# David, Mickey Mouse, and the Evolution of an Icon[1]

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## Abstract

The transformation of an entertaining roguish figure to an institutional icon is investigated with respect to the figures of Mickey Mouse and the biblical King David. Using the three-stage evolution proposed by R. Brockway, the figures of Mickey and David are shown to pass through an initial entertaining phase, a period of model behavior, and a stage as icon. The biblical context for these shifts is basically irretrievable so the extensive materials available for changes in the Mouse provide sufficient information on personnel and social forces to both illuminate our lack of understanding for changes in David while providing some comparative material for similar development.

## Introduction

[1] One can perceive a progression in the development of the figure of David from the rather unsavory character one encounters in the Samuel narratives, through the religious, righteous king of Chronicles, to the messianic abstraction of the Jewish and Christian traditions.[2] The movement is a shift from "trickster," to "Bourgeoisie do-gooder," to "corporate image" proposed for the evolution of Mickey Mouse by Robert Brockway.[3] There are, in fact, several interesting parallels between the portrayals of Mickey Mouse and David, but simply a look at the context that produced the changes in each character may help to understand the visions of David in three surviving biblical textual traditions in light of the adaptability of the Mouse for which there is a great deal more contextual data to investigate. Certainly the transformation of David was more complicated and more continuous than the extant biblical texts currently allow us to understand, but precisely the same sort of shifts take place with the character of Mickey Mouse with whom

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[1] The first version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature held at Walt Disney World, Orlando, November 22, 1998. Immediately subsequent to the SBL meeting Pierre Lambert's work appeared, too late to be used for researching that paper; it is an easy resource for citations concerning Mickey Mouse. A second, expanded version of the paper was presented at the spring 1999 meeting of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research. Since then a number of works on both David and the background of Disney animation have appeared, a select few of these have been incorporated into this version of the paper.

[2] These periods roughly correspond to the three periods of David that were discerned in Chronicles itself by Stinespring (219). The "historical David" is the one inherited by the Chronicler from the Book of Samuel (so equivalent to the David of Samuel here); the David of the Chronicler's own day would be the one concerned with the "temple, especially its Levitical musicians;" and the "eschatological David" would correspond to the later development of the davidic messianic traditions. This three-fold periodization of the development of David is also presented in the recent work of Steussy (4-5).

[3] This same three-part succession is used by Klein. Note, however, that animators themselves do not break the changes in the character of Mickey Mouse into three distinct periods, but see more "periods" and a continuous evolving change rather than distinct episodes (Lambert; Thomas and Johnston; Schroeder, 1997: 9-61; Heide, Gilman, Peterson, and White: 12-147; and now the illustrated "Mickey changes" sequence in Schroeder, 2002: 12-13).

transitional material is available. For these reasons the arbitrary three-stage progression will be used and the more fully documented Mouse will be discussed prior to the portrayals of David.

**First Stage**

[2] In this period of the development of the character one of the main controls on the production of the narrative is a notion of holding the attention of the audience - that is to say: entertainment. Thus David's presentation in Samuel and the presentation of Mickey Mouse in the early series of shorts and comic strips (roughly 1928 to mid-1930s) provide examples of less than respectable, but obviously lovable rogues, who no doubt entertained their respective original audiences precisely for the reasons that embarrassed later generations. For David this rogue characterization produces a more complicated character for the Book of Samuel than has traditionally been assumed.

[3] As David was not the first king of Israel, Mickey Mouse was not the first successful animated character for the Disney brothers; that place of honor (the Saul equivalent, so-to-speak) would have to go to Oswald the Rabbit.[4] The first Mickey Mouse short, "Plane Crazy," was drawn in its entirety by Ub Iwerks in 1928. For reasons well known this product reverted to a system of production that had virtually ceased to exist in the animation business since the heyday of Winsor McKay. The contents of this and the succeeding two shorts are what are of immediate interest here. Ub took a historical event, Charles Lindberg's solo flight across the Atlantic, and set up an animated mouse desiring, if not to duplicate the feat, at least to be an aviator of renown. This Mickey Mouse was drawn very much like Oswald had been, but then the mouse was not much different from the mice that had appeared in Paul Terry's "Farmer Alfalfa" series, the Ignaz of the Krazy Kat short produced in 1916, or any of the mice or rats in the Alice shorts.[5] The attempt by a barnyard figure to duplicate the achievements of a contemporary celebrity was based on a standard motif present in a flood of children's stories, a genre that began in the nineteenth century and continues to the present. The broad parody of well known events derived from the early twentieth century theatrical reviews produced by innumerable civic, literary, or intellectual clubs to entertain themselves and their friends. The basic design, black and white line drawings, not only reflected what was economically feasible at the time in animation, but also reflected what, still in the mid 1920s, was considered good art; black line drawings in fashionable magazines were only at that point being replaced by bright colors; film and animation would follow only in the 1930s (all following the lead, in fact, of advertising copy).[6]

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[4] The Alice comedies shorts in fact got the studio off the ground financially, but were not the object of hostile corporate takeover as was Oswald. This would make, in the historiography of the corporation, the Alice shorts the equivalent of the Judges in biblical historiography (see Merritt and Kaufman).

[5] See the illustrations in Crafton: 296-97, fig. 112; McDonnell, O'Connell, de Havenson: 218; Merritt and Kaufman: 69, 77, 93, 113, but note, 118-19, on Walter Lantz' redrawn Oswald figure to conform to Mickey Mouse. This rather makes the debate over whether the design for Mickey was Ub's or Walt's irrelevant (see Holliss: 12-15; Bryman: 23-24; Grant: 26, who points out that Walt was, nonetheless, responsible for the Mouse's character). Iwerks' recollection of the models for Mickey are presented in Iwerks and Kenworthy: 53-54.

[6] On the shift to color in graphic art in the 1920s and the centrality of advertising on this movement, see Reeves: 12, 212-15.

[4] The addition of the female lead, Minnie Mouse, had more to do with vaudeville and live-action silent movie plots than established animation plots. Mickey, the decidedly rural hero, divides his desires about evenly between the pursuit of flight and the pursuit of Minnie. In this first outing Mickey is not one to take no for an answer, neither in the fact that the plane does not work particularly well nor that Minnie is not impressed by his overt sexual advances. In current terms, Mickey was a sexual harrasser, made clear by the activity in the airborne plane; Minnie was not, however, a meek victim, though the number of times Minnie would haul off and slug Mickey for stepping over the sexual line would diminish rapidly in the course of the early shorts. The derivation of other aspects appearing in the first short would fill an article itself, but note that technology gone haywire (an early target of animators in a popular cultural tradition reaching back to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly's *Frankenstein*), outhouse humor (a staple of joke books that were omnipresent and universally scatological early in the twentieth century), unbuttoned britches on little boys and visible panties on little girls (considered cute in depicting children in American popular art from late in the nineteenth through the middle of the twentieth centuries at all levels of society), the ever recurring lucky horseshoe that backfires (popular in comic strips and the humor magazine *Life*), and of course parodies of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin were all already staples of the animation genre.

[5] The second short, "Galloping Gaucho," was a parody of Douglas Fairbanks' macho man movies (Lambert: 21, 40; Iwerks and Kenworthy: 54-55, 60). Male stereotyping itself is mocked simply by having Mickey play the role. Mickey here saves Señorita Minnie from the evil and vulgar Peg-leg Pete (the longest-running continuing Disney animated character, first appearing in the Alice comedies February 15, 1925), who already had her company before Mickey arrives on the scene. Señor Mickey is given the role of swashbuckling hero taken directly from the silent action movies (in turn taken from popular novels and dime-dreadfuls). Thus, he rolls his own cigarettes and quaffs beer by the mug with no ill effects. Even the extended passionate kisses animated between Mickey and Minnie were considered "adult" entertainment and some contemporaries considered them too risqué for general audiences.

[6] The third short was the first to be released; on November 18, 1928, "Steamboat Willie" (title taken from the folk tune, and Buster Keaton's film of the same name, "Steamboat Bill") was a groundbreaking event for all films in that the "Mickey-Mousing" of the soundtrack would soon be adopted for live action films as well as animation.[7] Here was a Mickey defiant of authority (here Peg-leg Pete) and anarchic with livestock. The scrambling of the bodies of animals for various purposes (here musical instruments) had been a staple of animation from the Bray studios of the teens onward, reaching its peak (at least until Tex Avery in the 1940s) with Felix the Cat, who just yanked pieces off himself (or others) to make things he wanted or needed (Canemaker, 1991: 101, 103; Klein: 11; Crafton: 343-46).[8] Mickey's interest in impressing

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[7] On the musical background, see Care: 22. On the introduction of a coordinated soundtrack to animation, see Mast and Kawin: 213, 215; Thomas and Johnston: 288. The impact on the animation industry was enormous (Crafton: 5; Kanfer: 64-72; Klein: 10-11), and can be gauged by the almost instant demise of Felix the Cat, who had to that moment been the darling of the popular cinema audience (Canemaker, 1991: 3, 123; Klein: 8).

[8] Crafton explains that the self-reflection of animation use of cells as a running gag in the Felix cartoons delighted audiences while confusing critics. Schickel notes the fact that Mickey's use of animals for musical instruments is

Minnie does not impress Pete and Mickey winds up in the galley, a victim of authority (and responsibility) over personal inclination, imagination, romance, and entertainment.

[7] The Mickey of the black and white short years was also available for the reading public in a comic strip, originally written by Walt Disney, drawn by Ub Iwerks, and inked by Win Smith (Gottfredson, 1978: 11; Andrae: 11). It began on January 13, 1930, after Mickey was already well established as a popular movie figure. The strip was soon turned over to Floyd Gottfredson, who continued to draw the strip until October 1975, though the writing was done by Bill Walsh from 1943 onward (Andrae: 11, 24).[9] The strips were originally tied to the current shorts being produced at the studio, though one can see clear influences on the plots from melodramas, popular middle-class children's literature, and Toby shows (a staple of the Chataqua circuit through mid-America, these were skits where rural "rubes" wind up wiser than "city slickers" who attempt to fleece the locals). Ethnic jokes (both narrative and visual) were common in both the shorts and the strips, as they were in all common entertainments in the United States from the mid nineteenth through the mid twentieth centuries. Most of these stereotypes, as presented in the Mickey Mouse stories, clearly derived from vaudeville and live-action films, though they had all previously been introduced into animated film (Canemaker, 1991, 75-76; Klein: 188-92).[10] Mickey and his friends, while a mixed group of species, did stand over against "others" (indigenous peoples, Africans, Asians, Jews, and assorted European nationalities - the exception were Hispanics, who, while presented stereotypically, could *be* Mickey Mouse and friends[11]).

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simultaneously ferocious and "catchy," and certainly at the time inventive and highly entertaining (30). A very interesting, if at times unintentionally hilarious, study of the early successful Disney years, was written (but not finished before his death in 1948) by Eisenstein, who saw the shorts as reflections of a Golden Age which temporarily released the oppressed from their fetters (26) and protested against "the immobility of the once-and-forever given" (40). Eisenstein especially loves the smooth presentation of the impossible and the defiance of authority presented in the shorts. His break into two periods for the Disney Studio was seen as coming with the Second World War (57).

[9] The need for a new artist and writer came with Iwerks decision to leave the studio in order to run his own animation company; Gottfredson both wrote and drew the strip until 1943 (with occasional input from Walt Disney).

[10] Klein deals mostly with Warner Brothers racist stereotypes, but notes that these were drawn on earlier animation models extending back to the origins of the medium. This, indeed, can be seen already in "Lightning Sketches," a James Stuart Blackton film of 1907 (Crafton: 56, fig. 19). That both vaudeville and early movies had a lasting influence on Walt has been documented often; that it derives from a Missouri youth that included ethnic humor (Dutch characterizations were popular there at that time and with his best friend's father) is emphasized by Burnes, Butler, and Viets (66-67). Schickel (95) argues from the number of Jewish employees and one (unmentioned) animated caricature (though, those familiar with the early shorts can name more than one such caricature) for a personal anti-Semitism at the studio (a popular, if not well documented, critique among late 20th century intellectuals); curiously Schickel was not apparently interested in any other stereotyping in the studio's product and, given the subtitle of the volume, does not place any of this in its cultural context. As an aside, unlike criticism of Warner Brothers and Disney Brothers studios, the contemporary overt ethnic and racial stereotypes that appeared in the shorts produced by the Fleischer Brothers Studio have generally not been taken as signs of Max and Dave being antisemitic (well, the Jewish figures were usually Jewish cultural entertainment stereotypes from the Fleischers' own cultural origins) or racist, merely that they dealt with urban (sur-)realism; a tradition promoted in Cabarga. This persepctive is questioned and yet curiously continued by Austen: 62-66.

[11] Shorts like "Pioneer Days" (1930), "Trader Mickey" (1932), and "Mickey's Man Friday" (1935) (see Lambert: plates 71, 73, 97, 98); and strips by Floyd Gottfredson: "Mickey Mouse in Death Valley" (strip from 1930; 1978: 29-50); "Mickey Mouse and the Terrible Bandit Wolf Barker" (strip from 1933; 1979: 23-37); *Mickey Mouse and*

All these no doubt reflected the conscious or unconscious biases of the writers and artists. In this period the shorts (7-8 minutes in length) tended to remain light entertainment and refrained from more serious topics; Gottfredson's 1930s extended strips, however, moved into more somber territories: urban gang wars, heroin smuggling, fascism, nuclear warfare, atomic energy, murder, suicide, and American interference in foreign governments.[12]

[8] Of the men who made these shorts and strips (and they were all men in the beginning, though by the time of the first Mickey Mouse shorts there were women employed as inkers and painters), the animators were from the Midwest, most coming directly from Kansas City, Missouri, as single males in their early 20s out of rural homes and who had dropped out of high school before graduating (this was at the time neither uncommon nor socially suspect, high school degrees being then held in roughly the same regard as college degrees are held now). They had learned the art of animation from books checked out (and duly returned, they held to a middle class morality) of the public library on off hours while employed at an advertising agency. Religiously the central figures came out of Congregational, Dutch Reformed, and Mormon upbringings to which they consciously maintained a nodding attachment, but, like most single young men in America during the period between the wars, none was terribly interested in organized religion. Mickey's occupations in these early works reflect the animators' backgrounds. The Mouse begins as almost entirely a rural character, moving into urban locales, but only at the margins of urban culture. Throughout these stories Mickey is presented as resourceful, independent, and determined; all ideals of the post-Civil War in America and notions generally held by the American middle class until well after the Second World War.[13] The shorts are not, however, mini Horatio Alger tales, even though the strips do bear the unmistakable mark of this literary genre. For the shorts the main point for production of the film was to present a good time with lots of gags tied to a discernible story line plot, which was the hallmark of a Disney short in this period. The Great Depression did not arrive until the formula for this stage was set, so that this period reflected the Roaring Twenties, as seen by outsiders, in its emphasis on a good time.[14] Walt's very early desire to move on from the Mouse and do something else led

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*the Bat Bandit of Inferno Gulch* (strip from 1934; 1974); "Mickey Mouse and the Sacred Jewel" (strip from 1934; 1978: 79-90). Daisy Duck made her first appearance in a short as Doña Duck in "Don Donald" in 1937 (Grant: 80).

[12] "Mickey and the Pirates" (Maris: 97-144, esp. 129-30); "Mickey Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot" (Gottfredson, 1979: 79-95). On suicide, see Andrae (23) and Hamilton. It is interesting that when Dorfman and Mattelart wrote about cultural interference by Disney comics, they failed to consider Gottfredson's continuities for subjects more substantial for their argument (as in, an artist who was actually working for the Disney company who wrote scripts overtly about the need for foreign cultures to be Americanized).

[13] The conscious adoption of nineteenth century values in the early Disney cartoons is set out in terms of midwest populism by Watts (70-74). Burnes, Butler, and Viets document the influence of midwest populism on Walt's work throughout his career (26, 31, 34-35, 43, 51, 62-63, and esp. 126 on mice; on the animators that also came from the midwest to work with Disney, see 130-39). Schickel explicitly intended his volume on Walt Disney to be a criticism of Midwestern American culture and its diffusion through popular American culture, which he describes in terms of "banality, decadent puritanism, suppressing of life, fear of death, hypocrisy" (arguing that intelligent youth fled this wasteland for the east coast - his own perception of himself); in a nod to Eric Hoffer, Schickel does credit the Midwest with kindness and a capacity for people working together (12-13, 72-73).

[14] "The Whoopee Party" (1932) deserves a full study on its own. This was a short about a party getting out of hand, reaching the stage where the police arrive and then join the fun. The plot reflects some live-action shorts, both by main-stream and by minority film companies, in placing a good time over decorum, complaints of neighbors, and

to no particular thought being put into the future use of the character, which may help explain the rough edges on the early Mickey (Mosely: 122-23; Bryman: 7; the directing of Mickey Mouse shorts passed from Walt to Wilfred Jackson in 1929).

[9] Turning to David in the Book of Samuel, we find the parallel character. Traditional commentators have focused attention on the covenant between Yahweh and the house of David in 2 Samuel 7 and assorted other texts attached to this covenant notion (see Hertzberg: 288; Eichrodt: 1.64-65, 447; von Rad: 1.308-12; McKenzie: 244-50; McCarthy: 86-87; Halpern, 1981: 31-50). Even the Deuteronomistic History has been posited as depending on this eternal promise of the throne of Jerusalem to David.[15] However, as the literary tradition of the Book of Samuel as a whole has begun to be taken more seriously in understanding the Bible, the centrality of the eternal covenant with David has become more problematic.[16] It is this broader portrayal of David in the Book of Samuel that is of interest here.

[10] David in the Book of Samuel is not only portrayed as the king of Judah and Israel, but also as the mercenary in the employ of the Philistine army. This David, like Mickey, is portrayed as a rural figure coming into contact with civilization in the cities, taken with women, given to excess, and occasionally on the wrong side of propriety, not to mention an anarchist flouting civil order.[17] The proof for these claims is easily demonstrated. Abigail and Bathsheba catch his eye as sexual objects, not as wise or good people (neither of them, however, *à la* Minnie Mouse, slugs David); David's pursuit of power is bloody and is presented as the very cause for his not being allowed to build the temple to Yahweh in Jerusalem (which means that the author of the Book of Samuel believed there was something untoward about David's behavior, which raises questions about usurpation, warfare, and imperialism as acceptable activities for rulers). As for David the thug, this is simply a protection racket, as most residents of major urban areas easily perceive.[18] In this, David is simultaneously rejecting the rule of Saul and shaking down the local populace for

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the law. Indeed the unbridled gaiety of the party (which extends to the furniture in the short) overwhelms all those who come into contact with it. The need for entertainers to defend entertainment against critics insisting on social utility in all matters remains to this day; for Walt this reflected attempts to explain his animation business to his own no-nonsense socialist father, attempts that appear not to have succeeded very well (Watts: 21). The short, however, is clearly an attempt to make a case for the utility of joy for its own sake.

[15] Note that the centrality of the eternal nature of the davidic covenant is central to the Book of Kings, but not to the Book of Samuel, where the eternal nature of the covenant is undermined from the beginning of the book (McKenzie: 162).

[16] See Rosenberg (199, 207) who sees the problem of conditional/unconditional promise not only woven into the Samuel narrative, but also into the biblical narratives as a whole, and Noll who stresses the need to take in the whole narrative when defining David and his purpose(s) for the author of Samuel. The divine conditionality of promises made of eternal covenants has already been carefully (and forcefully, note Jeremiah 7:12-15) demonstrated in 1 Samuel 2:27-29 (Fokkelman: 229, n. 46; Handy, 1993: 10-12, 21).

[17] Rosenberg weaves the opposing portrayals of David together while noting them both, though he decides that the author of Samuel intended to set up an ideal of the "idea" of kingship with this playing with the figure of David (136-39; see also, Murray). The unsavory vision of David in the Samuel narratives has recently been highlighted by Halpern, 2001).

[18] Rosenberg rightly notes that the perception of David as a criminal element in 1 Samuel cannot be easily dismissed as a "Nabalian" view (149-50). Noll sees David as an opportunist, not only in this activity, but in all his actions prior to becoming king (52-53).

his own gain. All the while he is already the anointed of Yahweh and favored by God against Saul. David's occupation as a mercenary in the employ of the Philistines defines his stance *vis-à-vis* Israel, though the editorial notices claim that Judeans and Israelites were not killed by David, who only killed "others" who happened to be living in the areas of (soon to be) Judah and Israel. In the light of neither Torah legislation, nor ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature is this a David that could be deemed "good" or "wise."

[11] As ruler of Israel he gets a fairly short run as a good king before his libido brings the *shalom* of the nation to a resounding end with the Bathsheba incident. The end result of this sexual escapade is the series of civil wars that run until the end of the Book of Samuel, pitting all Israel against David and his immediate circle of mercenaries and advisors. In the end, Yahweh loves David, but the Israelites do not. The Book of Samuel contrasts the figure of Saul, beloved by Israelites (even to risking their own lives to save his corpse [1 Samuel 31:13]) and hated by Yahweh with the figure of David who is hated by "all Israel" (it is the cause of Absalom's initial success) yet loved by Yahweh; this provides a decidedly unsettling biblical representation of kingship.[19] Of course, it may well be that the early audience simply found this character favorable, a trickster that flouts authority, gets whatever women he desires, and crushes the mass of people with his wits and his mighty thugs (usually read: "mighty men"). Even so, this is a hero as flawed individual, but undeniably as interesting literary character.

[12] What do we know about the authors of the Book of Samuel? The simple answer is not much. It is generally assumed that they were men simply because most scribes in the ancient Near East were men.[20] It is also clear that they had been educated, but where and when is unclear as there remains debate as to the origins and final redaction of Samuel. That the text, however, was written for scribal entertainment is probably the case; there is little evidence for wide literacy, or any sign for a need for it, in ancient Israel.[21] In that case, the rough and tumble "macho" world of David in Samuel may well reflect young men coming to terms with their own authority and positions of power in the Judean Jerusalem court (or the Persian Jerusalem court, or the Hellenistic Jerusalem court; for this investigation it does not much matter, since we know next to nothing about the cultural shifts for any of these periods in the civilization of ancient Jerusalem when compared to the extensive knowledge of the backgrounds of the creators of Mickey Mouse).

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[19] Handy notes that the requirement in Assyria for one to be a legitimate ruler necessitated that both the backing of gods *and* the people be established (1993: 8-9, 21-22). Noll notes that it is hard to discover what Yahweh sees in David and that the problem of why David is loved by God "becomes increasingly questionable" as the Book of Samuel progresses (45).

[20] Camp sees the professional sage (scribe) as male having pushed the wise woman, a role of the family and clan, out of the way by the time of the United Monarchy (203). Whybray speaks only of men and boys (133-39).

[21] The extensive and sometimes acrimonious debate over the extent of literacy in ancient Israel I have addressed elsewhere (Handy, 2000: 8-9). Generally, at least to the extent of literacy in Judean society, I agree with Davies, who sets the upper limit at 5% of the population who could functionally read and write (101-2). Noll removes the context of the telling of the story from the world of employment to that of the elite of Judah for their own entertainment - so "aesthetic" literature rather than state document (184-85).

## Second Stage

[13] Once the character becomes popular enough, or significant enough, in the tradition, it needs to be made suitable as a role model. The figure becomes a part of society as opposed to a trickster undermining the norms of culture. Leadership becomes important, both as character and as example, in opposition to anarchy. Thus, in the second phase, both David and Mickey get toned down by their creators.

[14] By 1930 it had become clear that Mickey Mouse was going to stay around. Merchandising was escalating, though this did not mean longevity in and of itself. Both Winsor McCay and the Bray Studios had used character merchandising already in the 1910s without a great deal of success; but Pat Sullivan, promoting Otto Messmer's Felix the Cat, made animation merchandising lucrative, though the real marketing bonanza in film items remained, well into the 1930s, that connected to Charlie Chaplin.[22] The Mickey Mouse toys made Mickey a constant home companion of children throughout Europe and North America, while theaters took up the craze with Mickey Mouse clubs (an idea originating in France and spreading across Europe and North America). Letters poured into the studio from theater owners, children, minority organizations, parents, and especially parent organizations (groups that became more popular throughout the 1930s). These people objected to the way Mickey smoked, drank, treated Minnie, handled animals, and dealt with minorities, and the studio took all of these complaints into account. Walt and Roy, from the top down, required changes in the productions of shorts to lessen the possibility of antagonism.

[15] Ub had left the studio in 1930 leaving the Mouse in the artistic care of Les Clark and a team of animators that went wild with new concepts (and new variations on Mickey's design); many of these shorts became the classics of Mickey Mouse memory (on Iwerks departure, see Iwerks and Kenworth: 83-89; Thomas and Johnston: 168; Grant: 28; Lambert: 42-45; on the "second generation" animators, now see, Canemaker: 2001). Heavy on parodies of swank nightlife, operas, movie staples, and small town life, they also roamed widely into domestic chaos, and middle class charity. The letter campaigns, by the middle of the 1930s, brought this period of invention pretty much to a close. Roy Disney saw the Mouse as the company's money maker and the correspondence effectively convinced him to convince his brother to remove cigarettes, beer, any hint of drugs, sexual impropriety, wild parties, and most ethnic stereotypes from the Mickey shorts. The Hays Office, having come into existence by the time of this second phase, had a taming effect across the animation industry, though direct involvement by the agency in the shift in tone for the Mickey Mouse cartoons appears minimal. Even the introduction of color has been cited as a taming device on the Mouse.

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[22] On animation merchandising before Disney, see Canemaker (1991: 66-67, plates between 82-83), and Kanfer (41), who, curiously, given his title, deals almost not at all with merchandising until after Mickey Mouse. On Chaplin as a merchandising master in the early 1930s, see Mast and Kawin (102). The Disney "merchandising machine" (as it has come to be known) was the creation of Herman "Kay" Kamen, who took over Disney licensing in 1932 and ran it through his own company until his death in 1949, which is when the Disney Company finally took over their own licensing (Munsey: 109, 250; Tumusch: 44).

[16] Mickey became so goody-goody that story writers and animators universally remember having had a hard time thinking of anything to do with him. The first and most successful idea was to team the Mouse with Donald Duck and Goofy. In tune with the deepening Depression, Mickey became the straightman, a good and tireless figure that was saddled with impossible tasks in which he was placed in a position of authority, but with a crew that could not do anything right (consider the observations by Marling: 99-102, who analyses the 1935 short "The Band Concert" in relation to the 1941 Corning, Iowa, WPA mural "Band Concert" by Marion Gillmore). He became a model of frustrated goodness when not simply cast in a classic story as the hero. In 1940 Mickey was turned over to Fred Moore and Ted Sears; they redrew the Mouse: gone were the circles that had formed him; in came a pear-shaped body and most noticeable, his eyes were reduced to ovals in what had been the large eye spaces (Thomas and Johnston: 126; Culhane: 25; Kinney: 47; Lambert: 112-13). Shorter, rounder, cuter, the softer Mouse was also more domestic.[23] Mickey was now an upper-middle class suburbanite with reserved behavior and a great deal more leisure time (Hollis: 68). Mickey virtually escaped the Second World War shorts, in which Donald, Pete, and Goofy became central figures, even Minnie appeared in home-front shorts (Mickey was by this point, as a general rule, too goody-goody for war).

[17] The same Mickey Mouse continued in the Post-War period as much of the nation pursued something of normalcy and a desire for patriotic tranquillity after years of intense violence; like GIs on the GI bill, Mickey gained a house, gathered material gadgets and settled in for comfort. Now problems came to him. The animators themselves were now mainly town and city natives who had themselves moved to the suburban life of Southern California. Still men, but men who had gone through animation classes in post-high school education, these were men with families and young children with a desire to produce cartoons for their kids. At least the Disney brothers, having children of their own by that time, requested the animators so to desire. As for the comic books, Mickey was done on license for Western Publishing by Paul Murray, who often took earlier Gottfredson plots and rewrote them toning down the story. It was their Mickey Mouse who, in 1953, took his bow as an animated short character and went fishing in "The Simple Things" - a calm vacationer with his dog (clearly reflecting the early 1950s craze for cars and vacations) beset with seagulls. One could argue that Mickey had simply become too boring to continue as a viable cartoon character; the World War II favorite vintage characters appealed to older audiences and portrayed manic self-absorption, but, in reality, the market for animated shorts had simply dried up across the country. The Depression had provided vast numbers of unemployed or marginally employed people with entire afternoons or evenings free for the full cinema experience; now the fare was one feature shown over and over such that theater operators wanted turn-over, not time spent on shorts and newsreels. By the end of the 1950s Disney would remain the only studio attempting to regularly release animation shorts for the theater. Television was the new market (as far as animated cartoons were concerned this outlet was virtually created by Hanna and Barbera, MGM veteran animation directors who suddenly found

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[23] The transformation had taken several years of previous changes to the "neoteny" mouse of Moore's design (see Gould: 95-107; though this study did not take into account the newspaper strips where the style changed more slowly, but also more markedly)

themselves unemployed after years of fame and recognized quality shorts). In 1955 Mickey Mouse moved to TV as host of the Mickey Mouse Club whose central figures were live young people to whom Mickey played the opening host. This Mickey, newly animated by Ollie Johnston for the show's director, Bill Walsh, was a figure of respect and kindness as denoted by post-World War II middle-class norms: determined, patient, home-owning, relatively inefficient, deferential, and pretty dull (Lambert: 233; several stills in Schroeder: 44-47).

[18] The presentation of David in Chronicles sets parallel to this Mickey. The David who was portrayed by the Chronicler owed much to the David who had been presented in the Book of Samuel, but the differences are stark and omnipresent. Those aspects of David which shone badly on the king or on the davidic dynasty disappeared (McKenzie: 292; Braun: 53-54; Japhet: 468-71).[24] The womanizer was gone, gone the racketeer, gone the mercenary, gone the rapist, gone the adulterer, gone the corrupt judge, gone the bloody avenger. Now David is a squeaky clean ruler. Here he is presented as the psalm composer, concerned father of Solomon, temple planner, instructor of priests, country-loving ruler who is quite literally the paradigm of the good king. The two major additions to the portrait of David in the Chronicler's account consist of David as a prophet receiving direct communication from God and David as the founder of the Temple in Jerusalem (Newsome: 203-204, 209; Japhet: 468, 471-77). As prophet, David stands above other rulers in not needing intermediaries to receive the word of God and his words themselves become more weighty (such that the psalms can be read by later generations as prophetic proclamations). For the Chronicler, as founder of the religious cult in Jerusalem, David's character embodies the unity of the davidic dynasty with the proper religious ritual and belief (Duke: 74). In both of these newly central occupations David firmly supports the world of the Jerusalem elite and the upper levels of society that make their living from supporting the capital city. What is lost is the David who attacked Saul's court from the inside, served with the enemies of Judah and Israel, and behaved in a manner unacceptable for rulers or citizens in the eyes of those who want order and loyalty within the royal structure. Like Mickey moving into the leisured class, David suddenly has a great deal of time to lavish on temple preparations. He has no wars to fight, no rebellions to quell, no extortion loot to collect, and no beautiful women to pursue; instead this David is pious and verbal about his piety. David (like Mickey) is no country bumpkin in this phase, but a city dwelling king. His great desire is to build a magnificent temple to Yahweh, but he does not do so because of all the blood he had shed while building the kingdom (little enough of which flows out over these pages as compared to Samuel).

[19] The Chronicler has an interest in the loyalty of *all* Judah and Israel (apparently in line with the vision of Ezekiel in which Israel and Judah are united as greater Israel) to the davidic dynasty. To this end the Israelites in the Chronicler's narratives are unlike those in the Book of Samuel. These Israelites are unanimously loyal to David; they even come as a unit to join him and crown him (Williamson: 164-76, especially 170). With the notion set that God and David are close, and that God, in the final analysis, is in control of the earth, aiding those who support God and punishing those who do not, the Chronicler can and does make loyalty to David (and his Judean

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[24] Schenker sets the time period for the shift from the ruthless tyrant to the paternal ruler in the Exilic Period and sees evidence of this shift already in the editing of the Book of Samuel.

lineage) the touchstone by which adherence to God can be measured. Here, in Chronicles, the uniting of God and people behind David makes him the uncontested legitimate ruler in marked contrast to the royal ideology as presented in Samuel.

[20] David's deference in building the temple is noteworthy. Here the reason of bloodshed causing the king to postpone the temple until the time of his son is, in fact, David's idea and not a requirement of God. David acts as director while all those around (priests, contractors, carpenters, masons, stonecutters, singers, *et alia*) await his orders and directions even though it means waiting for him to die so his son can build the temple that David lays out in terms of architecture, personnel, and ritual. Solomon is left, essentially, with a life-sized temple-kit like one might get for an HO train set.

[21] This David is the model of a pious and caring ruler who concerns himself with the thought of how to keep people and God together. His army helps him prepare for the temple building more than they engage in war. The Israelites are all behind him in his effort to construct the house for Yahweh. The plague that slew so many Israelites is not his fault here. The people love him, God loves him, and everybody wants to help his son Solomon build the temple. The Chronicler's David is a director (not a doer), good, respectable, pious, and pretty dull.

[22] The author or authors of Chronicles elude(s) us almost as much as do the writer/editor/compiler(s) of the Book of Samuel. A scribe after the rise of Persia as the power in the area, the Chronicler writes a history in which God keeps a fairly tight rein on the ups and downs of the rulers of Judah. The united kingdom has become a major notion of the way the state ought to be (a state under a davidic ruler). That the royal house seems to have disappeared, at least from office, under the Persians, may explain the overwhelming concern for the Temple cult and its foundation; or, it may just reflect that the scribe was a priest. Still the author would appear to have been a man, but one who was settled in to urban life in a fairly stable position with a desire to keep things as they are and preferring that everyone in the country accept them that way. The notion of a respectable founder for the state and the religious cultic center implies a conservative outlook. This David suits an established elite, and probably priestly, readership.

**Third Stage**

[23] Once the subject has become sufficiently well-known and associated with some organization or movement, it is rather marked for life. The active narratives upon which the notoriety are based have essentially taken place in the past and, while reinterpretation and even some addition to that material is possible, this phase uses the earlier material to support the ongoing organization. If the organization wishes to accept the connection between itself and the character and sees itself in some way represented by the subject, the character becomes a symbol for the group. Thus the character becomes in itself a representation of the group becoming an icon, usually by a selective presentation of traits of the figure in the earlier material.

[24] The 1960s and 1970s saw the gradual displacement of Mickey Mouse out of animation into the live person dressed as Mouse figure stationed at the Disney theme parks. There was an attempt to produce an audioanimatronic Mickey Mouse in a music revue at Disneyland that did not last long. Mickey appeared to be disappearing from the active company repertoire. This

would all change once the corporate family feud was settled in the 1980s (Taylor; Grover; Gomery; Lewis). The shift was one from corporate footnote (the business had not been fiscally sound until the early 1960s) to multi-national mega-corporation.[25] The New corporation, with a team of corporate management wheelers and dealers (college graduates, MBAs, corporate executives) in charge, set out to remake the economically failing studio in economic textbook fashion. The selling point was to be family-oriented, but with side-lines that would expand the market and the profits: little items like Miramax, big items like ABC, and mega-items like ESPN. The new acquisitions did not always fit the image of Disney family entertainment, but to remind people of the basic foundation of the company, especially with a nostalgic twist, Mickey Mouse became, in fact, the logo of the entire international corporation. This newly revamped corporation played hardball economics and was corporate savvy enough to throw real clout around (for a decidedly negative, but succinct, survey of the current Disney Corporation, see Hiassen).

[25] Suddenly Mickey Mouse was back in movies and even a short in 1995. This last was no minor outing; "Runaway Brain" was executive produced by Pam Coats, BFA, Utah State University, MFA, University of Oregon, vast research in earlier Disney animation techniques and story lines, with several years work on Disney feature animation. She directed a team including the established animator Andreas Deja, who studied extensively the animation of Mickey in the 1930s and on into the 1940s to incorporate the whole of Mickey's character into the Mouse he produced (Lambert: 276-77). The short was made at the newly built animation studio in France where the mostly French artists took classic second period early 1940s styled Mickey and Minnie, added a character from Gottfredson's "Blaggard Castle" newspaper strip of the first period, used a celebrity voice (a standard of Disney feature films of the third period), threw in a visual gag referring to two of the famous second period animators - a technological runaway computer-lab-experiment, and a mad scientist (right out of classic animation shorts from before Mickey, but reminiscent of "The Mad Doctor," 1933) - added a Mickey who becomes fiendish through worse technology and produced everything you could want in an icon: the entire history of the corporation in one short!

[26] Mickey Mouse merchandising has gone balistic. With Michael Eisner at the helm of the corporation Mickey Mouse menorahs are now available. The ears of the Mouse have been legally nailed down so tight that reproductions of the top of Mickey's head will now result in a lawsuit if not carefully licensed (Koenig: 190). Now writers cite simply "Mickey Mouse" or even just "the Mouse" when the entire corporation is meant. This Mouse is seldom actually part of an entertainment project; this Mouse *is* the idea of entertainment projects. Comics in the United States based on Mickey Mouse appeared from Gladstone (and now Gemstone) Publishers, combining classic reprints with new stories often based on other lines of contemporary comic

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[25] See Smoodin (8), which is often at variance with Schickel. The reaction to the Schickel volume is succinctly surveyed by Watts, who sees a divide between politically left and politically right responses (450-451), a position he acknowledges does not reflect the actual mixed left-right political reception of products by Disney (508, n. 9). Dorfman and Mattelart had earlier built *Uncle Scrooge* comic materials into a Disney mega-corporation cultural take-over of the world; almost the entire work is factually inaccurate (many of the major errors are commented upon in Gabbard and Blum, but their basic thesis would make much more sense with the current corporation than it did with the translations of Western Publishing's Carl Barks stories. An interesting comment on the current state of the animated features compared with the early Mickey Mouse shorts was made in Kakutani (8, 10).

narrative (it might be noted that European comics featuring Mickey Mouse have consistently been published since the early 1930s).

[27] David as logo for an international organization? It is not a very large step from the pious rather idealized king of Chronicles to the origins of the davidic messianic figure (already noted by Stinespring: 219; but note cautions about reading too much later interpretation into Chronicles by Riley: 55-56). Here is the leader, rather nostalgically cast, who will bring the very Kingdom of God. The Messiah finds its biblical beginnings in the David of the Psalms, but does not become a central character until the messianic Christologies of the early Church and later Judaism (for a few recent treatments, see Galbiati; Robert: 488-90; Wegner; and Jonge: 4.779-81). The messianic ruler is nebulous enough that he does not actually do much except stand for the coming of a state in which all evil and strife cease for the members of the messianic community.

[28] The figure of David as an ideal ruler in which justice and righteousness exist to the exclusion of warfare and evil begins with the transformation of David into the embodiment of the people themselves, an event that occurs already in the psalms (Gerleman). Once this shift has been made, it became something of an obsession for certain strains of Judaism (including those of the early Christian movement) to search carefully the scriptures to find the portraits of this (these) messianic figure(s) (see the convenient survey in VanderKam). Not all of these "anointed ones" related to the character of David, but for the Gospel writers it was necessary that the messiah be a davidic character.[26] The people who produced the portraits of the messianic figures (Jewish and Christian alike) extensively studied the scriptural materials in Samuel and Chronicles (as well as numerous other texts they attached to the davidic tradition). The figure, however, became the symbol of the Kingdom of God that they and their own group wished to see; often this entailed incorporating notions of empire from their own surrounding culture. In both Christian and Jewish expectations the rule of the davidic messiah was to stretch universally throughout the world (either by the movement of members throughout the known world, or by converting members of the peoples of the known world).

[29] The David of the messianic traditions stands for something other than merely being the King of Judah and Israel and proceeds to encompass a number of aspects (world rule, universal peace, Kingdom of God) that were not a part of the earlier two periods of David portrayals. Nonetheless, the earlier biblical material on David is the source for reconstructing this messianic David figure (see, as one of numerous works, O'Toole: 245-248, who connects all the davidic messianic references to 2 Samuel 7:12-16). The groups who discerned the right to have a messianic rule from God and David find this right in extensive study of the earlier material, highly selectively used and reconstructed to produce a portrait of their own right to be God's people. Much is taken from the first stage for these messianic notions (royal kingship especially and the promise to David of eternal rule), but with that a notion of a just and pious ruler from stage two. Here is the David figure, reproduced for a universal kingdom which will emphasize those aspects which earlier portraits used, but for presenting the individual ruler; now the figure of David becomes generalized into the ideal of the organization. David, like Mickey, has arrived as icon.

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[26] The davidic ancestry of Jesus is central to the *authors* of early Christian literature, though how important, if at all (or even if it existed), it was to Jesus is unclear (see Brown: 505-12; Kümmel: 73-74).

**Final Observations**

[30] Both Mickey Mouse and the biblical David appear to have begun as primarily entertaining figures. While we can demonstrate the enormous cultural material that went into the creation of the figure of Mickey, the material that was used by the author(s) of the Book of Samuel for David eludes us; however, it most likely is the case that the presentation of David as rogue and king owed much to narrative traditions totally lost to the modern world. The male authors of these early renditions of the characters, giving no particular thought to the long-term use of their figures (American animation shorts usually were shipped to Europe after one run in the United States and were forgotten; the authors of Samuel appear to have been writing to themselves and a highly select audience; see Nolls: 183), let their protagonists engage in the imaginative life of immature (not necessarily young) men: adventures, danger, battle, sexual conquest, outwitting foes, overindulging in drink (and other substances), a quick wit better than their superiors (no doubt dear to the hearts of scribes), and a sense that through it all the figures remained likable. Even so, the basic morals held by the culture in which the authors/animators lived show through these wilder portrayals. The fact that both David and Mickey appear as rural males who spend a great deal of their time in rural settings before coming and having to adapt (as underlings) to the urban world is interesting; suggesting that the rural ideal was perhaps as strong in the Judah of the time of the Book of Samuel as it was in the America of the 1920s and 30s. Both characters were undoubtedly enjoyed and perceived as favorable characters by the readers/viewers at the time of their production, though David was clearly intended for an elite and Mickey for a general cross section of their respective populations. A great deal of imagination and mental play went into these portrayals of figures striding through a world which was often against them (often, indeed, portrayed as an antagonistic or malevolent place) and in which they were at the mercy of figures of greater power than they, even of masses of people out to put an end to them.[27] For David this is an ambiguous world and the relation with God is less certain than a highly selective reading of the Book of Samuel would suggest.

[31] The characters take a significant turn in the second period simply by having become popular figures in the circles into which they were introduced. Both David and Mickey become "citizens" of that urban world to which the first period saw them as outsiders. The norms of middle-class morality bear upon Mickey and the requirements of religious obligation weigh on David. Their earlier wild lives are displaced with positions of leadership within a stable culture with duties and obligations. The overindulgence in sex, warfare, and consumptables is replaced with respectability. Indeed, for the most part, these "wilder" sides of the world disappear from this period's presentations altogether. Mickey becomes organizer, David becomes organizer; Mickey becomes kind and generous, David becomes kind and generous. Mickey gains house and capital; David gains house and capital. Both have become models of proper societal behavior; whether there was a desire from the elite readers to produce a more acceptable David as there had been a middle-class pressure exerted to produce a more acceptable Mickey we have no idea. The creators of the second period figures, however, appear to be more mature at least in that they see

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[27] One can think simply of David chased by Saul and his army or David against the massed Israelites in concert with Mickey in "The Mail Pilot" or "Two Gun Mickey."

need for individual figures to concentrate their energies to larger tasks than themselves. Society, religion, domestic tranquillity become central themes and the world in which these figures live becomes decidedly more benign. Moreover, the narratives themselves illustrate the likablity of the figures by having other characters in the narratives shown actually liking them. The absence of war and obsession (for women for example) gives way to a calm life which is portrayed as a good thing and one to be pursued. David, indeed, becomes not only pious, but also a receptor of divine revelation.

[32] The figures of the second period pass into the ideals of what someone in that culture ought to be. In this both David and Mickey pass from being independent characters to being images of those who produce them. In both cases the organization that uses these icons is larger and more variegated than the producers of the first two periods. This does not matter, since the figures are now presented as universals and as universally restricted to the group that presents them as images of themselves. To do this, only aspects of the earlier periods are presented and these are only those which suit the purposes of the organization. The ideal being presented, while referring back to the earlier portrayals, may, in fact, now be used to explain things unimagined by the earlier producers of the characters, or even things the earlier producers would have not wanted to represent with their stories. In both cases the primary use of the figures currently is by organizations that have greatly adapted the traditions of the founding groups who created David and Mickey, yet who are very desirous of assuring others that they are in direct continuation with that founding group (Disney Brothers garage to Disney Corporation international industry; Judean elite society to world-wide Christianity). Those using the characters as "corporate images" seem to become very "territorial" about the use and presentation of these icon figures: one need consider only the reactions to unlicensed use of Mickey Mouse by the Disney Corporation or the reactions to those scholars who have suggested that David might be an imaginary person by those for whom the icon of David is closely related to their self-understanding. For those who claim these two characters as central figures, perceived improper use of their images is simply not taken lightly. These claims even become, in this last period, decidedly enlarged and geared to world transformation; Mickey Mouse has been posited as the worldwide embodiment/ambassador for "democracy." For the character of David this period sees him shift into the "messiah," lord of the earth and harbinger of the ideal world.

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