

strengthening or modifying; but, at least, they were starting from the same point.

All of this demanded more care in the planning and shooting of live action film. If the image on the film was right, a weak animator could get by with it and a good animator could make it even better. However, if the live action was poorly planned, or staged in a confusing manner, it would cause trouble for everyone, and the director would do better to throw the film away and start afresh with the animator and his storyboard. Essentially, the film should be considered a further step in the visual development of the story material, like an advanced story sketch, and it should be shot with that purpose in mind. Before going over to the sound stage, the director should take a hard look at the scenes he is planning to shoot and ask himself:

Is this material really ready to go into animation?

Does the business fit the story? The character? Is it right for the mood, the tempo, the overall idea?

Is it entertaining? Is it just somebody saying some necessary dialogue, or is it a situation that gives the actor a chance to build and contribute?

If we happen to get some funny action or new business, will it fit? Can this be used easily and effectively? Does it animate as it is? Will it make a good scene? Would I be excited if I had to animate it?

Am I helping the animator by shooting this, or will it be tough to handle once it is on his board?

And when the director is on the stage with the scene rehearsed and the actor ready, he should remember renowned film director Stanley Kubrick's final check: "Is anything happening worth putting on film?"

Unless a director is exceptionally wise, or an animator himself, he should ask the man who ultimately will animate the scenes to help plan the business on the stage. Almost always when someone else shoots film for an animator the camera is too far back, or too close, or the action is staged at the wrong angle to

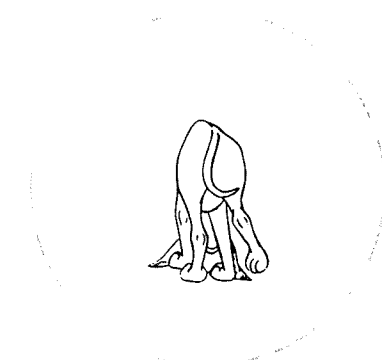
reveal what is happening, or it is lighted so that what you want to see is in shadow. Occasionally the footage will show only continuity of an actor moving from one place to another, or just waiting, or getting into position to do something interesting later on. The action must be staged with enough definition and emphasis to

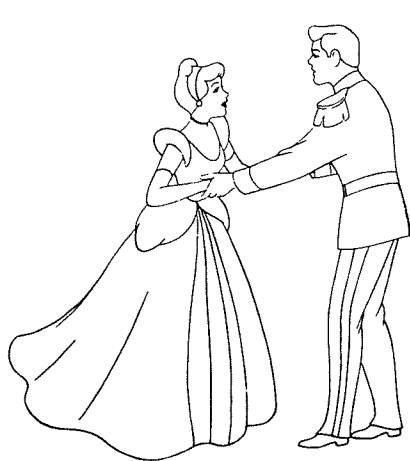


The whole production unit often participated in the shooting of crucial actions. In this scene for Sleeping Beauty, from the left, layout men Ernest Nordli, Don Griffith, and Tom Codrick check their layout continuity; performers Ed Kemmer and Helene Stanley discuss their roles with the director, Clyde "Gerry" Geronomi; supervising animator and sequence director Eric Larson reviews the script while production designer Mac Stewart makes sure the camera position matches the scene that has been planned.



Actor Hans Conried portrays Capt. Hook and artist-comedian Don Barclay gives a very imaginative performance as Mr. Smee in this scene from Peter Pan. The prop man rocks the boat, creating an action that would be difficult to animate convincingly, while an unidentified child actor plays the stoical Indian princess Tiger Lily.





ANIMATOR: Eric Larson—
Cinderella.

When a pretty girl or a handsome prince are presented romantically, they must be conceived as "straight" and drawn realistically and carefully.

ANIMATOR: Milt Kahl—
101 Dalmatians.

If the shapes in the face and body can be caricatured just a little, the characters will be easier to animate and more convincing to the audience, as in this scene of Roger teasing his wife Anita in 101 Dalmatians.

ANIMATOR: Eric Cleworth—
101 Dalmatians.

The Baduns were the henchmen of Cruella de Vil in 101 Dalmatians but their stupidity made them a constant liability. The grotesque design enhanced the slapstick routines and semiserious business of these second-rate villains.



Human Characters

be extremely clear, but neither overacted nor so subtle that it fails to communicate.

Great care in the shooting produced scenes on film that were so succinct, so rich, and so well staged that they could be cut into the continuity reel almost like a first rough test of animation. However, they were not the straight pieces of acting one might expect in a live action film, because these imaginative scenes had been carefully planned for the medium of caricature. Usually we used actors whose talents included comedy, inventiveness, and creativity—as well as considerable theatrical experience. As the result of building scenes with such people, incorporating new ideas, searching for a way that communicates better or offers more entertainment, the live action film gave the animator a springboard to go beyond what he could have imagined himself.

We photographed anything that might prove helpful, and soon we discovered that the timing of a clever actor could make a mild gag hilarious, that an experienced stage comedian would offer sure ways of staging a scene's business, that another talent might suggest ways to put life into actions that had been conceived simply as continuity. Some actors gave back only what was asked of them; others were eager to take over and tell us how to do our whole production. In between, there was a group who enjoyed working on a role, building character, and finding ways to make it memorable.

Many times a performer would devise a piece of business so funny, so unusual and appealing, that everyone would be sold on it immediately—blinded to the fact that its length would slow down the pace of the story. Just because some business is funny does not

necessarily make it right for that place in the picture. It is very difficult to judge whether a suggested way of doing something is worth the extra footage or whether it can be shortened in animation without losing its value. Comedy routines and personality-building both take time; they cannot be rushed. The director and animator must decide whether they are gaining important development with this piece of entertaining action, or just stretching out the picture.

Usually we did not use the same person for both the acting and the character's voice on the sound track, since we found that actors had a tendency to give the same interpretation to both performances. What we wanted was someone who could add to the physical performance, come up with a new dimension, a way of doing it that no one else had suggested. To get that, we needed an inventive actor fresh to the whole idea, with no preconceptions to limit his imagination.

The sound track was on a record, which could be played over and over while the actor was rehearsing and trying out ideas for timing and character. Then, when the scene actually was shot, a recording was made of the sound as heard on the stage by the actor. After a "take" was chosen several days later, this recording was replaced by the original track, matching in sync what had been recorded on the stage. If new actions had been devised that required more time between lines of dialogue, there was no way of changing the track at that point; so, the needle was lifted from the record and the scene was shot "wild." After the film came back from the lab, the director and the animator juggled the picture and the sound track back and forth until they had the best sync they could achieve. Sometimes a new interpretation would develop

That Have Been Successfully Animated



that necessitated doing the dialogue over with a different phrasing or expression; that sequence would be marked for a retake the next time the "voice talent" was at the studio—another reason for not recording all of the sound at one session.

It became increasingly important to choose just the right actor for this type of live action, since it would have such an influence on the development of a character's personality, and even on the entertainment value in the picture. Some comedians were versatile enough to suggest antics for characters in one picture after another, but for the most part we wanted a different actor for each role. Obviously, the Huntsman in *Snow White* could never be portrayed by the same man who would do Mr. Smee in *Peter Pan*.

Occasionally, there will be a cartoon character requiring such a subdued role, or such careful planning, that there is virtually no room for new concepts from the actor. Once the role comes to life with the proper voice, the visual image should match, and nothing more. The Huntsman needed no more personality, no more acting; his scenes had been so well conceived that he had only to look convincing to make his sinister role believable.

Of course, there is always a big problem in making the "real" or "straight" characters in our pictures have enough personality to carry their part of the story. Animator and director Woolie Reitherman has said, "The art of animation lends itself least to real people, and most to caricatures and illusions of a person." The point of this is misinterpreted by many to mean that characters who have to be represented as real should be left out of feature films, that the stories should be told with broad characters who can be han-

dled more easily. This would be a actors need to have someone or s believe in, or the picture falls apar the young girl Penny was surroun of broad characters; but, while the they did not carry it. As Woolie sa the little girl was so believable! All her were great, but you needed tl

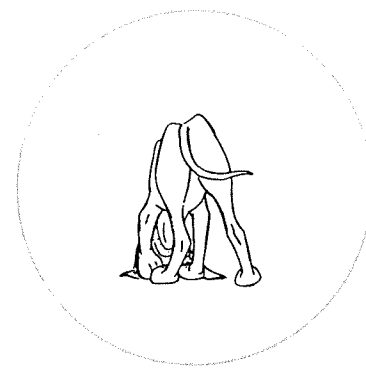
The sincerity in that case came f of the scenes to make use of the m of this little character. Some misc been filmed of two different five- the animator could study how a chi but there was no attempt to recc actual scenes after that. Instead, into finding the right things for h way for her to do them. It is axio characters can be done more easi in cartoon, and that one shoul cartoon better done in live actio philosophy had been followed c would have been no *Snow Whit Peter Pan*, nor most of the feat studio produced. To make a "str vincible and interesting requires g may take imagination and a kno and animation, but there is alwa is smart enough to find it and enough to accomplish it.

Generally speaking, if there is a story, it is wise to draw the caricature as the role will penn development, these questions sh this character have to be strai



Human Characters

That Have Been Successfully Animated



out neither overacted nor so subtle
unicate.

shooting produced scenes on film
t, so rich, and so well staged that
to the continuity reel almost like a
imation. However, they were not
f acting one might expect in a live
these imaginative scenes had been
the medium of caricature. Usually
se talents included comedy, inven-
ity—as well as considerable theat-
the result of building scenes with
orating new ideas, searching for a
rates better or offers more enter-
action film gave the animator a
eyond what he could have imag-

l anything that might prove help-
covered that the timing of a clever
mild gag hilarious, that an experi-
an would offer sure ways of stag-
is, that another talent might suggest
o actions that had been conceived
. Some actors gave back only what
others were eager to take over and
ur whole production. In between,
who enjoyed working on a role,
and finding ways to make it mem-

rformer would devise a piece of
o unusual and appealing, that every-
on it immediately—blinded to the
would slow down the pace of the
some business is funny does not

necessarily make it right for that place in the picture. It is very difficult to judge whether a suggested way of doing something is worth the extra footage or whether it can be shortened in animation without losing its value. Comedy routines and personality-building both take time; they cannot be rushed. The director and animator must decide whether they are gaining important development with this piece of entertaining action, or just stretching out the picture.

Usually we did not use the same person for both the acting and the character's voice on the sound track, since we found that actors had a tendency to give the same interpretation to both performances. What we wanted was someone who could add to the physical performance, come up with a new dimension, a way of doing it that no one else had suggested. To get that, we needed an inventive actor fresh to the whole idea, with no preconceptions to limit his imagination.

The sound track was on a record, which could be played over and over while the actor was rehearsing and trying out ideas for timing and character. Then, when the scene actually was shot, a recording was made of the sound as heard on the stage by the actor. After a "take" was chosen several days later, this recording was replaced by the original track, matching in sync what had been recorded on the stage. If new actions had been devised that required more time between lines of dialogue, there was no way of changing the track at that point; so, the needle was lifted from the record and the scene was shot "wild." After the film came back from the lab, the director and the animator juggled the picture and the sound track back and forth until they had the best sync they could achieve. Sometimes a new interpretation would develop

that necessitated doing the dialogue over with a different phrasing or expression; that sequence would be marked for a retake the next time the "voice talent" was at the studio—another reason for not recording all of the sound at one session.

It became increasingly important to choose just the right actor for this type of live action, since it would have such an influence on the development of a character's personality, and even on the entertainment value in the picture. Some comedians were versatile enough to suggest antics for characters in one picture after another, but for the most part we wanted a different actor for each role. Obviously, the Huntsman in *Snow White* could never be portrayed by the same man who would do Mr. Smee in *Peter Pan*.

Occasionally, there will be a cartoon character requiring such a subdued role, or such careful planning, that there is virtually no room for new concepts from the actor. Once the role comes to life with the proper voice, the visual image should match, and nothing more. The Huntsman needed no more personality, no more acting; his scenes had been so well conceived that he had only to look convincing to make his sinister role believable.

Of course, there is always a big problem in making the "real" or "straight" characters in our pictures have enough personality to carry their part of the story. Animator and director Woolie Reitherman has said, "The art of animation lends itself least to real people, and most to caricatures and illusions of a person." The point of this is misinterpreted by many to mean that characters who have to be represented as real should be left out of feature films, that the stories should be told with broad characters who can be han-

dled more easily. This would be a mistake, for spectators need to have someone or something they can believe in, or the picture falls apart. In *The Rescuers*, the young girl Penny was surrounded by a whole cast of broad characters; but, while they enriched the story, they did not carry it. As Woolie said afterward, "Naw, the little girl was so believable! All those things around her were great, but you needed that sincerity."

The sincerity in that case came from careful planning of the scenes to make use of the most appealing aspects of this little character. Some miscellaneous scenes had been filmed of two different five-year-old girls, so that the animator could study how a child of that age moved, but there was no attempt to record special moves or actual scenes after that. Instead, the effort had gone into finding the right things for her to do and the best way for her to do them. It is axiomatic that boy or girl characters can be done more easily in live action than in cartoon, and that one should not do things in a cartoon better done in live action. However, if that philosophy had been followed over the years, there would have been no *Snow White*, no *Cinderella*, no *Peter Pan*, nor most of the features that the Disney studio produced. To make a "straight" character convincing and interesting requires great creative effort. It may take imagination and a knowledge of both story and animation, but there is always a way—if the staff is smart enough to find it and willing to work hard enough to accomplish it.

Generally speaking, if there is a human character in a story, it is wise to draw the person with as much caricature as the role will permit. Early in the story development, these questions should be asked: "Does this character have to be straight?" "What is the role

ANIMATOR: Ollie Johnston—
Reason and Emotion.

The broader the design, the greater the communication, and the more fun for the animator. The essence of pure, undisciplined emotion was embodied in this chubby lady for the film Reason and Emotion. Without the restrictions of realism, the animator was able to make her appealing, and even a little sexy.



Snow White

we need here?" If it is a prince or a hero or a sympathetic person who needs acceptance from the audience to make the story work, then the character must be drawn realistically, but not necessarily in a restricted manner. In *101 Dalmatians*, Roger and Anita had to be treated as real people because of the genuine concern they had for their pets; yet they were drawn with less realism than the prince in either *Snow White* or *Cinderella*. The design of the whole picture, as well as the treatment of the story, permitted the animator more freedom in representation. The Baduns and Cruella deVil had broader roles and could be drawn with more caricature, which immediately made them more interesting and stronger. In *The Rescuers*, the little girl had to be drawn sincerely because she was the heart of the story; Medusa and Snoops could be wild, comic figures because they were not sinister.

Whenever two or more animated characters are in the same scene, interrelating in ways that are true to their own personalities, live action staging can be particularly helpful. Technically, it is difficult to animate two characters sharing a space, moving them about without their stepping on each other, while keeping a general feeling of dimension and volume in the scene. The problem is compounded if some critical acting is required at the same time. When the scene is shot with this in mind, and the actors move around in a way that is helpful to the animators, everyone will benefit.

Les Clark was given the scene to animate of the three dwarfs dancing with Snow White—the only long shot that showed the dimensions of the dwarfs' room and the scale of the characters through their movement. Animating the decrease in the girl's size as she moved away from the camera was controlled by working from the live action film, but the matching perspectives of the dwarfs that Les animated from imagination made the scene amazingly convincing and added credence to the whole sequence.

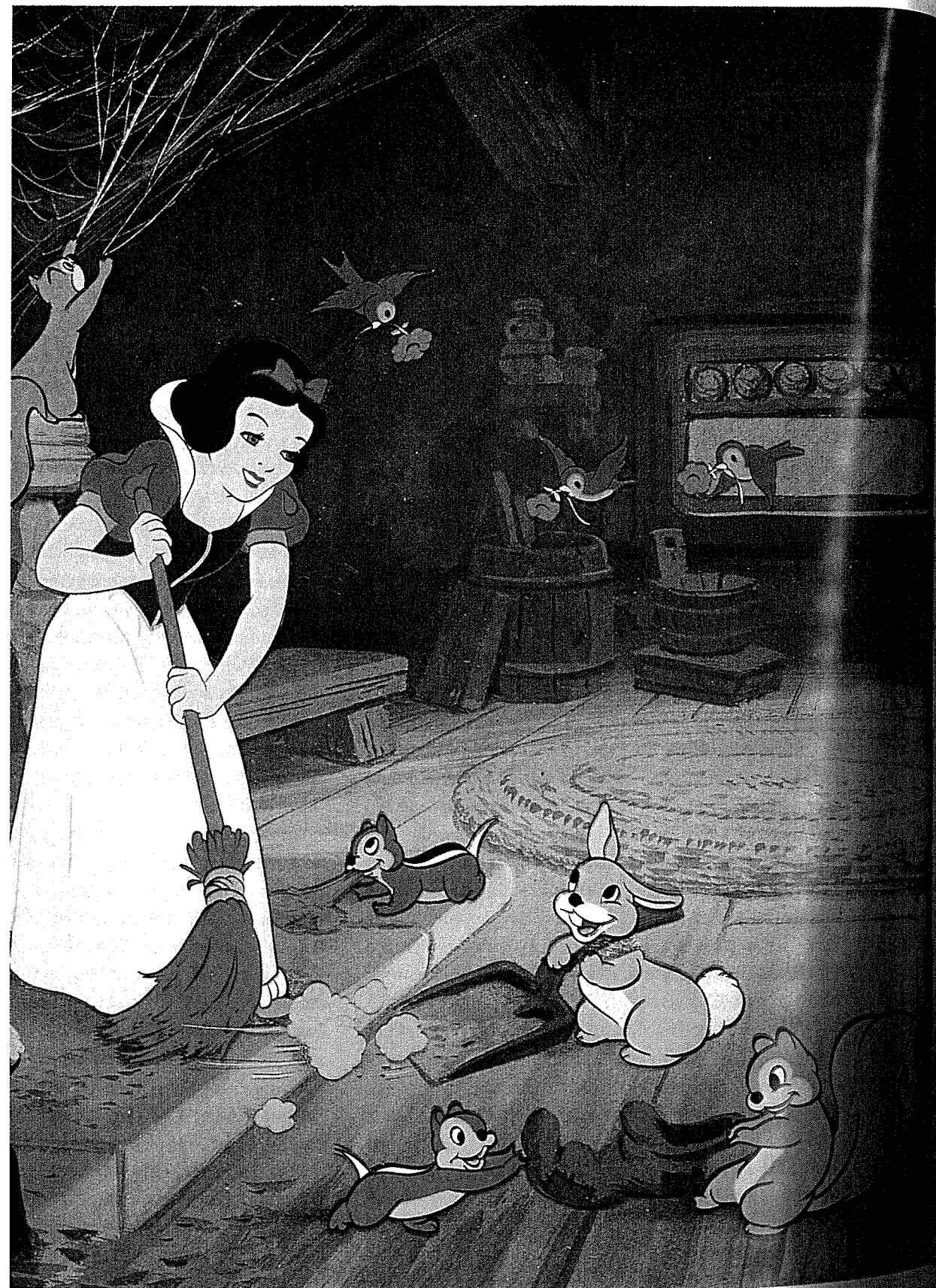
Any dancing scenes in a story should be shot early and planned throughout the musical number, rather than handed out piecemeal when an animator needs them. Obviously the choreography will be richer if a dancer plans it all, instead of leaving it up to the unresolved fantasies of some storyman. In the scene Les had, there was a special problem with Snow White's hand positions. Just how high can a dwarf

reach up comfortably to dance with height of each dwarf had to be planned to the girl doing the live action proportions, derived from the phoning. For the scene to be effective, the dwarfs should not strain or be reached to take her hand. Fortunately shooting the live action, all such details were covered.

It is not worth the trouble of film a change in size as a character comes to camera, but if a major part of the based on startling perspective or several characters working in perspective deal of the animator's time may be proving out the effectiveness of the

The same strategy applies to the inanimate objects that might be in a scene: falling trees, avalanches, moving trains are all time-consuming and hard for the animator to master, and they are questions of the animation budget when tracing photostats will give just as good a result. In *Pinocchio*, Stromboli locked a large bird cage made of bent sticks and swung as his wagon bumped down stone streets. The cage even had a door that was swinging in a separate direction. The object would have been almost impossible to animate in the first place, let alone to capture the convincing movement of its action. The solution of the scene was not the cage but the character while inside, calling for help. This was difficult enough for any animator, but there was no need to add more expense by having someone work over and over on the swinging cage. A model of the cage was made to the correct size, and it was filmed so it appeared to have the scale and weight for both the character and the wagon. The animator then worked from photostats of the swinging cage to animate the acting he wanted with the character inside the bouncing cage. It was a nightmarish idea, but a spectacular theatrical device.

In 1948, Walt Disney had more problems with *Pinocchio* (which had been finished



Snow White

we need here?" If it is a prince or a hero or a sympathetic person who needs acceptance from the audience to make the story work, then the character must be drawn realistically, but not necessarily in a restricted manner. In *101 Dalmatians*, Roger and Anita had to be treated as real people because of the genuine concern they had for their pets; yet they were drawn with less realism than the prince in either *Snow White* or *Cinderella*. The design of the whole picture, as well as the treatment of the story, permitted the animator more freedom in representation. The Baduns and Cruella deVil had broader roles and could be drawn with more caricature, which immediately made them more interesting and stronger. In *The Rescuers*, the little girl had to be drawn sincerely because she was the heart of the story; Medusa and Snoops could be wild, comic figures because they were not sinister.

Whenever two or more animated characters are in the same scene, interrelating in ways that are true to their own personalities, live action staging can be particularly helpful. Technically, it is difficult to animate two characters sharing a space, moving them about without their stepping on each other, while keeping a general feeling of dimension and volume in the scene. The problem is compounded if some critical acting is required at the same time. When the scene is shot with this in mind, and the actors move around in a way that is helpful to the animators, everyone will benefit.

Les Clark was given the scene to animate of the three dwarfs dancing with Snow White—the only long shot that showed the dimensions of the dwarfs' room and the scale of the characters through their movement. Animating the decrease in the girl's size as she moved away from the camera was controlled by working from the live action film, but the matching perspectives of the dwarfs that Les animated from imagination made the scene amazingly convincing and added credence to the whole sequence.

Any dancing scenes in a story should be shot early and planned throughout the musical number, rather than handed out piecemeal when an animator needs them. Obviously the choreography will be richer if a dancer plans it all, instead of leaving it up to the unresolved fantasies of some storyman. In the scene Les had, there was a special problem with Snow White's hand positions. Just how high can a dwarf

reach up comfortably to dance with a young girl? The height of each dwarf had to be planned, not in relation to the girl doing the live action but to her cartoon proportions, derived from the photostats of her dancing. For the scene to be effective, it was important that the dwarfs should not strain or be awkward as they reached to take her hand. Fortunately, with Ham Luske shooting the live action, all such details were carefully covered.

It is not worth the trouble of filming simply to record a change in size as a character comes closer to the camera, but if a major part of the design of a scene is based on startling perspective or the relationship of several characters working in perspective, then a great deal of the animator's time may be saved by first proving out the effectiveness of the scene on film.

The same strategy applies to the action of the inanimate objects that might be in a scene. Rolling barrels, falling trees, avalanches, moving cars, wagons, and trains are all time-consuming and tedious for an animator to master, and they are questionable expenses in the animation budget when tracing such things from photostats will give just as good results, if not better. In *Pinocchio*, Stromboli locked the little fellow in a large bird cage made of bent sticks, which bounced and swung as his wagon bumped along the cobblestone streets. The cage even had a small perch inside that was swinging in a separate action. This intricate object would have been almost impossible to draw in the first place, let alone to capture the weight and convincing movement of its action. However, the point of the scene was not the cage but Pinocchio's reaction while inside, calling for help. That action in itself was difficult enough for any animator, and fortunately there was no need to add more expense to the scene by having someone work over and over on the drawings of the swinging cage. A model cage was built at half size, and it was filmed so it appeared to be the right scale and weight for both the little puppet and the wagon. The animator then worked with tracings from photostats of the swinging cage, attempting to match the acting he wanted with the changing perspectives of the bouncing cage. It was a nightmare to animate, but a spectacular theatrical device.

In 1948, Walt Disney had money problems (again). *Pinocchio* (which had been finished in 1940) had not

