TEXTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y TFG

WHY CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVE IS NOT NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND ANIMATION SPACE
AN ALTERNATIVE WAY TO REPRESENT THE STAGE

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1. RESUMEN

En la sociedad occidental actual, parece existir una concepción globalmente aceptada de la representación gráfica en perspectiva del espacio. Sin embargo, antes de que este renacentista concepto de representar los objetos en profundidad se impusiese como sistema mayoritario, han existido otras épocas y otros lugares en las que el espacio se ha representado de una forma completamente diferente.

Este texto de investigación se plantea como un trabajo teórico relacionado con el cortometraje de animación *We are Glad*, proyecto personal de final de grado de la alumna. En él, se ha pretendido realizar un análisis de los sistemas de representación del espacio alternativos a la visión occidental moderna de la perspectiva, y cómo estas alternativas han resultado una evidente influencia posteriormente en el mundo de la animación. Por sistemas alternativos de representación entendemos el que se daba en la Alta Edad Media, o en culturas como la africana o la oceánica, en las cuales el tamaño de los objetos y la disposición de los mismos en la imagen dependían de factores muy diferentes a los que hoy en día seguiríamos. Para acotar el campo de investigación, los principales ejemplos que se explorarán en este ensayo serán dos periodos de la historia que comparten aspectos en común con el proyecto personal de la alumna: El arte medieval de la Alta Edad Media y su relación con la animación americana de los años 50.

Así, a lo largo del texto se irán exponiendo y analizando todos los aspectos de estos dos ejemplos que sirven para argumentar y demostrar la tesis expuesta en el título del texto: que la perspectiva no es necesaria para entender el espacio en la animación.

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, in the Western culture, it seems that "Perspective" is the only globally accepted way of understanding the graphic representation of objects in space. However, before this modern concept was understood as the main one to represent objects in depth, in other historical periods and distant cultures they had chosen completely different ways of representing space.

This is a researching dissertation that is understood as a theoretical work related to the animation short film *We are Glad,* the personal final degree project of the author. In it, the alternative ways of representing space that differ from the Renaissance perspective has been analysed, and how they have influenced in the late animation world. When we talk about alternative ways of representing space, we are referring to systems like the one that took place during the High Middle Ages, or in distant cultures such as Africa or Oceania, in which object 's size and distribution in images don't follow the same rules that we would do nowadays. In order to enclose our research field, the main examples that will be analysed are two that, in some way, share some aspects in common with *We are Glad:* The High Middle Ages art and its relationship with the American fifties cartoons.

Thus, all the important aspects of these examples will be exposed and analysed in order to argument the main thesis of the dissertation: why traditional perspective is not necessary to understand space in animation.

2. DISSERTATION

Why classical perspective is not necessary to understand animation space.

2.1. Introduction

Nowadays, everybody can understand the modern concept of linear perspective, based on the rules established in the Renascence. But before this western understanding of depth, there has always been another universal language of perspectival representation. This way of representing space was different, without the distance reduction effect, and not only was it used in the Middle Ages but also in other cultures, such as Africa or Oceania. Subsequently, in the XX century, modern artists tried to recover some aspects of this art, also in Animation.

This essay will analyse this particular way of representing space, focusing especially in two different periods in the history of art: The Middle Ages (Fig. 1), and nineteen fifties American cartoons (Fig. 2). Although they may not seem to have anything in common, we have found an interesting connection between them regarding to the treatment of space which will support the main thesis and that will suppose the main visual referencing to the graduation film "We are Glad".

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

In order to present our ideas clearly, after making a short literary review of previous studies related to this subject, this essay will be divided into three main parts. First of all, we will analyse how the Middle ages captured perspective in painting. Secondly, we will explore the particular treatment of space that animators used during the American nineteen fifties cartoons. Finally, these two previous cases will be related establishing the main points that they have in common. At the end of the dissertation, the author will make a connection between all the exposed to her graduation short film.

2.2. Literature Review

We are analysing two periods in art history that are really far away one from each other. It has been really difficult to find sources that mentioned both periods, so they are going to be studied separately, exposing all their main characteristics referring to our topic, and then, their common features are going to be related.

Paradoxically, the most complicated part of the research has been the Middle Ages. Throughout history, many people have written about treatment of perspective, but it is a really vast subject and it was quite difficult to find exactly what we were looking for. So the main author used to reference our theories will be Ernst H. Gombrich (1909 – 2001), known as one of the most important art historians thanks to his attempts for trying to explain history of art for a young public. His most popular book, *The story of art* (1950), is going to be our main reference for the medieval art part of the essay.

Regarding nineteen fifties cartoons, we have found more information that could help us to back up the thesis. The cartoons I am about to discuss from this period of time are UPA (United Productions of America). I am going to base their analysis with the book *Cartoon Modern, Style and design in Fifties Animation,* written in 2006 by Amid Amidi (1980), an award-winning author of numerous books about animation and cinema. This books offers a broad analysis of these cartoons, and not only studying the UPA, but also the main animation studios that coexisted in time and style. We will be taking references as well from the book *Animating Space: From Mickey to Wall·e* (2010) by J.P. Telotte, professor of literature, communication and culture in the *Georgia Institute of Technology*. In his book, he dedicates one of his chapters to the UPA cartoons and the Warner Brothers Productions, and their special way of playing with the stage where the characters move.

These two books are our main source of information about fifties cartoons, including, in the second instance, a global vision of space treatment in the history of animation.

Apart from these three main books, that have been useful not only to find exact assertions to reference, but also to learn about the subject, we are also analysing other case studies to support what we want to demonstrate. There has been a wide research looking for visual references, examples and quotes in other books, essays and films that will be properly referenced. Every quote or example exposed in the coming text will be linked to the Bibliography section, at the end of the dissertation.

2.3. CASE STUDY

2.3.1. Analysis of the Early Medieval Paintings. The ignorance of perspective.

The Art in the Middle Ages is a really vast subject. Trying to cover every aspect of medieval art would probably distract us from our essay topic, so we are going to try to analyze the main features of medieval art that are related to the treatment of perspective.

The Middle Ages, in Europe, is the period between the decline of the Roman Empire (c. 476) and the beginning of the Renascence (c. 1400) (Rebold Benton 2002, p. 14) The main theme in medieval art - in all its facets – was religion (Gombrich 1950, p. 171), as we can observe if we look into the most important examples of medieval art. Churches and cathedrals that still remain standing today were built all over the western world to exalt the God's magnificence. As Gombrich marks in his *Story of Art,* "The church was often the only stone building anywhere in the neighbourhood; it was the only considerable structure miles around (…)." (1950, p. 171).

As Gombrich analyses in his chapter *The Church Triumphant: The thirteen century* (1950, p. 172), there were ages of religious preponderance, where God was the central point in most of the artistic representations. Cathedrals were big and powerful, populated with knowledgeable and truthful religious figures. Innumerable examples show us the importance of God during this historical period: Notre Dame, Chartres or Durham cathedrals are only three of these cases where we can clearly see how important God was, and how people tried to show his power through huge buildings that, majestically built, impressed the population.

Gombrich rightly reminds us (1950, p. 167) that there were not only churches in the Middle Ages. Hand in hand with the Church, there was the king and the royalty. They lived in huge castles, separated from the village, living in the most absolute opulence. At the top of the feudal structure, the king and the church ruled the world, becoming the central motif in medieval art.

So according to the feudal system, there were two principal institutions at the top that had preponderance over the rest of the people. They were the only ones in charge of art, because they paid for it. And maybe because of that, they were the central subject: Art was serving them, so artists had to represent what they were told to.

Especially in the High Middle Ages, paintings, sculptures and other artistic representations were used to tell stories about the Bible and important political events, and sometimes to describe scenes from the life in the cities and villages. It is known that Pope Gregory I (Sixth century AD, cited in Gombrich 1959, p. 135) better known as "Gregory the Great" said "Painting can do for the illiterate what writing does for those who can read". These artists did not focus on trying to imitate the real world, because they wanted to represent evident symbols everybody could understand and with which people could learn. The main purpose of this art was didactic, and this is why they used so many symbols easily understandable to teach the mostly illiterate population.

As a consequence of this objective, medieval painters didn't explore the scientific treatment of reality. They seemed to have developed a completely different way of expression. They were more worried about composition and symbolism, always using very bright and plain colours, representing everything separately and with no concept of depth.

Didn't they realize that objects closer to your eyes look bigger than those that are far away? Yes. Actually, if we have a look to medieval paintings, we appreciate that some elements are bigger and other are smaller. Normally, the ones on top are smaller. But, in general, the perspective is completely distorted.

These two images above are from a medieval manuscript called *Les tres riches heures du Duc de Berry,* from 1416. Although they do not illustrate a religious scene, they are a good example of this treatment of perspective that medieval artists treated. In the first one (Fig. 3) we find that a man could easily jump the fence in close-up, the sheep have the same size than the pigeons, and the men at the bottom are the same size as the trees.

In the second image, (Fig. 4) we see a wall in the right side. It is seen from the top of a high tower, in a totally different perspective to the rest of the picture.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

And those images are from the last period of the Middle Ages, where they were closer to the discovery of linear perspective. But if we analyse other paintings from before, from the High Middle Ages, we can easily see that artists did not pay much attention to the space they were representing (Fig. 5). They were even less worried about perspective, and they seemed to treat their images as illustrating pictures, with concrete colours used for creating a good composition. Regarding to the author of an image from a year 1000 manuscript, Gombrich mentions:

> "Representing the room where the scene was taking place was irrelevant for him; it even could distract your attention from the inner meaning of the event" (1950, p.166)

Fig. 5

Artists in the Middle Ages, especially in the High Middle Ages, did not intend to recreate reality, nor to create art or beauty in itself: they used their art at the service of other values, and they, simply, depicted bigger what had to be more important from another point of view, normally, the religious point of view. Like children when drawing their dad and mom.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

In this painting above *(Fig. 6)*, we can see how Jesus is as high as the walls of Jerusalem… quite similar to what Egyptians had made some thousands of years before *(Fig. 7).*

2.3.2. Evaluation of the Fifties Cartoons: A new conception of space without a classical representation of perspective

After Middle Ages, art started developing individuality. Some remarkable names began to appear in the History, names that changed ideas and conceptions, going from the classical to the passionate styles, discovering new things and setting new challenges. We went from the medieval "artisans" without name to the individual artistic personalities, from the remarkable Leonardo Da Vinci (1452 – 1519) or the admired Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475 – 1564) to the acclaimed Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973), among other many masters that have gave their personal vision to the artistic world across the ages. (Gombrich, 1950)

In this exciting way through ages in art, it was inevitable to come across Animation. Since the first prehistoric representations of motion in the cave walls, humans have always expressed movement, and like that, we find in the XIX century the first attempts to simulate motion. Probably we could consider Winsor McCay (1869 – 1934) as the first man in realising the potential of animated drawings as an artistic discipline. His famous "Moving comics", his *Gertie the Dinosaur* or his *Little Nemo* discovered a new world that was about to start.

In 1919, *Felix the Cat* appeared as the first animated character that achieved a considerable fame. Animation was beginning to be understood as a way, not only to communicate ideas, but also to earn money. Some people discovered the potential of a big animation studio, and really big creations started to turn up. In America, the Fleischer Studios, founded by the Fleischer brothers in 1921, were the first ones in this business of animation, bringing to life characters as famous as Betty Boop. (Bendazzi 1994)

In the forties, there was a particular animation studio that prevailed over the others, whose name is still today one of the biggest in the world: Walt Disney Studios. Walt Disney (1901 – 1966) found the key to make a really profitable business from this art, commercializing with many nice animated characters which danced on the screen. Walt Disney established the base of animated cartoons, discovering many things that would continue being useful many years after his death.

One of the biggest things he set up was the way of drawing animated cartoons, the style. Preston Blair (1908-1995), one of the animators from the studio, wrote a book called *Cartoon Animation* in 1994, where we can see these main aspects of the Disney style for animation: rounded forms that could be easily animated by many different people, specific features for each kind of character, exaggerated expressions… In order to create this shapes that all the workers from the studio could animate, they established a standard drawing style. So in this historical moment, some people from the Animation world began to need anything else.

In the 1950s, when Disney Animation Studios began to have a monopoly in the animation business, some of their artists began to move to another style. Some of them came from a strongly artistic background, and were interested in other kinds of art, as they knew animation had much more potential than what Walt Disney was doing. They were trying to avoid this classical way of representing things, paying attention to the contemporary vanguard artists that had something new to say to the difficult times the world was going through. (Bendazzi 1994, p. 130)

Amid Amidi, (1980) studies*:*

> " The work of these artists [from Disney] was marvellously creative to be sure, but their quaint rendering techniques and sentimental clutter couldn't have been further removed from the vanguard of modernity led by the likes of Picasso, Miró, Matisse, Klee, and Léger". (2006, p.10)

This is the field where animators from the fifties cartoons found their inspiration. They were tired of the prevailing Disney style that was not interested in aesthetic innovation. So they decided to create an independent animation studio based in these new influences. (1994, p. 129) The new animators found a huge influence in the artistic vanguards and their way of understanding art, and they also looked in the world of design and advertising, that was building a new society – The "American way of life" – model for the rest of the world. They realized that something really interesting could happen if they tried to apply those artistic features to the animation world, maximizing the personality of the artists and not looking for a profitable style that could be used in a massive studio.

The most important studio of the time was the UPA, (United Productions of America) founded in 1944 by some old Disney studios workers, and known for its famous *Gerald McBoing Boing* short movie (1951), and *Mr. Magoo* series (1949-1961). Although there were many more companies that acquired this way of doing cartoons, the UPA is probably the most notorious one that influenced the others. In fact, nowadays, to refer to this style we use to say "UPA style cartoons", as Telotte analyses:

"Often associated more with the work of United Productions of America (UPA) and its briefly popular Gerald McBoing boing and, later, its Mr. Magoo films, cartoon modern drew heavily on a variety of earlier art movements – cubism, surrealism, expressionism – all of which in various ways had launched assaults on conventional realism and its common spatial illusion." (2010, p.158)

UPA cartoons were truly influenced by these new artistic movements. Their cartoons were now more than just "characters acting in an scenario": they were worried about other concepts such as composition, drawing, painting and personal style. As if they were paintings by their selves, most of the UPAs shorts have a reduced palette of colours, studied compositions and characters. You can appreciate that their drawings, as Bendazzi asseverates,

Fig. 8

are "deliberately flat, two-dimensional, with angular or elongated shapes." (1994, p. 131). (Fig. 8).

Definitely, these cartoons were decided to explore all the possibilities. Having this wide artistic inspiration, they wondered what would happen if they applied all these artistic concepts in their movies… And this is what they did. They wanted to do more, to do all they could do. They were known by a new concept of composition, of characters, of space. Now, the character and the background were not two separate things: they were only one. The character could move around the scenario in a very different way, doing things one could have never imagined in real life, interacting with the environment.

Regarding to these ideas, Telotte states:

> "Characters become line- drawn caricatures, traditional perspective practically disappears, and various elements of the designed mise-en-scène seem to vie for attention with the often motionless or limited-motion characters to which the animation studios were increasingly turning." (2010, p. 158 – 159)

In other words: these artists don't try to imitate reality. They try to create a different universe.

2.3.3. The connection between these two parts: Their relationship.

It may seem that there is no way to link these two art periods that we have just exposed. They are so far away in time from one another, but curiously, we have found that they have a lot of things in common.

Fifties cartoons were influenced by the vanguard painters, designers and artists of the moment. And those creators were building a completely different art universe, based on their personal perception of the world.

> "After the invention of photography in 1839, some artists began to question the need for rigid adherence to pictorial accuracy because cameras could do a similar job with much less effort." (Hodge 2012, p. 7)

So they began to break the classical rules to start discovering other ways of representing things. They tried to escape from reality, as they no longer found sense in imitating reality.

And to escape from this occidental conception of art, many artist searched for ancient and distant cultures, where they could discover other artistic conceptions foreign to western society. They were interested, among other things, in lack of perspective, as they had in Africa, Oceania, and the Middle Ages art.

> "For centuries, illustrator commonly used devices we might define as self-reflexive and label as "modernist". That distinction can be confusing, because the standard definitions of modernism begin with Manet or with Cubism, not with seventeenth-century theatre, or with pre-industrial traditions of pantomime. And yet, cartoon "modernism" dates back almost to the late middle ages". (Klein 1993, p. 169)

As Amidi analyses (2006), animators from the 50s were not only animators: They were artists coming from other backgrounds, educated in different ways, influenced bt contemporary art. They tried to look for different ways of expressing themselves, different from our cultural dictations. Contemporary vanguard artists influenced them, and those artists were, in turn, inspired by other cultures far away in space and time from our society. So we could say that, indirectly, animators from the fifties cartoons could have been inspired by the art from the Middle Ages. These "modern cartoons" could

have looked back to our medieval past to find a way to express situations distorting space, focusing in other aspects such as colour, composition or narrative, and not on realistic natural renditions (as they did from Renaissance to our age).

Once this theory is established, we find in our research that some fifties cartoons' artists were actually getting their inspiration from Middle Ages. And they were not only part from the United Productions of America studio. One of the most transcendental artists is Eyvind Earle (1916-2000). He was a really particular artist working in Disney Animation Studios, bringing some aspects of this "UPA" modern look to the company productions. He was in charge of the concept art for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and, as Amidi studies, "his tapestrylike approach was also informed by other classical sources like Dürer, Van Eyck, Breughel, and the illustrated manuscript *Très Riches Heures de Jean, Duc de Berri*." (2006, p. 159)

This movie, despite being a Walt Disney production, becomes one of the main examples that support our thesis. It is done in the fifties, so it was obviously influenced by the UPA cartoons that, as we have analysed, were really successful by then. This movie sought an especially modern aesthetic look. The intention of getting a strong visual design was one of the most distinctive features of the film, it had a panoramic format, deeply studied compositions, and a strong contrast between colours in all their scenes (Fig. 9). In the *Picture perfect: The making of Sleeping Beauty* documentary (Disney 2008), they say that "In every frame in *Sleeping Beauty*, even if you stopped the film anywhere in the course of its projection, you would get a perfectly beautiful composed image." (Norton 2008) [1]

Fig.9

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[1] This documentary was made so many years after the movie was done, but they explain how did they make the film in terms of style, storytelling and influences.

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

However, as usual, the final look of the movie had to be adapted to the needs of the animation business. It was difficult to keep all the designs that Eyvind Earle made for the film, that can actually be considered as a modern adaptation of the medieval paintings (Fig. 10 and 11). In there, you can see that even the colours seem to have been done consciously to simulate this "medieval look", and it is easy to detect Eyvind Earle's intention to keep the composition plain and with straight objects.

Eyvind Earle also collaborated in other films. Another case study that supports our observations is *The truth about Mother Goose* (Walt Disney 1957), that could be considered as another example of the medieval influence in the fifties cartoons. If you look at the film, there are some parts that have been probably made with this intention of simulating the medieval paintings. The animators seemed to have looked for a concrete and genuine general aspect, following the medieval distorted perspective (Fig. 12), referencing the medieval iconography (Fig. 13), and, of course, the topic chosen, that was, probably, what made them use this style.

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

These two last films are two good examples of what we are trying to illustrate. But Disney was not the only one with this medieval influence. In fact, actually Disney was a bit late in this trend. As we have previously exposed, Disney was influenced by this fifties "modern" cartoons to change its classical animation style. Before Eyrvind Earle made *Sleeping Beauty* or *The truth about Mother Goose,* there were other cases that share some of these features.

In the short film *The emperor's new clothes* (UPA, 1953), we can easily detect the attempt to imitate the High Middle Age paintings (Fig. 5). The treatment of the objects in perspective is completely unreal (Fig. 14); they place the characters in order to get a good composition (Fig. 15), not worrying about "correct" spatial representation at all. People in the film are two-dimensional and not very realistic, with a strong black outline and a distorted sizes. Even the look of the people seems to have been done looking for the style of the

Fig. 14

Fig. 15

High Middle Ages painting, as we can see in some of the characters on the right side of the second image (Fig. 15).

Even when the topic of the films is not about the Middle Ages, we can find that the aspects we have analysed previously still remain.

Almost every UPA film (and school) keeps these common facts. Each animated short we analyse has got, apart from a basically flat palette and colour-limited characters (fig. 16), a genuine treatment of space and a detailed design, even when that means a big object disproportion (fig. 17)

Yes, UPA drawers, as well as High Middle Ages painters did not intend to make a "realistic" copy of the external world. They rather tried to express an inner emotion.

Fig. 16

But there is a strong, basic, essential difference that must not be forgotten: UPA drawers were making a conscious free use of their skill and techniques. They could draw "academic" drawings, completely acceptable from the orthodox point of view, but they did not want. Medieval painters, created those images for a different reason: they were not interested in realistic representations of space because they wanted to focus on the message, in the main lesson they wanted to convey.
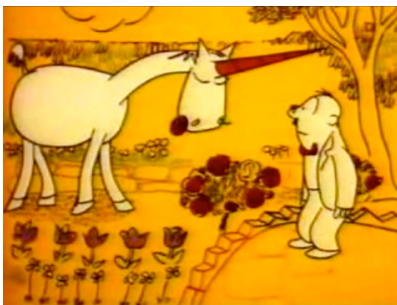

Fig. 17

After everything that we have discussed, now it can be argued that animation (and other plastic arts) do not need to represent a realistic perspective to understand space. In fact, sometimes it seems even more effective when artists defy the rules of perspective to create an image. If we investigate and look for the origins of art (as we have done), we discover that we have learnt a lot from the masters of the past Middle Ages, that may have not had some of the artistic skills that nowadays are considered important, but did have some interesting features to use.

The UPA animators discovered that, and used it for their own purposes. They transformed space in which the act was taking place into a funny scenario where everything could happen. They changed this "negative" concept of space into a "positive" being, where the character could play. That means that the background was no longer something you had to represent exactly as a photographic rendition, it could be whatever they wanted it to be. They tried to forget about the physical laws, and it worked. UPA demonstrated that we could see a house with no difference between the floor and the walls, a building as tall as a child or a temple with twisted columns, and you still understand it.

Fig. 18

After the UPA advances, this trend in animation began to increase and to evolve. From these cartoons, this "perspectival game" has become something usual in animation, a common way to get some visual designs and stylistic innovations. Nowadays, we are so used to this kind of effects that sometimes we do not realize that something innovative is happening on the screen.

In the coming years, a lot of new followers of this style made profit of some possibilities that space could give to a film. The immediate heirs of the UPA

> "As an initial illustration of this development of designed space, we might consider one of the most celebrated Warner Bros. cartoons of the post-war era, *What's the Opera, Doc? (1957)*" (2010, 159)
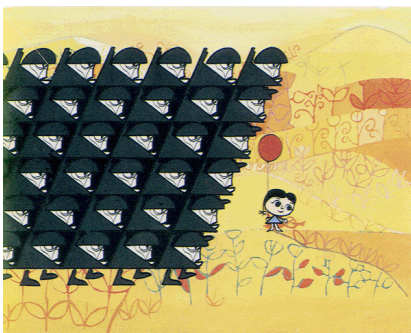

Fig. 19

They were much more successful in business than UPA because they applied these new advances to a commercial approach, creating characters as well known as, for example *Bugs Bunny*, that still today remains as one of the most important Disney competitors.

But they were not the only ones in finding that space as a good resource for playing. If we look into the European history of animation, we find some animators that followed the movement, like John Halas (1911 – 1995), famous thanks to his *Animal Farm* (1954) animated adaptation and other experimental animation short films (Fig. 18), or Raoul Servais (1928), also pioneer in the European experimental animation (Fig. 19). And later in time, we find Raimund

Krumme (1950) as one of the main contemporary exponents of the independent animation, known for his tricks with the space and perspective. His concept is a bit different from the UPA cartoons, but they have something important in common: both realized that space is something relative that you can use to help you to tell something. (Fig. 20)
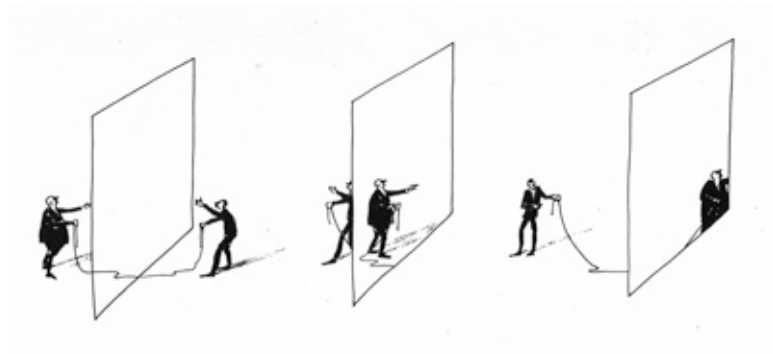

Fig. 20

2.3.4. The application of this Dissertation to the short film "We are Glad".

This essay has been developed at the same time as the short film "We are Glad". This is a student graduation film that tells the story about a princess who lives in a medieval world from where she wants to scape, to get to know what exists beyond. The castle where she lives is going to be the starting point of this character journey.

Intuitively, at first it seemed natural that to represent this medieval world, medieval painting should be the main reference. It seemed obvious that the layout should be quite flat, that perspective should not be too realistic and colour and composition should be the most important aspect.

And after considering medieval art as the principal influence, the second step was to look for animators that have treated the medieval topic before. And mixing these two big sources for developing the first concept art, it easily came the great relationship that exists between this kind of art (more "primitive", far away from the classical concept of perspective), with the fifties UPA style cartoons. And it was great to discover, as well, that UPA was not the

only animation studio that acquired those medieval influences. In fact, from these concepts binding it a huge amount of artworks appeared and answered to the theory, which finally turned into a very important help for the film pre-production.

So many animators have worked on the Middle Ages, each one of them in a different style. But these animators from the fifties cartoons were a really good influence, because they actually seemed to be looking back to the Middle Ages to create their art.

So that the research continued, and everything that came after that was used to prove that from an aesthetic intuition, if you keep investigating, you may discover that there is an actual fact that made you think so. From there, things began to have more sense. When the next concept art started to develop, there was a real intention to simulate a "non-perspective" world, at least for the part of the film where we see more castles, knights and medieval situations. This "perspective game" is going to be one of the main resources in "We are Glad" to explain something in a metaphoric way. When the princess is in her castle, everything is intentionally two-dimensional. If we show this first world so flat, this will give the key to the second world that is supposed to be much more deep and intense.

After this dissertation, the film is going to make more sense. It is not only the story it tells, it is also they way it is told. When you learn something, it gives you the chance to use it in favour of your needs.

2.4. Conclusion

it is true that, if you try to create something new, you will find yourself unconsciously influenced by many things that you have previously seen. But it is also true that it is necessary to know your past, and to be conscious of what happened before you started creating. If we investigate our past, we can find that many things were connected in a way that not everyone knew.
We started the research establishing a question: *How classical perspective is not necessary to understand animation space.* In order to answer this question, we analysed history of animation from the point of view of the space treatment, and we decided to look for the best examples that also were related to the animated graduation film "We are Glad", the starting point of this essay.

We have passed through a big quantity of animation styles, techniques and standpoints in the history of animation. And we have learned that in all this history, one of the most playful things in animation has been the space in which the characters move around, the ability to trick the audience making you believe something impossible is happening. The UPA animators were pioneers in this space deformation in animation.
But UPA animators were not completely innovative. As we have seen, they had their references as well. Specifically, they were so close to the contemporary vanguard artists and their multiple media: painting, sculpting, design, advertising...
They all paid attention to the ancient cultures in order to find inspiration for create eye-catching attractive new designs. From these ancient cultures (not only in space, but also in time) they wanted to learn about different ways of using colour, of representing the human figure or for treating space. So, in their art, the objects began to be flat or strangely constructed, there was no depth (and if there was, it was changed in order to complete the composition), and the composition was a high priority: Just like the Middle Ages.

It is easy to observe now that the animators from the fifties cartoons were surely influenced by the medieval art. And based on those references, they created a new conception of space in animation, where they could play with the perspective to adapt it to their needs, depending on what they wanted to show.

In other words, they could create their own conception of space, exactly like medieval artists used to do. The audience does not need the animators to imitate reality.

As the UPA animators proved, we do not need classical representations or traditional realism: we can understand space without it.

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< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yug222XydFg > [15/10/2012]

2.5.1. Image appendix

Figure 1: Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *The effects of the good Government in the city,* 1939, frescoes, 1500x678 cm., Salon of Nine in the Town Hall of Sienna. Image from Andrew Zaleski, Dino Compagni and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, image available from < http://evergreen.loyola.edu/brnygren/www/Honors/Compagni.htm >

Figure 2: Eyvind Earle, *The Truth about Mother Goose Concept Art,* 1957. Image available from http://eye-likey.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/eyvind-earle-vintage-disney-series-1950.html

Figure 3 and 4: Limburg Brothers, *Februaty from Les très riches heures du Duc de Berri,* 1412-16, Gum Arabic, 30x21,5 cm., Manuscript. Image available from http://warwickshireleisurestudies.org/david-packwood/02fevrif/

Figure 5: Unknown, *Cantigas de Santa María,* 1221-1284, Codex illustration, San Lorenzo del Escorial, Spain. Image available from

< http://cantigas.webcindario.com/index.htm#>

Figure 6: Limburg Brothers, *Les très riches heures du Duc de Berri,* 1412-16, Gum Arabic, 10x21,5 cm., Manuscript. Image available from < http://alcazaba.unex.es/~csanchez/perspectiva/ >

Figure 7: The Thomb of Nebamun decoration, 1400 b.C., British Museum, London. Image available from http://www.arteiconografia.com/2012/12/la-tumba-de-nebamun.html

Figure 8: UPA Animation Studios, *Rooty Toot Toot,* 1952. Video file available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37B7uRuURXs >

Figure 9: Walt Disney Studios, *Sleeping Beauty* frame, 1959. (video recording) Disney DVD.

Figure 10: Unknown, *Master of the Frankfurt Paradiesgartlien,* c. 1410, mixed techniques on wood, 26.3x33.4 cm., Städel, Frankfurt. Image available from < http://www.aparences.net/es/periodos/gotico-internacional/el-gotico-internacional-en-alemania/ >

Figure 11: William of Tyre, *The reconstruction of the temple of Jerusalem,* s. XV, París, Biblioteque Nationalle de France, Département des manuscrits Français 2629, folio 17. Image available from http://www.catedralesgoticas.es/eni_canteros.php

Figure 12 and 13: Disney Animation Studios, *The truth about Mother Goose,* 1957, video file, available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWEB6fY0uO4 >

Figure 14 and 15: UPA Animation Studios, *The Emperor's New clothes,* 1953, (video file) available from: < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yug222XydFg >

Figure 16: UPA Animation Studios, *The Unicorn in the Garden,* 1953, video file available from: < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1teJjX-smdE >

Figure 17: UPA Animation Studios, *Punchy de Leon,* 1950. Video file available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RwINdZD2WU >

Figure 18: John Halas, *Automania 2000,* 1964, video file available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtDhbd5i6nQ >

Figure 19: Raoul Sevais, *Cromophobia,* 1966, video file available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-auBeFd0qnI >

Figure 20: Raimund Krumme, *Seiltänzer,* 1984, video file available from < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXl46Ena9Ks >

3. EL PROCESO DE TRABAJO DEL TFG

El texto anteriormente expuesto responde a la propuesta académica de la asignatura *Critical and Contextual Proposition*, de Middlesex University, destinada a los alumnos de último curso de Animación. El texto, de 5500 palabras, es un análisis de investigación, y trata un tema relacionado con el proyecto personal de fin de carrera de la alumna, un cortometraje de animación de cuatro minutos. Ambos trabajos, el texto y el proyecto de animación, fueron realizado durante una estancia *Erasmus,* un programa de intercambio que permitió realizar el último curso del grado en esta universidad en Londres.

El proyecto de animación que dio paso a este texto de investigación responde a la propuesta de la asignatura Professional *Portfolio and Major Project,* en la cual se desarrolló el cortometraje *We are Glad*.

We are Glad fue planteado inicialmente como un vídeo musical para la canción con dicho nombre que había sido compuesta e interpretada por el grupo musical *Cat's Carnival,* del cual era miembro la misma autora de este proyecto. La canción, con letra en inglés, cuenta la historia de una princesa atrapada por su destino, que debe casarse con un hombre que no ama mientras realmente está enamorada de otra persona. Al tratarse de un proyecto completamente personal y sin ningún tipo de pauta formal, se escogió esta idea como promotora del corto.


Fotograma de *We are Glad*

Todas las ideas, inevitablemente, evolucionan con el paso del tiempo y tras trabajar en ellas. Desde la concepción del cortometraje en septiembre de 2013, la idea ha ido avanzando, modificándose y mejorando durante todo este tiempo hasta la finalización del proyecto en junio de 2014. En cuestión de argumento, estilo y aspecto, el proyecto ha ido creciendo y cambiando muchísimo. Llegaron a realizarse un total de seis animáticas distintas hasta llegar a dar con la mejor forma de contar la historia, decenas de *storyboards* de cada escena, cientos de variaciones para la estética. Personalmente, resultó un reto muy grande, ya que se comenzó con un nivel principiante en el ámbito, y muchas de las dudas y problemas surgidos sobre la marcha (que no fueron pocos) tuvieron que ir resolviéndose de una forma muy experimental.

El corto está realizado con la técnica de la animación tradicional digital. Dicha técnica supone un largo proceso de varios pasos en los que la animación va creciendo y perfeccionándose. Partiendo de un *storyboard* o guión gráfico inicial de lo que pasa en cada escena, se realizó un *layout* o disposición final de cada uno de los planos. Gracias a este *layout* pudimos saber cuáles iban a ser las posiciones clave de los personajes en cada momento, y cómo iba a ser la composición final. Así, se procede a animar primeramente a línea, que en un principio es en sucio y después se "limpia". Al mismo tiempo que se fue realizando la animación, se fueron dibujando también los fondos definitivos. Posteriormente se dio paso al coloreado, y con todas las animaciones a color se realizó la composición final de las escenas, y finalmente de todo el corto. Como postproducción se agregaron una serie de pequeños efectos visuales que ayudaban a la cohesión de todos los elementos de la escena, que mejoraban el ambiente y la luz y que daban unidad a la película en su conjunto.
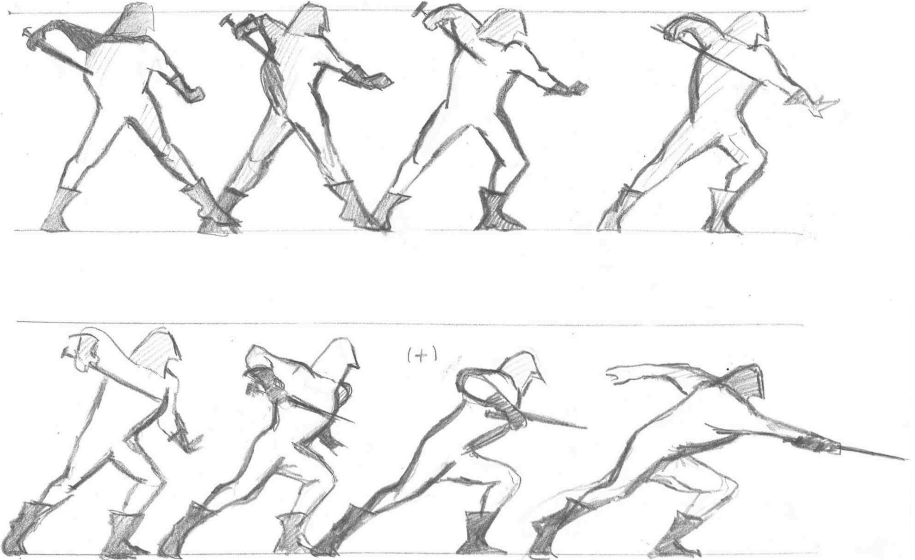
Como colofón final para el trabajo del año, durante el último mes de la estancia en Middlesex Univesity llevamos a cabo una parte del curso que consistía en la creación de una imagen personal que nos ayudaría a movernos y a promocionarnos como animadores en la industria una vez finalizada la carrera. Este trabajo incluía la creación de una página web personal (www.sarapaint.com), un showreel (https://vimeo.com/94741274), un portfolio, tarjetas de visita, postales personalizadas y una serie de reseñas y búsquedas sobre las empresas más notables del mundo de la animación. Y para terminar con todo esto, se organizó una exposición colectiva para que los alumnos del último curso pudiéramos promover nuestro trabajo y exponerlo al público, y se nos facilitó un espacio personal a cada uno para mostrar de nuestro trabajo. Además, se nos animó a realizar un blog personal en el que fuésemos haciendo seguimiento de nuestro proceso de trabajo, que resultó ser

una gran herramienta para documentar en condiciones todo lo que fuimos realizando y sirve muy apropiadamente para ilustrar este apartado con más información: www.weareglad.tumblr.com . Además, existe un vídeo documental del proceso de creación del corto: https://vimeo.com/101348420

Postal, anverso y reverso

Tarjeta de visita, anverso y reverso

Portfolio impreso con carpeta

Espacio expositivo en el Degree Show de Middlesex University

Como conclusión final de todo esto, podría afirmarse que este proyecto, tanto en su parte práctica como teórica, ha resultado una increíble experiencia personal y profesional. Al final, el resultado obtenido con el cortometraje resulta casi algo menor en comparación con lo muchísimo que he aprendido con todo esto. Considero que el objetivo que se nos planteó era bastante alto para el nivel principiante en el que yo me encontraba en el mundo de la animación al llegar, y por eso resulta realmente gratificante comprobar que al final he sido capaz de resolver los problemas y superar los obstáculos, y sobre todo de aprender. *We are Glad* para mí es valioso por todo lo que he aprendido gracias a él, por todo lo que he ganado y por todo lo que he crecido, comprobando así de lo que se es capaz tras cuatro grandes años de educación universitaria.

En el blog de producción de *We are Glad,* el ocho de mayo se publicó una reflexión escrita sobre el corto, en el que decía lo siguiente:
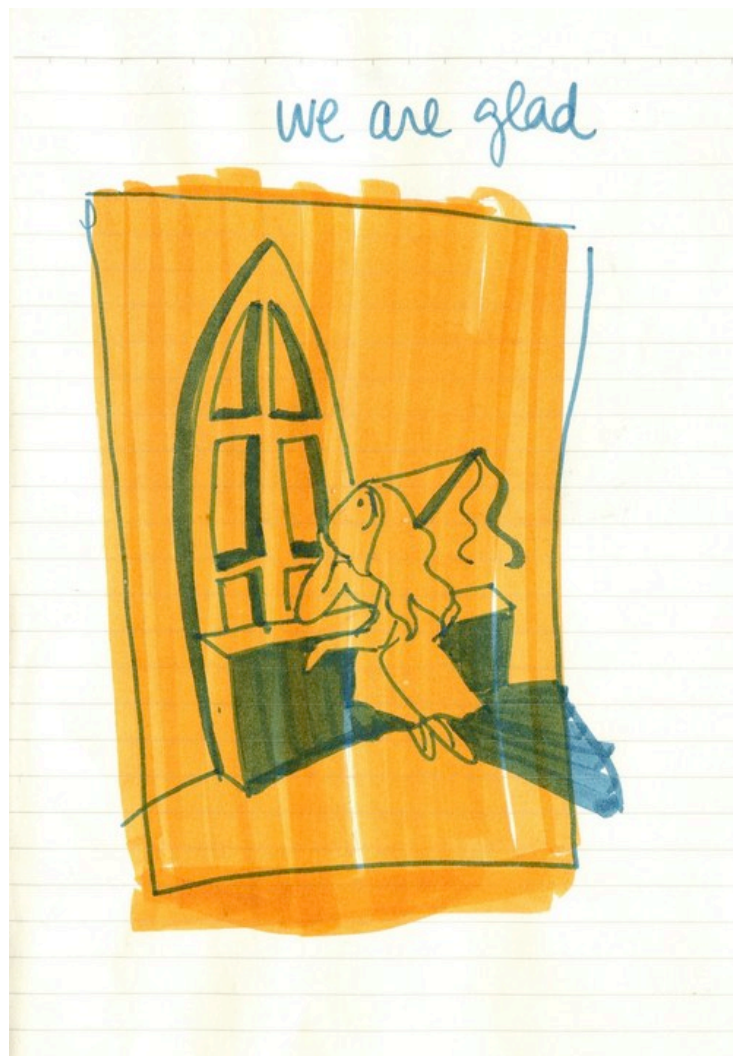
This is my first sketch for "We are Glad".

At that time, I had no idea what I was starting. "We are Glad" has been, for sure, the most challenging project of my life. It has been the biggest thing that I have ever done, but the bigger it seemed at first, the more rewarding is being at the end.

From my first sketch to the last finished version of the film, it is easy to see how much I have evolved from the beginning, not only regarding to the artistic part, but also to the story and conception of the project. Actually, what I have learnt this year is priceless. I have learned that the most important thing in any creation is the idea, the concept, the essence. There isn't enough with beautiful drawings or a lovely technique: it is the idea who makes a great work of art. And as well as the conception of the idea, it is equally important to decide the right way to tell it, and it is very difficult! In my case, I had to think and rethink how could I tell the story to be understood. And even after hundred of hours thinking, writing, drawing and testing, I still feel that maybe I could have done it better. The amount of sketches, notes, and digital files that I have created for the production of this film is so big that I don't think I could embrace it all.

Some moments have been specially difficult. Sometimes I seriously considered to end it all, as I saw that I had chosen a challenge too big for someone who has just turned up in the animation world. But luckily I found an incredible environment in the Animation studio, that has been my day-by-day place for this last year at uni. I have found beautiful people that have helped me out with my work and with my experiences here in London, and that is something really important that, regardless of what I achieve or not with the film, has meant much for me.

"We are Glad" may not be the greatest animated short film ever, but for me it meant the beginning, the discovering of a new world of infinite possibilities. Now, I know the process, I know the technique, I know the way. And I am sure that this is going to be the start of something great that will be improved over the years and the experience. Whatever I do next will continue exploring my possibilities and my strengths in the Animation world, and that's something beautiful. I really have enjoyed the experience of bringing my own idea to life, so I am sure I am gonna continue doing my best and creating my own projects, so that, someday, I will hopefully be part of an animation studio and will contribute with my best works to build great stories.

El corto puede visionarse en la siguiente dirección, introduciendo la siguiente contraseña: wag123 .

https://vimeo.com/96617722