

Beachless

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thesis research paper

I. Narrative

A. History

1. Consumerism

a) Definition of consumerism, modern man's identity and the contemporary's society characteristics

(1) Consumerism, as it is defined in dictionary.com, is an attachment to materialistic values or possessions. These materialistic values and possessions –basically the act of consuming- provide for the modern man a way to define his identity. From the materials he buys he differentiates himself from the rest of the community, or declares himself a member of a narrower group of the whole. Rene Descartes' (French philosopher, 1596-1650) philosophical statement "I think therefore I am" ("Cogito ergo sum"), in our contemporary society has transformed into "I buy therefore I am". Since our society is oriented around consumption, the desire, act and celebration of consuming, two of the main sectors of the economy are the advertising of goods and marketing. The ancient Greek principle "all in good measure" ("παν μέτρον ἄριστον") –meaning that everything should be balanced- or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's (German architect, 1886-1969) "less is more" –a precept for the Modern Architecture Movement and the minimalistic design- are not contemporary characteristics. So, it is more than obvious why our society has converted from a consuming to an over-consuming one.

B. Relevance

1. The effects of our over-consuming society

a) *WALL-E's environmental message and Mafalda's (Quino's) criticism on our society*

(1) The effects of our over-consuming society on the environment have already been the subject of the Pixar movie *WALL-E*, although the studio distances itself from the green message of the film. The story unfolds about seven hundred years from now that Earth has become a huge wasteland. The humans' over-consuming habits have caused the collapse of the environment making the planet uninhabitable. In *WALL-E* humans are affected from the character of their society and their habits through the disaster of the environment, whereas Quino's comic strip *Mafalda*, intentionally, reveals a more direct affect of –among others- the society's characteristics in the heroes' everyday life. The Argentine cartoonist though, does not want to criticize anything and believes that everything does not lend to laugh.

C. Unique Contribution

1. Arouse people's interest on the negative results of consuming without limits

a) *Live better with less; the need of changing our consuming habits*

(1) "The idea that more is better, which has been orthodoxy for the past 50 years, no longer matches reality", author Bill McKibben, the Harvard-trained economist and activist, says. Studies have shown that the long-lasting assumptions that acquisitions improve our lives, give us satisfaction and make us happier are not true. "All that material progress –and all the billions of barrels of oil and millions of acres of trees that it took to create it- seems not to have moved the satisfaction meter an inch" says McKibben. "It 's as if we 've done an experiment in whether consumption produces happiness and determined that it doesn't". My thesis animation short is trying to show exactly that in a humorous way. That over-consuming does not provide the hero with happiness, but on the contrary, it makes him miserable and frustrated. Along with the fact that his over-consuming habit has immediate affects on himself in the present time and not only in the human species through affecting the environment in the long run. It would be unrealistic to believe that an animation short could change deeply established characteristics of our society but as Quino says, "I don't believe humor can alter anything, but sometimes it can be the little grain of sand that acts as a catalyst to change".

II. Design - Style, Look & Feel

A. History

1. The Modern Design of the 1950s cartoons.

a) *Adopting a sophisticated and stylized graphic language*

(1) The look of the 1950s cartoons is a result of the animation artists' urge to incorporate contemporary ideas established in the world of art to the one of animation. Modern Art influenced the character design and characters were created with a variety of modern elements. The animation was stylized and often abstract and the backgrounds did not re-create a three-dimensional space but were rather minimalistic and were not following the academic perspective. Realism was abandoned also in textures, lighting and shadows whereas color was used to create dramatic or emotional effect rather than represent reality.

b) *101 Dalmatians and the break from the Disney mold*

(1) Ken Anderson, *101 Dalmatians'* art director and production designer, came up with the idea of using Xerox technology instead of the traditional inking process creating a modern look for the film, with a visible outline of the characters and the background. The depth in the background was achieved with the use of different lines in thickness rather than light and shadow. Ernie Nordli was the artist that was mostly responsible for the film's background drawing style and color stylist Walt Peregoy was the one responsible for the free use of color. Instead of filling the Xerox lines with color, Peregoy would create large planes of flat color that would loosely follow the lines. Walt Disney, who was not involved in the production of the film as he was working on the Disneyland theme park, would hate the look of the film. The film was actually a huge financial success for the studio.

B. Relevance

1. Contemporary style in 3d animation

a) *Pixar's aesthetics, a visual richness*

(1) It would not be unrealistic to say that Pixar - the leading animation studio in the film industry today- is following Walt Disney's path regarding the style of their films and that would be the "illusion of life". Walt Disney's goal was to make his films look like they were live action. So does Pixar with the character design, animation, textures, lighting, background, all the composites of an animation film. The studio is doing that so well and successful that other studios are imitating their work.

C. Unique Contribution

1. Combination of 1950s Modern Design with contemporary style in 3d animation

a) *A design based on the modern cartoons of the 1950s combined with the visual perception of the contemporary 3d films*

(1) Inspired by the *101 Dalmatians* style that combined the typical Disney's character design along with elements influenced by the Modern Design & Art in general, the design of this animation short would be a combination of elements of that period with contemporary computer generated graphics. So instead of trying to imitate the design and style of the Pixar movies the goal would be to create a style that would marry the 1950s Modern Design 2d elements with the contemporary 3d ones, having a 3d character interact with 3d props in a 2d environment.

III. Technique - Tools & Process

A. History

1. 1950s animation

a) *Stylized animation and the 101 Dalmatians*

(1) Modern Design and Art did not influence only the design of the 1950s animation films but the animation itself. By creating an animation with limited movement and more symbolism, artists created an abstract art that was also a cost-cutting measure. However, in the case of the Disney's feature film *101 Dalmatians* the only film, which was influenced by its contemporary design, the animation was loyal to the principle of Walt Disney, that of creating the illusion of life.

B. Relevance

1. Principles of character animation

a) 9 old men's 12 principles of animation

(1) 1. *Squash & Stretch*. For weight & flexibility 2. *Anticipation*. To prepare audience for an action 3. *Staging*. Draw audience attention and make clear what is happening and what is about to happen. 4. *Straight-ahead action & pose-to-pose*. Two different approaches in animating. 5. *Follow through & overlapping action*. To make movements more realistic. 6. *Ease in & ease out*. Accelerate & slow down. 7. *Arcs*. The movements should follow an arc to represent better realistic movements. 8. *Secondary action*. To give a scene more life. 9. *Timing*. 10. *Exaggeration*. Perfect imitation of reality makes the animation look static. 11. *Solid drawing*. To understand basics of anatomy, composition, weight, balance, light and shadow etc. 12. *Appeal* The audience feels that the character is real.

C. Unique Contribution

1. An animation short of 1950s elements with a computer generated character

a) The reference of "101 Dalmatians"

(1) Following the example of the *101 Dalmatians* this animation short will use the 12 principles of animation. As the design of the character will be based on the 50s Modern Design it will be a challenge to incorporate the 12 principles in the animation and combine them –where and if possible– with the extremes of a stylized animation.

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