . . animation’ by placing Tom and Jerry within a pre-Revolutionary French romance. (Qtd. in Smoodin, _Cartoon and Comics_ 133)

The notion of historical representation in comics gives a hint that “lower forms of popular culture” such as the comic books and cartoons function in the same way as the so-called “higher forms of popular culture” (Smoodin, _Cartoon and Comics_ 133). Like most comic strips and animated cartoon cited earlier _T&J_ tries to justify its position by finding examples of “masterworks” within itself and assert that as cultural artifact _T&J_ incorporates cultural tensions and fights against itself in the production
of meaning (Smoodin, *Cartoon and Comics* 136). Joseph Witek in his *Comic Books as History* claims that only some comic strips and animated cartoon can provide such a reading/viewing that seeks to create a comic canon based on the modernist principle and achieve greatness (6-8). For critics like Sennett and others, *T&J* series is part of the higher forms of popular culture that tries to communicate complex social relations with all its grotesqueness in a subtle manner. Further in his discussion on *T&J* Sennett holds that:

> . . . for all their achievements, and all the pleasure they have provided the audience the ‘Tom and Jerry’ cartoons have been repeatedly critised as not merely violent but excessively violent. [He insists that] this is only fantasy violence, done in comedy form. (qtd. in Smoodin, *Cartoon and Comics* 134)

This points to the much debated question of “real versus fantasy” that is central to all cartoon criticism from the coffee-table to academic criticism. *T&J* is known as one of the most violent of all cartoons. For instance, Matt Groening, the creator of *The Simpsons*, remarked *T&J* as one of the most violent cartoons he had ever seen. The story of *T&J* often revolves around a fear of failure as in the war and superhero comics and the subsequent vindication of the hero when his real bravery is shown. The number of comics produced is so enormous that to read or view them all is not just
Quixotic but a Herculean task. New titles keep on appearing everyday, in different languages around the globe. Psychologist and sociologist give various reasons for their popularity, some of which are obvious known reasons and facts. The present study acknowledges the existences of such questions but however, does not try to answer them, as they it requires a different method of analysis.

For many children, adults and parents these enormous lists of comics are but innocent forms of pure entertainment. (This list excludes underground and horror comics). The underground cartoonists like Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, S. Clay Wilson, and Art Spiegelman combined great freedom of subject. Crumb, the Father of underground comics earned himself lasting fame with the creation of Fritz the Cat (1972) and Mr. Natural (1967). Underground cartoonist worked outside the established channels of comic strips and animated cartoons and developed on themes such as sex, drugs, social protest and others subjects that are taboo to mainstream comic book writers and animators who are hedged by the strictures of the Comics Code (International Encyclopedia of Communication 573). The scope of underground comics is so vast and enormous and still awaits a detailed study.

However, the growth of comic strips and animated cartoons was not without controversy. The most furious and spectacular assault on comics
came from Wertham. His book *Seduction of the Innocent* resulted in a congressional hearing in 1954-55. The debate was quelled possibly by two important events, the establishment of the Comic Code Authority -- a self-censoring institution within the comics industry and the diversion of public attention away from comics to television and film. Wertham offered a different picture about comics:

here is the repetition of violence and sexiness which no Freud, Kraft-Ebbing on Havelock Ellis ever dreamed could be offered to children, and in such profusion. Here is one man mugging another, and graphic pictures of white man shooting coloured natives as though they were animals. (44)

It is not just Wertham, but many other critics of comics like Ambrose Bierce, Mary Baker Eddy, William Rockhill Nelson and Max Nordau attacked the medium. There were also various crusades organised by individuals and groups that shared similar views about comics. William Savage in his book *Comic Books And America* says that comics present a world of escapism:

exotic locates and/or characters, virtually non-stop action . . .

[they] transport readers elsewhere-to a jungle, a desert, the Far East, a distant planet, or some other a typical environment where heroes struggled against tall odds or fabulous creatures,
and where nothing had any real bearing on the problems of the
day. (5)

A direct proof of the re-emergence of Wertham’s ghost is found in
John Fulce’s attack on comics in his *Seduction of the Innocent Revisited*
(1990). The cases of actual censorship are on the rise. Due to complaints
from evangelical groups, Fleetway -- an independent comic book company
-- withdrew its plans to publish *The Faith*, the story of a pious Christian
plumber, distraught over the death of his wife and newborn, who desires to
inflict vengeance on God through the acts of terrorism on churches in south
London in order to lure God out of his hiding and then to kill him with a

In another instance a printer for college newspaper, the *Ellsworth
American* refused to publish an “obscene” comic strip by freelance
cartoonist Steve Kurth, a few weeks later Kurth’s illustration for another
college newspaper was refused by the assistant editor. (Williams, *Comics*
130). There was a hot debate over Lynn Johnston’s syndicated comic strip
*For Better or worse* (1979) when it was revealed that teen aged boy in the
strip was a gay. Forty newspapers, including, *Boston Globe, St. Louis Post-
Dispatch, Arkansas Democrat- Gazette*, and *Las Vegas Journal* dropped the
strip due to protest calls and letters from over thousand subscribers. *St.
Louis Post-Dispatch* alone suffered a loss of readership numbering eight to
nine hundred. Out of the forty newspapers, twenty canceled the strip permanently.

The controversial cartoon on Prophet Muhammad led to violence and mayhem destruction in many countries and also resulted in the attack on the Dutch newspaper that published the strip. The Dutch embassies in different countries were the center of attack for this publication. Some of the newspapers that published the strip were forced to apologies in public.

Recently in yet another instance a federal judge in New Jersey questioned whether it was appropriate for two fifth-graders to wear sporting buttons featuring Hitler’s Youth members. When enquired, they informed the judge that they got the idea from comic books (*The Hindu*, 24 sep 2007).

These instances raise debatable questions about the intention of comics as a medium meant for “innocent,” “pure” entertainment. Most serious studies on comic strips seem to have focused on how it reflect and relate to society and the culture out of which it emerged, the signs and discourses through which it address the individuals who are already members of the particular group or community. Max Faust in his essay *Comic and How to Read them* reinforces this opinion and say: “Comics are produced for entertainment, they transmit ideology, and it is often difficult
to determine whether the producers regard entertainment or the
transmission of ideology as more important” (197).

Even as comics continue to project itself as a media for
uninterrupted laughter and entertainment they circulate value-loaded
pictures and messages, or ideologies. The codes and sub-codes that exists
in comics “are forms of perceptions, particular ways of seeing the world”
that legitimises the ideologies of the dominant group, who own the means of
production (Eagleton, *Marxism* 6). The codes and sub-codes of the
addressee can be different from that of the senders and can vary from
author to author, period-to-period and place-to-place. At the minimal level,
as Eco states in his *The Role of the Reader*:

> Every type of text explicitly selects a very general model of
> possible reader through the choice of (1) a specific linguistic
code (2) a certain literary style and (3) specific specialisation
> indices . . . They apparently aim at pulling the reader along a
> predetermined path, carefully displaying their effects so as to
> arouse their pity or fear, excitement or depression at the due
> place and at the right moment. Every step of the ‘story’ elicits
> just the expectation that its further course will satisfy. They
> seem to be structured according to an inflexible project. (7-8)
But for Karl Marx these codes and sub codes are indices of an inflexible project of “a new theory of private property” created by the bourgeois or the dominant class that controls the means of production (Marx 577). And it is not surprising from the history of colonialism to find that U.S. colonising forces have waged in films and cartoons an “effeminising and infantilising” campaign towards minority targets in Asia, Africa, Latin America and those within the U.S. (Piedral 77). Cartoons aim at a particular group of audience who do not challenge the readers/viewers interpretive or critical skills and train the readers/viewers palatable for U.S. appetite and desires of a pan-American union within them. Thus the world of comics (including *T&J*) is sustained by rewards and punishments that echo in favor of the dominant group.

Comics like *Superman*, *T&J* and other are part of a powerful “ideological tool of American imperialism” a point that is discussed in later chapters (Tomlinson 41). It conceals the imperialist nature behind the innocent, wholesome facade of the world of animals. The aim of the present study is to offer an oppositional reading of *T&J*, which pertains this veneer of innocence and to reveal the ideological assumptions that inform the story and plot of *T&J* series. That can arguably naturalise and moralise the social relation of western capitalism, particularly that of the American Capitalism which in the words of Martin Barker “persuade the people it
dominates that the ‘American way of Life’ is what they want . . . [and] American superiority is natural and in everyone’s interest” (110).

Though infinitively varied in detail the story and action most of the comics and animated cartoons like *T&J, Superman* and *Mickey Mouse* contain values of American consumer capitalism and offer an implicit interpretation of the American life. *T&J* like other cartoons are exciting and are able to keep their readers/viewers to find out what happens next with their antique actions. Most viewers enjoy *T&J*, as they unconsciously underline the concept of preferred reading of the dominant culture that forms the basis of some of the popular films made to train the viewers to accept the ideologies of “producers and transmitters of the text,” (Shuker 17). One of the reasons for appeal of these films is their very predictability:

the formula to which they conform is so familiar that they present no challenge to the readers/viewers interpretive or critical skills. Further, their series of banal thrills reinforces the standard perceptions and prejudices of our culture, assuring . . . western male reader of his innate superiority. (Hourihan 9)

It should not be surprising if it is suggested that there is a connection between heroes of popular culture, cartoon heroes and ancient myths, for it is in this myths that many of the prototypes of modern heroes and heroines are found. A large number of comics and cartoons heroes are based on
ancient myths whether it is Superman, Batman, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse or T&J. Like most of the hero story, comics and animated cartoons also follow an invariable pattern:

- The protagonist or the central character is an orphan. As seen in *Tarzan, Superman, Donald Duck, T&J* and others.

- They are nurtured by their foster parents or housemaids. For instance Superman is nourished by his foster parents, where as Tom and Jerry find solace in the owner of the house.

- The protagonist is usually a white male in Western comics, where as in *ACK* they are members of the dominant group or caste.

- Most of the cartoon heroes always remains young and seldom advance in age.

- They leave the safety and security of their home to the wilderness may be forest, a fantasyland, another planet, Africa or some other non-European part of the world, or the mean streets of London or New York.

- They are responsible and duty bound.

- Have duel personality for instance as seen in Superman, Spiderman, T&J and *ACK*.

- Achieves his goal and the end is invariably happy.
Some of the meanings of the story, especially the inscription of white European dominance in western comics and the dominance of Brahmanism and members of the so-called high caste in ACK, the marginalisation of women and the privileging of action and extroversion over imagination and feeling, are already apparent from such a summary.

The history of comics is a history of controversies and every controversy has involved claims about the meanings, messages and potential influence of some other comics (Barker 13). These controversies are based on arguments about the ideological character of public representation that appear in different guises. These characters of public representation can be distinguished from other debates by their preoccupation with two related issues: the question of social control and implicitly/explicitly coherent position or point of view says Stuart Price (n.pag).

When described as ideological, messages in the strips and characters are usually represented as attempts made by powerful social alliances, who are also the producers and transmitters of the text, to exercise a form of real world influence over a subordinate body or class. In cartoons like T&J, Donald Duck, Mutt and Jeff and others this is achieved through the use of anthropomorphised creatures. The world of comics is populated with animals that pervade and seem to determine the whole complex social relations, while the animals like traits provide the characters with a façade
of innocence. They aim at producing some desired change in the behavior, attitude, belief, or perception of a weaker group forced into the condition of reception because of their position of structural inequality. The use of animals is not in itself either good or bad, but it is the use to which they are put. Hanna and Barbera use the cat and the mouse to trap children, not to liberate them. Tom, the cat, and Jerry, the mouse are dual figures because they retain the “obligation of the adult on the one hand while behaving like the child on the other” (Dorfman 37).