



Animation and America

Paul Wells

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The "cartoon" in the output of the all conquering Disney studio, the anarchic antics of Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck in Looney Tunes, and the satiric vision of the Simpsons on television is synonymous with the United States, but the genre rarely is taken seriously. Nevertheless, cartoons are important artistic and cultural achievements, and are an essential ingredient in how America is viewed, both by itself and by others.

In *Animation and America*, Paul Wells looks afresh at this unique art, discussing the distinctiveness of the cartoon form, as well as myriad other types of animation production. Insisting upon the "modernity" of the genre, Wells examines its importance as a barometer of the social conditions in which it is made and which it reflects. This book is not a standard history of animation in America, but rather uses animation as a way of discussing social and political change. Wells concentrates on the ways in which the form continues to grow, experiment, and remain subversive and, increasingly, gaining acclaim and recognition. Now in the vanguard of visual culture, animation occupies an important position in representing both the outcomes and impacts of new technologies, and it also has laid the foundations for a new understanding of social and artistic practice.

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