ANIMATION HOMEWORK BOOKLET

YEAR 8: SUMMER 2
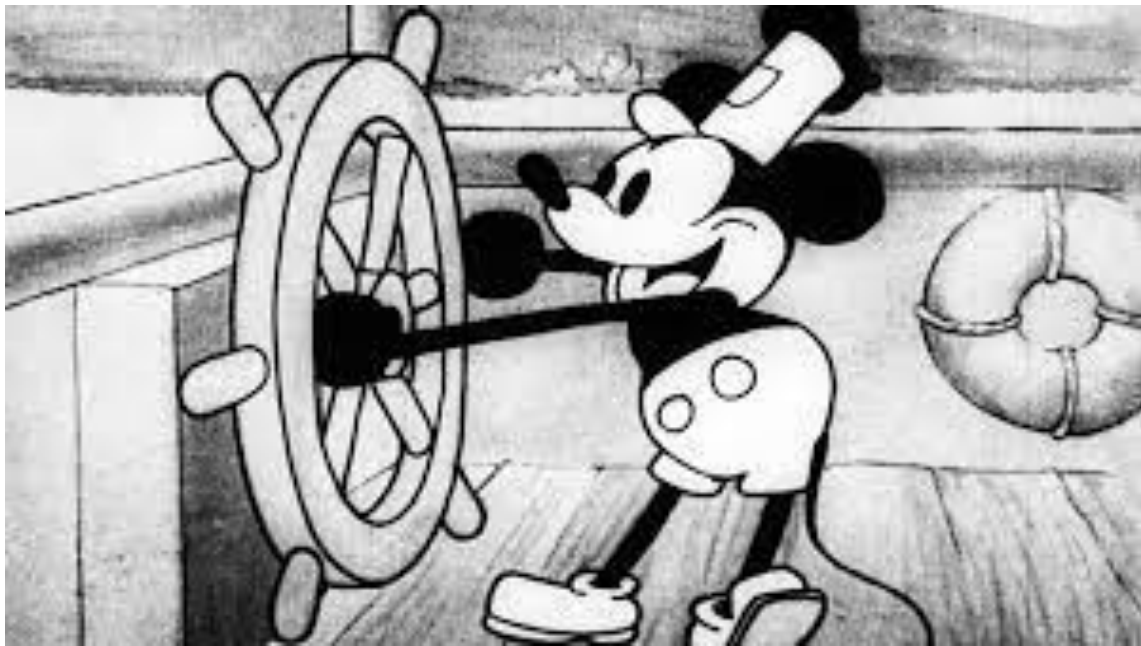
Read the article below

A Guide to the History of Animation

The history of animation dates back to the ancient world. From the pottery of the ancient Greeks to the ocular toys of the seventeenth century to the computer-generated imagery (CGI) of the twenty-first century, animation has existed in many forms, evolving into the technological feat we see today.

What Is Animation?

Animation is the process of bringing illustrations or inanimate objects to life through motion pictures. Animation techniques manipulate photos and drawings to give the illusion of movement and present a narrative to viewers on screen. Some consider early Grecian pottery as an early form of animation, depicting scenes of movement and expressions along its surface, like a comic strip.

What Is the History of Animation?

This history of animation extends far beyond the history of film, as early animators throughout the centuries found ways to create movies without cameras or recording technology. Before Oscar-winning CGI Hollywood blockbusters like Pixar's *Toy Story 3* (2010) and Academy Award-winners like *Finding Nemo* (2003), there was the first animated sequence captured on standard picture film—J. Stuart Blackton's *The Enchanted Drawing* (1900)—which used a live-action actor, props, and stop-motion techniques to create a two-minute comedic scene.

Animation continued to evolve throughout the decade, with French cartoonist Émile Cohl's two-minute stick figure animation, *Fantasmagorie* (1908), becoming one of the first cartoons. In 1914, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* broke new ground in the animation industry as the first animated film to use techniques like keyframing, inbetweeners, and animation loops, which laid the foundation for standard industry practice for future animation production. Later, Walt Disney's short film *Steamboat Willie* (1928), marked the first time an animated film was fully scored, popularizing Mickey Mouse, and the use of sound in animated film going forward.

6 Examples of Early Animation Devices

Throughout history, there have been numerous devices and toys capable of depicting active scenes of animated cartoon characters, people, objects, and events:

1. **Magic lantern**: The magic lantern was an image projection device developed in 1603. This device used a mirror in the back of a light source (originally a candle)

that would direct the light through long glass slides, projecting the slide's illustrations. Placing the slides together formed movement, making the magic lantern the first instance of "moving pictures."

2. **Thaumatrope**: The thaumatrope was a nineteenth-century optical toy that featured a picture disk held by two strings. When the strings were twirled, they would spin the disk, moving images on either side of the disk into one by the "persistence of vision," an optical illusion that tricks the eye into seeing movement long after the movement has stopped.

3. **Phenakistoscope**: Also known as the Fantascope, and sometimes spelled "phenakistiscope," the phenakistoscope debuted around 1833, featuring spinning, painted cardboard disks reflected in mirrors, which created the illusion of movement. The phenakistoscope's innovative experience could only be enjoyed by one viewer at a time.

4. **Zoetrope**: The phenakistoscope's successor, the zoetrope was a spinning cylindrical version that presented images in sequential phases of motion that multiple viewers could watch at a time. The cylinder contained several vertical slits, which provided a mechanism for the eye to keep the spinning photographs from blurring together while in motion.

5. **Kineograph**: Latin for "moving picture," the kineograph (known as the flipbook) debuted in 1868. The kineograph is a small book of drawings, with each page conveying a different form of movement, so that when the pages are flipped quickly in sequence, they animate a scene.

6. **Praxinoscope**: In 1877, the praxinoscope succeeded the zoetrope, replacing the latter's narrow vertical slits with an inner circle of angled mirrors instead. These angled mirrors helped provide a clearer and more vivid animation than peering at the moving illustrations through slits.

What Was the First Animated Film?

Émile Reynaud's *Pauvre Pierrot* (1892) was created by using a longer image roll for the praxinoscope, allowing for a longer viewing time. *Pauvre Pierrot* is often credited as the first animated film because Reynaud's picture roll was hand-painted with 500 individual images (rather than using photographs). However, film historians argue that Émile Cohl's *Fantasmagorie* (1908), is the first instance of a film produced with traditional animation techniques, making it the first true animated movie.

Some consider Britsh-American producer J. Stuart Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (1906) to be the animation industry's first film. Blackton used stop-motion animation to depict a series of animated characters changing movements throughout the three-minute movie. *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* was the first animated film recorded on standard picture film, technically making it the first animated movie captured on real film.

What Was the First Feature-Length Animated Movie?

The first animated feature film is Walt Disney Studios' *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). This film used the traditional animation process of cel animation, which involved rendering two-dimensional visuals on a transparent sheet of celluloid. The cel animation process allowed transferring illustrations between frames, rather than having to redraw from scratch each time, speeding up the process, saving time and labor.

What Is the History of Computer Animation?

People began to experiment with computer graphics as early as the 1940s, for science and research purposes. Composer, animator, and inventor John Whitney Sr. built a custom computer device from a converted Kerrison Predictor (a World War II-era anti-aircraft fire-control system). Using mathematics to control the device in more specific ways, they had the ability to produce precise lines and shapes. Whitney Sr., with the assistance of legendary graphic designer Saul Bass, animated the opening title sequence for Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 film *Vertigo*. The classic film is considered to be one of the first live-action films to use computer animation.

By the 1960s, innovative digital graphics boomed as more computers entered the mainstream, and by the 1970s, many people began using computer graphics as an art form. Graphic design tools and software for computers continued to evolve, and government funding allotted to the University of Utah saw an emergence in groundbreaking animation projects, notably one produced by Ed Catmull, *Hand/Face* (1972). The abilities of computer animation continued to expand, as more people discovered the capabilities of this new medium, eventually evolving into the CGI masterpieces that dominate our media today.

Mastery:

Complete the comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. What is animation? Write down the definition.

2. Name one example of an early animation device and explain how it was used.

3. How many individual images were painted for the animated film, *Pauvre Pierrot*?

4. How did 'cel animation' speed up the process of creating an animation?

5. When did people begin to experiment with computer animation?

Extension:

Select one example of an early animation device and do some of your own research.

-Who invented it?
-When did they invent it?
-What did it look like?
-Do we still see examples of it today?

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!

Read the article below

The Evolution of Disney Princess

By Mary Grlic

Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful princess in a large elegant castle. Despite having everything she wanted, she still felt the curious desire to go out and explore the world. Being held back by the world around her, she was stuck in her castle until she could find a prince to marry and live with as a family. Her insatiable curiosity led her to escape, where she found her dashing prince who would finally save her from her captive life. They lived happily ever after.

While stories like these seem to have a happy ending, the whole premise is inherently flawed. Classic Disney princess movies often follow a similar narrative in which a woman finds a man to save herself from her struggles in her life. Such stories adhere to gender roles and can send harmful messages to young, impressionable children.

Disney princesses tend to fall in one of three categories. First, classical Disney films portray the main character as a damsel in distress, playing into stereotypical domestic gender norms. These characteristics are shown in Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty. Secondly, there is a category of the ambitious and rebellious princesses, like Rapunzel, Ariel, and Mulan. The third type of woman is the independent and free spirited princess. Newer characters, like Anna and Elsa from *Frozen*, depict this archetype.

Beginning in 1937 with the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney depicts a young and beautiful princess that other women in the town are jealous of. The Ugly Stepmother follows a violent and obsessive narrative in which she aims to kill Snow White, purely out of jealousy. Throughout the film, Snow White is seen cleaning the house and cooking for the dwarfs, doing all of their dirty work and adhering to the female gender role as a housekeeper. Overall, the film depicts the main character as a ditsy girl who needs a man to save her, rather than a powerful woman that young girls should look up to.

Some other Disney films follow this misogynistic narrative, like *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Both Cinderella and Aurora are princesses that are only admired for their kindness and their looks. Their lives are only complete when a prince comes to save them. Although there is no issue with beauty, kindness, or relationships, the inherent problem is that these movies convey the message that all girls should only be pretty and codependent.

In later years, Disney films started to depict more powerful and rebellious women. While these were strides for girls in the media, they were still inherently flawed depictions of women. *Beauty and the Beast*, for example, is about an intelligent girl named Belle. The movie makes it clear that women reading books was an anomaly, but Belle fights against these gender stereotypes and continues to love reading. She is courageous when she tries to save her father and sacrifices her life back home to ensure that he is safe. However, some psychologists say that she is a victim of Stockholm syndrome: she falls in love with the Beast who holds her captive. The film may promote abusive relationships where victims are meant to change abusive men. It is not Belle's fault that she falls victim to this abuse, but by making the couple live happily ever after, the movie portrays that the Beast's outbursts and commands were tolerable. Nonetheless, *Beauty and the Beast* does portray an intelligent and brave young woman, unlike other Disney classics, making her a much better role model than her predecessors.

The newest wave of Disney films has portrayed some of the best role model princesses for young girls. *Moana* centers around a powerful young girl who sets out to save her family and her island. Though she disobeys her father's wishes, Moana works hard to help her community as she endures a challenging journey across the water. Overall, the film has no subplots to distract viewers from Moana's undoubtedly courageous and fierce character. Additionally, the animation of the film Moana set her apart from the traditional Disney princesses, as her body highlighted different traits that were more athletic and lifelike. She seems to be more realistic compared to real-life humans, which is an amazing thing for young girls to see portrayed in films.

Starting with Snow White and moving onto Moana and Frozen, the portrayal of Disney princesses has changed a lot. Disney movies and their princess protagonists have become increasingly better at showing the endless opportunities a woman can have, rather than merely depicting stereotypical gender roles and plots where men save the day. Disney films have surely evolved to accurately depict better role models for young girls.

<u>Mastery:</u>

Complete the comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. Why is the premise of early animation films flawed?

2. What three categories do Disney Princesses tend to be defined by?

3. What does this article say about Snow White's presentation? How does she appear to us?

4. What is one example of a more rebellious Disney female character? In what way are they rebellious?

5. In what way are the newer Disney films better at creating female characters?

<u>Extension:</u>

Select one female Disney character and write an informative paragraph explaining how they have been presented. You might pick an early character, such as Cinderella, or a more recent character, like Moana.

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!

Read the article below from the BBC

Do you whistle while you work? Perhaps you prefer to just keep swimming. Or maybe you're trying to fit your phenomenal cosmic powers into an itty, bitty living space.

If any of these phrases are now worming their way out of your consciousness (you're welcome), then it is likely you are a child of Disney, brought up on regular diet of chirpy tales to keep you occupied while your parents grabbed an hour for themselves.

The generation now filling up workplaces were fed a feast of feature-length animations during their formative years like no others before them.

The Little Mermaid first came out 30 years ago and less than six months later was released on home video. This was a significant break for Disney, who usually waited several years before releasing movies on VHS. The films that followed through the 1990s – including Beauty and the Beast, then Aladdin, the Lion King, Pocahontas and the first two Toy Story movies – also came out on video around a year after their cinema release.

And then came DVDs. Disney's first animated DVD was a re-release of The Little Mermaid in 1999. DVDs didn't need rewinding and were less susceptible to going wonky after being repeatedly watched. They were the perfect "electronic babysitter".

But has Disney's cocktail of morality, stereotypes and a sprinkling of magic had any lasting impact on this generation of adults who, once upon a time, devoured these films as children? And could it be influencing how your colleagues behave in the workplace or even your future career?

"Disney is quite pervasive within our modern culture," says Martyn Griffin, an expert on the cultural perceptions of work and organisation at Durham University in the UK. "Home videos exposed kids over and over again to the ideas in Disney films. If they were doing this from a young age it is bound to have an impact."

At face value, these cartoons are harmless entertainment, but some researchers have raised concerns about the **subliminal lessons Disney's films contain**. Perhaps the most common criticism is the way these have **portrayed gender, racial and cultural stereotypes** in the past. The opening song Arabian Nights in Aladdin, for example, contained the line "where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face" when it was released in 1993. **Disney later changed the lyric**.

Lasting impact of stereotypes

Some researchers divide the corporation's portrayal of women into distinct eras. First came the domestic era, when female characters like Snow White, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella were portrayed as homemakers, often cleaning and **in need of rescue by a man**.

Then came the **rebellious, new-age phase** of Ariel in The Little Mermaid, Princess Jasmine in Aladdin, Pocahontas and Mulan. During this period, Disney's women seemed to gain a more independent streak, striving to free themselves from the bonds of society. But Ariel also sacrifices her voice in order to be with the man she loves.

"The symbolism here is powerful," wrote Mia Adessa Towbin and her colleagues at the family studies department of Colorado State University in one study. "**To win the love of the prince, she must forfeit her thoughts and intellect**, her independence and identity."

Although the story was originally written by Hans Christian Andersen, the researchers say it provides an apt metaphor for many of Disney's heroines – "no one listens to their words".

The Little Mermaid and the five subsequent films also show another trend – **the female characters start to speak less**. Despite being the title characters, women speak just 32% of the time in The Little Mermaid, while they have just 24% of lines in Pocahontas and 23% in Mulan. In Aladdin, female characters have just 10% of the dialogue.

Carmen Fought and Karen Eisenhauer, the linguists at North Carolina State University whose analysis produced these figures, also found male characters in the same films tended to **boss the female characters around far more than vice versa.** When the women did so, they were more polite than the men. Others have suggested **levels of uncertainty in the dialogue of female characters** have also increased.

For critics, this sends a strong message to young children that reinforces many long-standing gender stereotypes. And there is some evidence it could leave a lasting impression.

A study by family life researcher Sarah Coyne at Brigham Young University – inspired by concerns about her daughter's own consumption of Disney – found that engagement with Disney princesses in young girls around two years old was **associated with greater female gender-stereotype behaviour** and lower body self-esteem a year later.
Demonising the mentally ill

Disney has also faced criticism over its treatment of mental health – **85% of Disney's 34 animated features released before 2004 contained references to mental illness**, often in ways that aimed to denigrate or set apart characters, according to psychology researchers at the University of Calgary. They warned it could have "implications for child viewers in terms of their potentially learning prejudicial attitudes" against people perceived as having mental health problems.

The same research team also warned that the high prevalence of references to evil in Disney's films could also lead children to learn to **"demonise people who engage in perceived 'bad' behaviours"** if they watch the films repeatedly.

It is something Fred Zimmerman, a behavioural economist at the University of California, Los Angeles, agrees could be contributing to wider societal problems today.

"Disney films almost always present a battle between Good and Evil," he says. "One can't help but wonder if this *Disnified* understanding of the world as a struggle between the good

guys and bad guys is a piece of today's problems of political polarisation and social exclusion."

The hidden upside

But there are many potential positive effects from Disney's films too. One study showed that watching Disney characters help one another – a common thread – **inspired children to help their own friends**.

Another study by Coyne revealed that Disney films are rich in so-called "prosocial" behaviour, such as sharing, helping others, or offering compliments or encouragement. She and her colleagues found that Disney's films contain an average of **one act of prosocial behaviour every minute** – about seven times the level found in other children's television programming in the US.

Griffin believes that the messages learned by children at a young age from films can be carried into the workplace and that there is a good chance that someone sitting near you in the office has had some of their beliefs shaped by Disney.

He has studied how work is portrayed in Disney films and says it may have contributed to the **reluctance among the younger workforce to join traditional workplaces**. **Millennials demand far more flexibility from employers** than previous generations, are more willing to change jobs and companies and often prefer **self-employment to the constraints of full-time contracts**.

"In the early films, work was **always portrayed as this horrible bad thing**," says Griffin. "You had characters who were often separated from their parents and punished in this world of work, like Snow White filling up the wash bucket and slaving away in the house and Cinderella subjected to work in the household."

"Disney's response was to say 'whistle while you work' and everything will be ok as a prince will come along and rescue you," he says. "That went on in the films for years."

 "If you think about that [situation] in a modern workplace, it is a dangerous view to have – if you just carry on being exploited because you think everything is going to turn out to be okay."

Managers – think about the ugly stepsisters in Cinderella for example – are also typically **portrayed as manipulative and horrible**.

It might also explain some of the dissatisfaction that millennials who were children during the late 1990s have with work, he says.

Disney itself did not respond to repeated BBC requests for an interview or a comment for this article. But in Disney's recent films many researchers have noticed a marked change. Griffin, for example, says careers are portrayed **more positively and as something to aspire to**.

"Zootopia is great example of work in Disney films," says Griffin. "There is a bunny rabbit who wants to be a police officer and she gets laughed at but throughout the film she sets

out to prove herself. The newest films also have this idea of bringing your friends closer to you to help change your identity and your workplace. That's a really positive message."

The female characters in Frozen, Brave and Moana also represent a new, independent and free-spirited era of Disney. They **are strong and in control of their own lives** and **no longer need male characters to save the day**. But while Brave and Moana are seen as truly breaking the Disney princess mould, **opinion is somewhat divided over Frozen's heroines**.

"The company is attempting to keep up with the times with reference to gender equality and representation," says Ingvild Kvale Sørenssen, who studies children's relationships with Disney at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. "How this influences [children long term] we cannot know, but representation matters, diversity matters. And being able to dream and imagine oneself a character, and to merely be entertained, is not a bad thing."

Perhaps most welcome are the recent remakes of the older classic Disney animations such as Aladdin and the upcoming Mulan. Earlier this month Disney announced it was casting R&B singer and actress Halle Bailey in the role of Ariel in a live-action version of The Little Mermaid, a decision that drew **a backlash from some fans**, but was widely applauded.

"Disney's recasting of prior era's works is extremely impactful for children of colour and for global diversity," says Shearon Roberts, who is studying the changing face of Disney's social consciousness at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. "Disney's current decade has offered girls the full spectrum to dream beyond castles and to imagine the full reach of their abilities.

"It is also a message for young boys. Women and girls are not just their objects of affection, but allies in ridding their worlds of evil and making the world better for all."

Complete the comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. Name one stereotype often shown in Disney films and how it could have had a lasting impact on society.

2. What is one positive upside to Disney films?

3. Why is the recasting of some characters, such as 'The Little Mermaid' important?

4. With the evolving Disney movies, what message is also being sent to young boys?

Extension:

Select one Disney film and write a paragraph explaining how it could shape the views of young viewers.

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!

WEEK 4: Animation to inspire action

<u>Mastery:</u>

<u>Task 1</u>: Watch the two animated videos on plastic pollution.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLeccbkBZzs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FQ_eQ5c7uw

<u>Task 2</u>: Write a few sentences explaining which animation you thought was more powerful and why.

I thought the video showing _____ was the most powerful because_____.

<u>Task 3</u>: Animation can be used to inspire action and create change. Design your own animation video to encourage people to recycle plastic. You could use the story board structure on the next page if you wish, or you can create something on your iPad.

<u>Extension:</u>

Write a commentary to go alongside your animation explaining your creative decisions. You might explain your use of characters, colours and images and how they contribute to your message.

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!

Scene:

Scene:

Scene:

Scene:

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The Unanticipated Audience of Animated Films (abridged article)

Introduction

Since their conception, animated films have been viewed as visual entertainment largely targeted at children — an instinctive conclusion to arrive at given their happy endings, didactic messages and flat characters. This is especially evident in films such as Snow White, Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella. While children enjoy these animated films, adults too partake in the experience these films create for their audience. However, the film experience lived by adults should not be equated to that which children appreciate. Animated films speak to adults in a vastly different way and it is this very experience that can be examined critically.

Three animated films will be discussed:

 Shrek (2001)

Shark Tale (2004)

Finding Nemo (2003).

These films have been chosen as objects of analysis, firstly, because they are all largely marketed to children, as can be seen from the trailers. Due to the fact that children appear to be the main targert audience of all these films, it is fascinating to venture beyond the superficial and analyse the covert, subliminal and complex ways in which adults are engaged — as opposed to a film that is overtly marketed to adults.

Secondly, these films were all released within five years of one another to ensure that the variation that diachronic change brings does not affect the study to a large extent.

Thirdly, they have all received accolades (IMDb, 2012). This is a marker of their positive reception by most and reveals that the filmmakers have crafted the movie with precision and purposefulness. This shows that they are generally of level standing in the movie arena, allowing them to engage in a comparative analysis together.

Analysis

Animated films make many allusions to other films, some animated, some not and often, many which children will not be familiar with. These references are sometimes used to create humour. An example of which can be seen in *Shrek*, where Princess Fiona's fighting scene, with Robin Hood and his merry men, shows her skillfully posing in mid-air. This is an overt reference to an iconic scene in *The Matrix (*1999), where the female lead, Trinity struck the same pose. This parodies *The Matrix* in a comical and lighthearted fashion.

Similarly, in *Finding Nemo*, the swarming in of seagulls in the clip below resonates links to the seagull scene in Hitchcock's *The Birds,* also featured below. Hitchcock's intense horror film is good-naturedly undercut and mocked and children will not be able to appreciate this element of humor.

There are also numerous references to specific characters and actors — whom most children would not be familiar with. Such references legitimize the film with the actors' reputations, to create a sense of character depth or to concretize the realism of characters. For example, mafia-themed *Shark Tale* alludes to the 1972 gangster movie, *The Godfather.* Don Lino governs the underwater world in *Shark Tale*, and is voiced by Robert De Niro, who also played Don Vito Corleone, the head of the mob in *The Godfather II.* To make this connection even more salient, Don Lino, in a mimetic fashion (Talib, 2011), has a mole on his cheek that strongly resembles Robert De Niro himself. This technique of mimesis is also applied to other characters in *Shark Tale*, such as Oscar, voiced by Will Smith and Lola, voiced by Angelina Jolie. While this connection is overt to an adult viewer, it is unlikely that this would be apparent to a child and the benefits reaped from such a connection would not materialize for children. The aforementioned examples can be seen below:

The use of music, by filmmakers, as a means of intertextual allusion, is also prevalent, though subtle. This is often used to frame the scene by indexing certain settings. In *Finding Nemo* when the character Darla, a terrifying young girl, is seen by the protagonists (Nemo and the other sea creatures) entering the dentist's office, "The Murder" from Bernard Herrmann's score for Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 film Psycho accompanies her arrival (IMDb, 2012). This particular piece symbolizes the terror that Darla brings to the story, simultaneously invoking the same sense of distress in viewers, induced by events from the Hitchcock movie.

Similarly, in *Shark Tale*, the *Jaws (*1975) theme song is played in the background as the silhouette of a shark creeps up from behind a worm being used as bait for fishing (IMDb, 2012). With the anticipation created by the music, the audience is made to believe that the shark is set to devour the worm. However, it heroically saves the worm instead, and this irony is a source of humour for the audience.

It would be erroneous to say that such humour cannot be appreciated by one without knowledge of the films alluded to in the aforementioned examples. Surely, the jarring tones rising to a crescendo, of the *Jaws* theme create an ominous atmosphere, which would make a child aware of the expected danger in the situation. However, it is the knowledge of these films that allows one to enjoy the delicate nuances which make the situation more humorous, and thus, the entire experience all the more enjoyable.

2) References to World Knowledge

Animated films are also created based on existing structures or assumed prior knowledge on the part of the audience. This is done through the use of stereotypes and archetypes, which the audience is presumed to be familiar with to provide a more complete understanding of the films. When characters, which physically embody these stereotypes or the archetypes themselves, are introduced, an informed audience will be able to immediately identify the inherent qualities associated to the characters without the filmmakers having to explicitly reveal them.

This can be seen in Crush and Squirt, the surfer turtles, in *Finding Nemo.* They are presented with droopy eyes and a laidback attitude. The main activity they do is just to follow and surf in the waves. They use words such as "dude" and "sweet" when interacting with Marlin and Dory. When audience sees these physical attributes, they conjure an image of a Californian surfer, who like the turtles, is relaxed and riding the waves.

In addition to the employment of stereotypes and archetypes, animated films also play on the knowledge of existing social practices. They mirror or reflect reality. This is exemplified in *Shrek* when the Magic-Mirror-on-the-Wall shows Lord Farquaad his potential dates. This is done in the manner, which resembles dating game shows. This is further emphasized by the Magic-Mirror altering his voice to mimic a typical "game show host" voice, in a parodic fashion.

Lastly, animated films also play on the audience's recognition of existing social groups or organizations, and the discourse associated to them. For example, in*Finding Nemo*, we also see that the shark, Bruce, is part of an organization of sharks, which has sworn off consuming fish. As he introduces himself, "Hello, my name is Bruce", the other sharks collectively reply "Hi Bruce" in a manner that clearly mimics the operations of Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization that tries to help alcoholics recover from their addiction to alcohol. This parallel makes the sharks appear even more comical as they have taken their seemingly natural inclination to fish too seriously. The film also, albeit insensitively, manipulates the stigma of Alcoholics Anonymous to comical ends.

It is thus evident that animated films base much of their humour on assumed existing knowledge of the audience. This knowledge is unlikely to be found in a child and the comic effect and wit are specially designed for adults to indulge in. Unfortunately, this is often done in such a way that stereotypes are perpetuated or social problems are trivialized. This is

Mastery:

Complete the comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. Why is it presumed that animated films are made for children?

2. Write down one example of intertextuality and explain how it might create humour for adults.

3. Write down one example of 'world knowledge' in animated films and explain how that might create humour for adults.

4. Why might the world knowledge be problematic, especially if young children picked up on the jokes?

Extension:

Plan your own animated film and then explain how you aim to encourage both children and adults to watch and enjoy your film.

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!

WEEK 6: The present and future of animation

Where is Animation Used Today?

Animated films are big business. Some of the top grossing films of all time are animated, including 'Frozen' and 'Toy Story 3'. The top grossing film to date, 'Avatar', shows how far technology has come in terms of creating realistic fantasy environments and creatures that interact successfully with real actors.


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Animation in Business

Animation also plays an important role in modern business. It is frequently used in advertising to grab the attention of the audience. It is a useful tool for keeping the audience engaged and for communicating information quickly and effectively. Businesses can also create a good relationship with their audience and customers by using likeable characters.

Animation in Children's Education

Animation is often used in education as a highly effective tool, especially for younger age groups. Animation can teach young children how to communicate with one another and how to build bridges between each other. By teaching children how to animate characters themselves, we can help children to express themselves creatively.
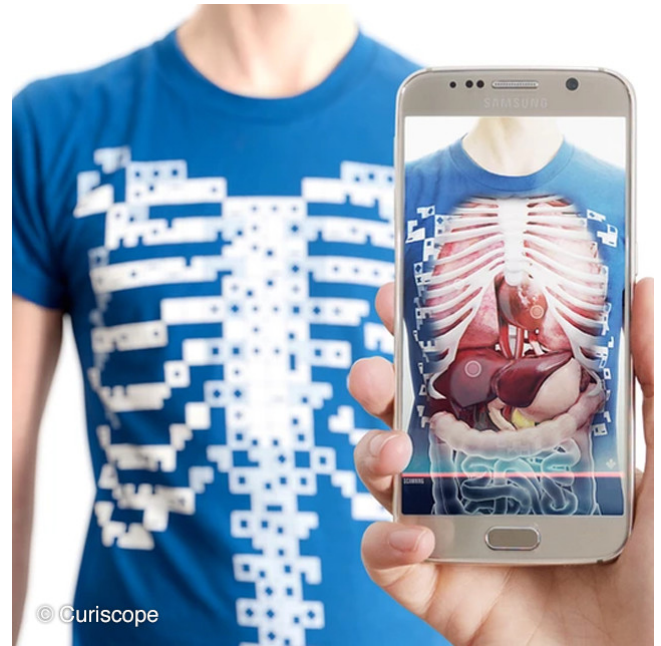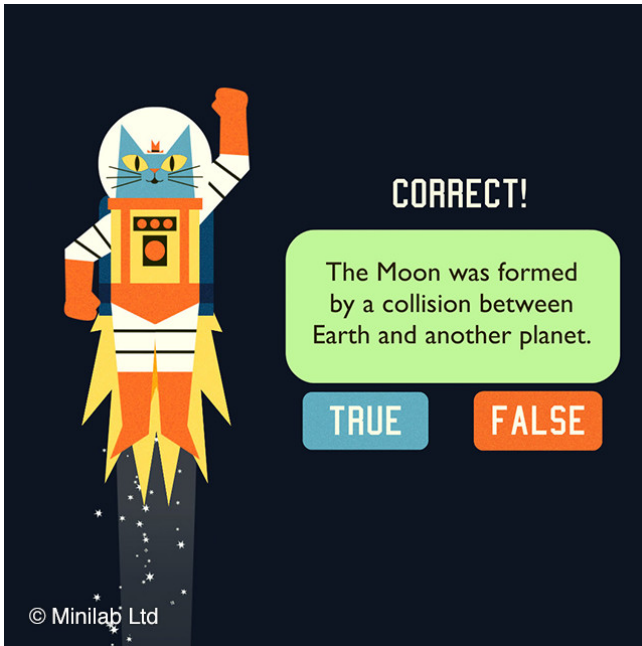
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Recent Animated Film Phenomena

Animation has had a major growth spurt in recent years due to the popularity of films such as 'Finding Nemo' and 'Avatar'. Most recently Pixar's 'Inside Out' won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film. Pixar do not use a publicly available form of animation software, but have in fact developed their own in-house software. 'Avatar', however, released in 2009, was created using multiple pieces of widely available software, such as Autodesk Maya, Avid, and Adobe After Effects.

© Pixar

Animé

There are other forms of animation as well of course, such as animé, which is Japanese hand-drawn or computer animation. The main focus is on creating three-dimensional views shot in a cinematic style. Good examples would be the famous 'Spirited Away' which was created on Toonz and is the highest-grossing film in Japanese history.

The Future of Animation

The future of animation looks to be on an interesting journey as the quality of films is becoming higher and higher. Most people would now aim for a 4k film, however to achieve this quality in animation would take twice as long to create. Most animated films are currently 2k and are made as 24 fps (frames per second), however to create a 4k film you would need at least 48fps or more.

Mixing Media

A technique that Disney have been experimenting with for a few years is mixing CGI and traditional 2D animation. The idea is to create an animated film using CGI and then to draw over each frame to give it a hand drawn quality. A good example would be Pixar's recently released 'Piper', an animated short shown alongside 'Finding Dory'.

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Animation Apps

Disney are also exploring alternative ways of making their characters appear more real. The Disney Colour & Play app allows you to colour in a character and the app will pick up its texture, shape and position, to produce a 3D animated character.

Computer Game Animation

The computer gaming industry is also pushing the boundaries of what is possible with animation, leading to the creation of some extremely realistic game footage. Computer game animation has certainly come a long way from the 2D graphics of early arcade games. Now computer game animators are able to build environments and objects that react to the player's actions, for example buildings being destroyed by explosions. Real-time interaction with light sources and shadows is also a relatively new feature. The greatest challenge has always been producing realistic humans. The closer that computer game animators get to recreating the look, movements, facial expressions and body language of a human, the more likely that character is to suffer from what is widely known as 'Uncanny Valley' – i.e. there is some human element missing from that character that makes them disturbing.

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Photorealism in games

The challenge for computer game animation is that everything happens in real-time, whereas film animators can spend hours, or even months, perfecting every frame. Photorealism in real-time rendering is something that may well be possible in years to come.

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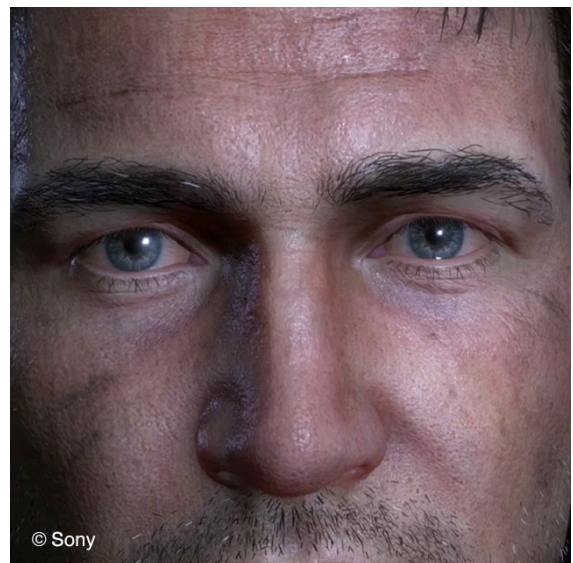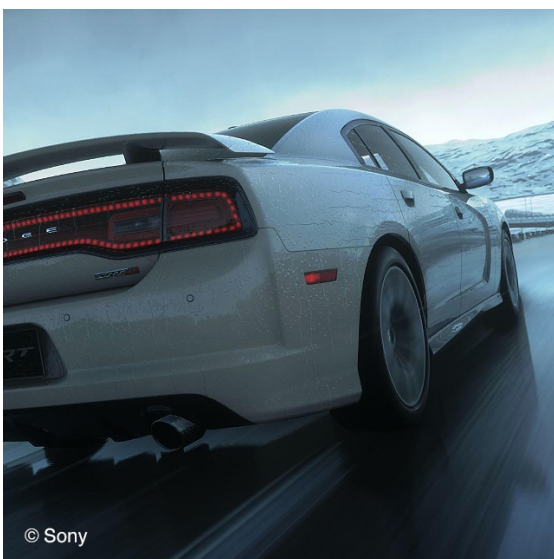
Conclusion

Animation looks set to continue delighting audiences for many years to come. With animated films continuing to rise up the blockbuster charts, capturing hearts and imaginations, there is no sign of this genre coming to an end. Technological advances promise to unlock new doors into the realms of possibility, with increasing photo-realism providing ever-more lifelike characters and environments.

Mastery:

Complete the comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. In what way does animation play an important role in modern business?

2. In what way can animation be used for the education of adults or children?

3. How have animators been experimenting with mixing media?

4. What is challenging for animators in the gaming industry? Why is it a challenge?

Extension:

Write a pitch to persuade big technology companies to spend more money animation. Why is animation important for the future?

Remember to hand your work in on Teams!