

Research in Practice Proposal

Principle, audience and impact

Name: Karol Schwarz

Student number: 1801245

Course: 3D Computer Animation

Module: Research in Practice

Word count: 2347 (excluding bibliography)

Lecturer: Rob Jones

The Principles, Audience and Emotional Impact of Animation

My dissertation proposal will explore three key words revolving around my area of study which is animation (this includes film making). The three keywords I will be examining are principle, audience and impact, all of which are key in the process of bringing animation to life. Using the research I gather based on these keywords, I will form a question for my dissertation.

Principle



Figure 1

Principle, 'a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system or belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning' (Oxford English Dictionary). Consequently, principle is a definitive veracity, "...the greater objective (representative) perfection there is in our idea of a thing, the greater also must be the perfection of its cause," this is a quote by French Philosopher René Descartes. The quote applies to the values of a principle, a good example is faith. Many religions share a similar ruleset of principles, monotheistic religions

believe in one God and share certain rules such as their own interpretation of the ten Commandments, which is their objective in life, by following these principles their faith promises "the greater ... perfection of its cause" which is afterlife. This example also applies to ethics and morality, when a person has their own principles by following them, they achieve a bigger goal. These fitting examples demonstrate the value of principles and the correlation with Descartes quote. Descartes also states that "in order to seek truth, it is necessary once in the course of our life, to doubt, as far as possible, of all things." This quote is very relatable in today's society, with all of the fake news going on in the media. The BBC reported on "the seven types of people who start and spread viral misinformation" some of the mentions are jokers, conspiracy theorists and politicians. It's also important not to forget that massive media corporations have been caught spreading fake news, showing just how important it is "to doubt as far as possible," in the words of Descartes. Or at least be cautious when reviewing information and do independent research.

Now that the definition and impact of principle in culture, philosophy and society has been established, how does it relate to animation and why is it crucial in the process of animating. The whole process of creating an animation or a film has its principles, you start with the pre-production which consists of thorough research, writing a script, storyboarding, character and environment design and much more. Each of those tasks have their own sets of principles, those principles are of high importance

and are there to keep the production process smooth. For example, scripts are written in 12-point Courier font and have a specific layout which roughly translates to one minute of screen time. This list could go on for ever, as each principle has its set of principles but let's have a look the main topic of this query which is animation. In 1981 Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas created the 12 principles of animation which are published in their book: *The Illusion of Life*. The book is regarded as the "Bible of animation" in "Walt Disney's Nine Old Men & The Art of Animation" article by Robin Allan. The 12 principles of animation are squash and stretch, anticipation, staging, straight ahead action and pose to pose, follow through and overlapping action, slow in and slow out, arc, secondary action, timing, exaggeration, solid drawing and appeal. Those principles are still effective and used in modern animation. The reason why those principles have been around for over 39 years is because of how effective they are, the purpose and effect of the 12 principles is fundamental to creating a lively character with human like emotion which allows animation to compete with film. You could say that animators are like actors since they have full control over their characters. I also believe that Descartes' second quote applies to animation, "in order to seek truth, it is necessary once in the course of our life, to doubt, as far as possible, of all things." The way I interpret it is that sometimes you need to ignore what you are taught (what you know) and try new things, think for yourself and experiment. After all, that's how the 12 principles of animation were created by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas, creating brand new principles in place of the old by thinking outside the box and doubting everything they knew.

Audience



Figure 2

The second keyword I have chosen is audience: 'a group of people in one place to watch or listen to a play, film, someone speaking etc.: (Cambridge Dictionary). In the entertainment business I would describe the audience as invaluable, after all the audience dictates the fate of any production, whether it be a high budget film or a music video. The audience generates money from buying cinema tickets, film releases and merchandise.

Not only does the audience have an impact on revenue, with the growth of social media fans have a platform to voice their opinion which can be either positive or harmful for the companies. I have researched John Berger's book 'Ways of Seeing' as it correlates to audience reaction, after all what is an audience? It's ordinary people. Berger's book considers that people react differently when presented with art, this can be compared to an audience reacting differently to a film than they would in a real-life scenario. "When an image is presented as a work of art, the way people look at it is affected by a whole series of

learnt assumptions about art,” The reason why this quote applies to an audience is because the audience has pre-set expectations for a movie that are different to real life expectations. One thing I found fascinating in his book is Berger describing a camera, “I’m an eye. A mechanical eye. I, the machine, show you a world the way only I can see it.” This means that the audience experiences a film through the director’s eyes, literally, he’s the one in control of the cameras and dictates what the audience does and doesn’t see. In her book, Margaux Noël takes an interesting approach of creating an audience rather than targeting an existing one. The book goes over the approach of identifying audience backgrounds and micro analysing the audience in order to find a niche. On paper this makes sense as creating a specific audience would result in a loyal fanbase, the question is if that audience is large enough. I also think it’s a high-risk high reward tactic as there already are so many different genres and subgenres out there.

In this case regarding animation and film, the producers really must know their target audience and do their research, as high production films cost millions of dollars and its success mainly relies on the viewers. According to ICO “Each year a small number of new release films, 6-10 titles, become ‘events’. These films such as the new James Bond, the latest Disney family feature and other big action titles such as the Marvel films or ‘sagas’ such as Twilight and The Hunger Games, are the bedrock of commercial cinema.” This means that these ‘events’ have an upper hand and are destined for higher viewer turnout, allowing the studios to spend high budgets on production and marketing giving them an edge over smaller releases. This makes sense, since companies like Disney have established themselves as pioneers with huge success over the years, creating a name familiar with the audience and using a sense of nostalgia to their advantage. This doesn’t necessarily mean that less money equals less success, but it might make it harder for smaller studios to reach a larger audience due to a lesser marketing budget. To prove that smaller productions can gather a large audience let’s take a look at Star Wars. Against all odds George Lucas’ creation became a blockbuster smashing the box office record with a total of \$775,398,007 having a budget of \$11,000,000 (stats by The Numbers). Whether it is Lucas’ genius, a bit of luck or both, he’s managed to find a massive audience for Star Wars creating a saga and loyal fanbase.

Impact

The final keyword was a tough one, but I’ve decided to go with impact. Impact is ‘the force of impression of one thing on another’ (Merriam-Webster), the reason I chose

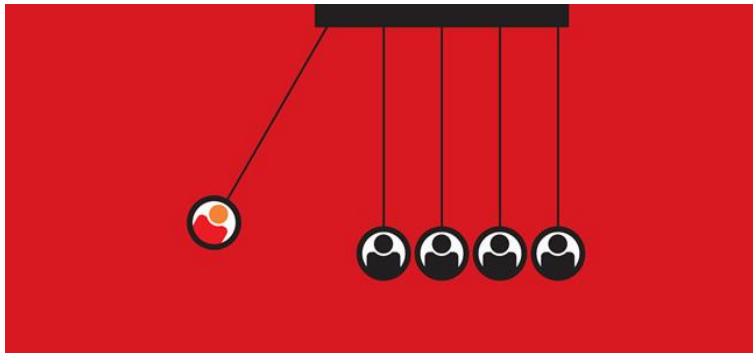


Figure 3

this as the final keyword is because its definition is broad and relates to many topics, one of those topics being the emotional impact of films on the audience and nostalgia. According to a publication by Eva Oliveira, Pedro Martins and Teresa Chambel there are two main models of emotion which are 'The

Categorical Model' and 'the Dimensional Model' this means that the way we assess emotion is subjective, the interesting part of the publication is how they assessed the emotional impact of films using technology (the IFelt system), this allowed them to compile data on different emotions using an interactive video application. Even though the publication is fascinating, I still think that that collecting data using questionnaires or by other means of human interaction has more reliable and detailed results. Going back to the emotional impact of films, there's no doubt that great storytelling combined with great film making captures the audience and leaves an emotional impact. "Movie emotion, in contrast, is tightly framed and bounded but permissive and uncontrolled in content." Quote from Emotion and Film Theory by Norbert Wiley, comparing everyday emotions to those in movies. Does the fact that emotion is presented differently in films change the way it impacts the audience? In some ways it does, but a well-produced film can have a strong emotional impact on a person causing them to feel strong emotions like empathy and even bring tears. After doing some research I figured out that the best way to analyse emotional impact is by looking at audience reviews. I used Rotten Tomatoes to look at audience reviews for 'THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS' film, the reason I chose this film is because of its touching story and an incredible amount of 114,478 audience reviews. The audience score for this film is at 85% which is a pretty high score, but what does the audience think of this film? "it is a powerful, beautifully acted film" – Daniel P, "Moving film" – Christian C, "The final scene is what remains with the viewer, based on shock value, and it does convey the level of disgust that its historical subject warrants" – William L, "It was heart-wrenching to watch that sequence..." – Marie C. Most of the reviews follow a similar trend, writing how moving and heart wrenching the film is. It's safe to say that this film had a strong emotional impact on most of the audience, even some of the negative comments felt those emotions but believed that the film went too far or was over the top. I believe that this impact isn't long lasting or harmful, rather it makes the audience think and reflect on the film or perhaps their lives. This film had some strong emotions, but there are films for every mood and emotion like comedies bringing laughter, action films giving the audience a thrill, horror films giving a scare and the list goes on. A technique film makers are using more often is creating a feeling of nostalgia. "Nostalgia is the warm, fuzzy emotion that we feel when we think about fond memories from our past," explains Erica Hepper, Ph.D. If we're classing nostalgia as an emotion, I believe that it's one of the stronger more impactful ones. "If you find

yourself recalling a fond memory and wishing you could recapture that moment, give in. It may give you the boost you need to deal with a current challenge, or to simply feel better.” One film/ series that comes straight to mind when thinking of nostalgia is Stranger Things, this nostalgic feeling may not apply to me since the setting of the series is 20 years before my birth, but the show has had massive success mainly due to its nostalgic setting. This is a strange sensation but 80’s setting and style appeals to a younger age demographic and seems to resonate with them even though they didn’t grow up in that time. I guess the audience wants to relate to the ‘good old days’ as there is a trend to believe things always used to be better, in some kind of way there is a nostalgic effect on the whole audience which is perfectly executed by the producers.

Conclusion

My research of principle, audience and impact ended up relating more than I expected, the three keywords play a big role in film making and allowed me to further develop my knowledge of the process. Contextualising and breaking down the keywords has led me to several questions and ideas to the proposed question. I want the question to be broader than just the topic of animation but still relate to it. I also want it to relate to the research and keywords having a good balance of knowledge gained through this proposal as well as new research. This has led me to multiple questions like ‘How much of an impact does animation have in the production process of film making?’, ‘What brings animation to life in the film making process?’ and ‘How does the audience tell apart good animation from bad animation in film industry?’ All the questions intrigue me but ultimately I have to settle for one question out of the three, the last question stands out the most as there is a lot of depth to it and would cover many factors of animation production, if it included the impact of animation in film it would be a complete question. With all of that in mind, my proposed question for the independent inquiry is:

‘How does the audience tell apart good animation from bad animation and what impact does it have on the film?’

Bibliography

Williams, R., 2001. The Animator's Survival Kit. [Erscheinungsort nicht ermittelbar]: Faber.

Thomas, F. and Johnston, O., 1981. Disney Animation: The Illusion Of Life. Abbeville Press.

Descartes, R., 2016. Principles Of Philosophy. Lanham: Dancing Unicorn Books.

Berger, J., 2012. Ways Of Seeing. London: British Broadcasting Corp.

Noël, M., 2019. Creating an Audience. New Degree Press

Wilson, J.L., 2005. Nostalgia: Sanctuary of meaning. Bucknell University Press.

Fisher, S., 2006. History, Memory, Home: An Exchange with MG Vassanji. Canadian literature, (190), p.49.

Anderson, C.T., 2012. Post-apocalyptic nostalgia: Wall-E, garbage, and American ambivalence toward manufactured goods. Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory, 23(3), pp.267-282

Olsberg•SPI., and Nordicity. 2015. Cultural and Audience Contributions of the UK's Film, High-End TV, Video Games, and Animation Programming Sectors. BFI.

Allan, R., 2020. Walt Disney's Nine Old Men & The Art Of Animation. [online] Animation World Network. Available at: <<https://www.awn.com/animationworld/walt-disneys-nine-old-men-art-animation>> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Bennett, M., 2020. 10 Commandments List. [online] Life, Hope & Truth. Available at: <<https://lifehopeandtruth.com/bible/10-commandments/the-ten-commandments/10-commandments-list/>> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Psychologytoday.com. 2020. Ethics And Morality | Psychology Today United Kingdom. [online] Available at: <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/basics/ethics-and-morality>> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

StudioBinder. 2020. Pre-Production Checklist — Preparing For Success. [online] Available at: <<https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/what-is-pre-production-definition/>> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Arabamericanmuseum.org. 2020. Three Faiths With One God. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/umages/IMLS_religion_exhibit/3f_home.html> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Independent Cinema Office. 2020. Understanding Audiences - Independent Cinema Office. [online] Available at: <<https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/advice-support/how-to-start-a-cinema/understanding-audiences/>> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Pasquine, F., 2020. The Importance Of Learning Your Audience - New York Film Academy Blog. [online] New York Film Academy Blog. Available at: <<http://www.nyfa.edu/film-school-blog/produce-animation/>> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Oliveira, E., Martins, P. and Chambel, T., 2020. Accessing Movies Based On Emotional Impact. [online] Research Gate. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257436773_Accessing_movies_based_on_emotional_impact> [Accessed 8 May 2020].

Wiley, N., 2020. EMOTION AND FILM THEORY. [online] Cdclv.unlv.edu. Available at: <https://cdclv.unlv.edu/pragmatism/wiley_emo_film.pdf> [Accessed 12 May 2020].

Leardi, J., 2020. The Incredible Powers Of Nostalgia. [online] Huffpost.com. Available at: <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/benefits-of-nostalgia_n_4031759> [Accessed 12 May 2020].

Lyne, C. (2020). How nostalgia took over the world (and why that's no bad thing). [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/jul/09/the-ghostbusters-reboot-and-nostalgia-in-pop-culture> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].

The Odyssey Online. (2020). The Power of Nostalgia in Film. [online] Available at: <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/power-nostalgia-film> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].

Blogs.libraries.indiana.edu. (2020). The Underbelly of Nostalgia in Film & TV – Media Beat. [online] Available at: <https://blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/mediabeat/2018/02/05/the-underbelly-of-nostalgia-in-film-tv/> [Accessed 27 Feb. 2020].

SPERB, J. (2016). Flickers of Film: Nostalgia in the Time of Digital Cinema. Rutgers University Press. Retrieved February 27, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt18kcvbh

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS. 2008. [film] Directed by M. Herman. Miramax.

Stranger Things. 2016. [series] Directed by The Duffer Brothers. Netflix.

Principle definition - A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Audience definition - the group of people together in one place to watch or listen to a play, film, someone speaking, etc.: (Cambridge Dictionary)

Impact definition - the force of impression of one thing on another: a significant or major effect. (Merriam-Webster)

Film statistics (Star Wars): <https://www.the-numbers.com/movie/Star-Wars-Ep-IV-A-New-Hope#tab=summary>

Audience reviews (Rotten Tomatoes): https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/boy_in_the_striped_pajamas#audience_reviews

Figure1-

https://www.organicauthority.com/.image/t_share/MTYwNzc2MjA0ODA5NDEzNjg3/i/stock-838489612.jpg

Figure 2- <https://www.animalz.co/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/audience-content-marketing.jpg>

Figure 3 - <https://blogs.salford.ac.uk/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2018/01/Planning-and-reporting-the-impact-of-research.jpg>