BACHELOROPPGAVE:

American animation VS. Japanese Animation

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Summary

This bachelor thesis is a comparative study between American animation and Japanese animation. We take a look into differences, taking into account the culture, history, production- and the animation techniques employed. The main theoretical questions that are answered in this study are:

- How has each side of animation influenced the culture surrounding it, and vice versa?
-Why can Japanese animation studios presumably produce more than twice the amount that an American animation studio produces?
- What are some of the structural differences when looking at similar, but ultimately different, productions from each side of animation?

We have come to decisive conclusions to each theoretical question. The biggest cultural influence for Japanese animation is the Shinto religion. It is at the core of Japanese animation, and influences both storytelling and visual elements. In American animation, a shift happened in the culture, making its animation oriented towards children. In later years, it shifted again towards adults. This gave birth to adult-oriented animated sitcoms, which has become the norm in America.

Japanese animation studios produce content faster than American animation studios. The biggest reasons for this is their budgets, how detailed the work is, and how hard the studio pushes themselves. Japanese anime is not as detailed as American animation, therefore it doesn't take as long to produce. On average, 30 minutes of Japanese animation takes 1-3 months to produce, while 30 minutes of American animation takes 6-9 months to produce.

Some of the biggest structural differences between Japanese and American animation is how they blur the line between good and evil, and how they pace their stories. Japanese animation usually gives characters a mix of both good and bad qualities, while American animation clearly defines a good hero, and an evil villain.

Foreword

I (Stian) am nothing short of trilled for the fact that I'm allowed to write a full thesis on what I consider my own personal hobby. I find the subject of Japanese animation fascinating, and if anyone who reads this thesis starts watching just a little bit of Japanese animation, that would make all this hard work worthwhile. While I feel that we had to cut a lot of 'muscle' to get this thesis finished, I still hope that you'll enjoy what we wrote, and that you might consider watching some of the shows we mention. I hope you'll enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Stian Olsen

Gjøvik 22.05.2011

I (Frank) was approached by Stian with a suggestion on writing a thesis on American and Japanese animation. I have always been interested in animation, especially American. I have to admit, I had barely seen any Japanese shows at the time. But while working on this thesis, I've gained interest and learned a huge amount of information. We have worked five months on this thesis, not including the planning, and it has been a part of daily life during this time. While it was a challenging task, I have no regrets. We would both like to thank our guidance counselor Odd Christian Hagen who contributed help and advice based on his knowledge on storytelling and helping us write this thesis. I would also like to thank Stian for letting me car pool during the process.

Frank Johnson

Gjøvik 22.05.2011

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Introduction

Our Bachelor Thesis is a comparative study of American animation versus Japanese animation. We wish to look at differences between American animation and Japanese animation, taking into account the culture, the history, production- and the animation techniques employed. This will be done for both American animation, which originated in the *United States of America,* and Japanese animation which originated in *Japan*.

Each culture has adapted unique ways of streamlining the animation- and production process. A American animation studio produces roughly *16-24* episodes in a year/season (1), and a Japanese animation studio can produce up to *50-52* episodes a year/season (2). By looking at these numbers, there is a difference, but how is this difference achieved? Using this as a starting point, we will delve deeper into how they use their resources, how everything is animated, techniques applied, and just figuring out how many of these features came to be.

These are the main theoretical questions we ultimately wish to answer through this study:

- How has each side of animation influenced the culture surrounding it, and vice versa?
-Why can Japanese animation studios presumably produce more than twice the amount that an American animation studio produces?
- What are some of the structural differences when looking at similar, but ultimately different, productions from each side of animation?

While writing this thesis we have to gather information in relevant books, internet articles, films and documentaries, and TV-shows. These have to be read, processed and analyzed, while constantly verifying the sources, making sure the information is legit.

Our competence going into this project is mainly our roles as media production students. Although, our study has not brought us onto the topic of animation production, we have had a general study of the functions and creation of media productions. Our reason for picking the topic of animation for our bachelor thesis is based on our personal interest in animation. Our personal goals are to learn more about animation, and educating others through our findings.

The decision to write our bachelor entirely in English was not an easy one, but we felt that the internationalism surrounding this thesis gave us a good reason to do so. It also has the added benefit of allowing almost anyone to simply pick up and read it, not being hindered by it being in a foreign language.

When describing animation, we first have to define what we mean with 'animation', because there are multiple variations of animation that we're not even going to touch, such as 3D-animation and stop-motion animation. What we will be focusing on is traditional animation. Traditional animation is an animation technique where every single frame is drawn by hand. This is also known as cel animation, classical animation and/or hand-drawn animation.

Our focus in this comparative study is to look at American and Japanese animation, but there is a staggering amount of work to go through, so the important issue is to set some criteria. While many works from each side are strikingly different, there are some similarities to be found. By using a similar foundation, we can take a look at how both sides represent their thoughts on an original work through creating a universe, animating, and ultimately bringing to life, the characters and telling the story.

Just as there are many works that are similar, there are also animation companies that have a similar track record in both critical acclaim and fame. We wish to compare two animation companies, one from each side, that are known to take inspiration from original works, and are influenced largely by their own culture. We'll be looking into *The Walt Disney Company* and *Studio Ghibli*.

We will look at two animated features from each of these studios.
From Walt Disney Studios: *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Little Mermaid*
From Studio Ghibli: *Spirited Away* and *Ponyo.*

We want to look at how these movies are made, the creative process behind it, how the story was created, how animation was done and how the characters are made. Behind each of these studios are a myriad of talented people, but both studios are represented by one figure that have each become innovators in their own right. They have brought these companies, and their respective fields, where they are today. Disney has Walt Disney, and Studio Ghibli has Hayao Miyazaki, respectively. We want to look into these people, figure out who they are, what they have done for the industry and why they want to tell these stories.

Having looked at animated films with a seemingly limitless budget, it is important to understand that there is another side to animation that must be addressed: TV animation. While films tend to feature crisp and detailed animation, TV animation is different. With a much smaller budget, sacrifices have to be made to achieve the detail of animation that is present in most TV animation. With TV animation we want to take a look into this, and see how studios work with a limited budget, time and how they streamline their animation to adapt to this. From both sides, we want to take a closer look into *The Simpsons* (American) and *One Piece* (Japanese). The reason for picking these two shows was based on their popularity which makes it a bit easier for us to gather information regarding the creation and culture surrounding them.

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One of the problems choosing a topic involving Japanese culture is that the most direct selection of information that can be found is in the Japanese language. Neither of us can understand Japanese, so we have to resort the English information we can find. At this point, we will mostly be referring to Japanese animation as *Anime,* as this is what it is commonly known as.

Main Article

Technical Aspects of animation

The Illusion of Movement

Animation is deceptive, and what makes it deceptive is that it has no movement - It is simply a rapid sequence of still images put together to give the illusion of movement. It is an optical illusion created by the human eye, in what is known as *persistence of vision*[1]. When you watch an animated sequence of characters running, or a car driving, it might be hard to see it being anything other than moving images, but simply look at any optical illusion, and it suddenly becomes clear - your eyes are playing tricks on you.

Animation takes 'refuge' in the human mind, which essentially helps make it real. For example, when viewing a moving perspective from a train, you are used to watching the telephone poles fly by, and the distant mountains slowly pass you by as you go. Animators make multiple layers of background images, and adjust the speed at which they move. Viewers accept this technique without questioning it because they all share the experience of watching vistas open up or stream by as they ride in cars or trains. While animation can trick you, there are moments that are hard, or simply impossible, to convey through animation.

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[1] Persistence of vision is the phenomenon of the eye by which an afterimage is thought to persist for approximately one twenty-fifth of a second on the retina.

Animating someone walking, or running, is considered extremely difficult to convey properly, especially if it needs to impact the viewer in a certain way. Animating someone moving is comprised of first drawing the picture of the subject, and then shooting it frame by frame. This will make it seem like it is moving, but what if the characters needs to communicate feelings, like expressing joy or anger. *Hayao Miyazaki* had this to say on the subject:

> *"A long time ago I was dumbstruck by a fragment of the film Duel at Takadanobaba, starring Tsumasaburo Bando. Bantsuma (as he was called) was playing Yasubei Horibe, who learns that his uncle was in a duel. He runs to Takadanobaba - and his run is terrific. He pulls back the left side of his body, where he holds his sword, and he sticks out his right arm as far as he can as he runs and runs along the embankment. He pushes people aside as he runs past them. [....] In this long shot, Yasubei's run conveys all of the anxious desperation he feels. I was amazed at the power of Bantsuma's acting. If we made an animated film of Duel at Takadanobaba, what kind of expression could we put into this scene? Most likely, Yasubei's facial expression would be the only place where we could show his desperation. I can see how this would turn out. His running would have to be a repeating series, a set pattern of motion. Unless we were careful, we might let the hand holding his sword move back and forth as well." (3)*

When animators want to depict running, there is an established 'running form' they follow, which is a repetition of a set pattern. The most established way is putting in a sequence of four running steps over twenty-four frames - that is, six frames per step. When someone is running, there are moments where both feet are off the ground, but this usually cannot be implemented in animation. Part of the animation includes: Gathering up power, stretching, and kicking up, which each use up 2 frames. If a mid-air frame needs to be added, the running doesn't appear very dynamic, the power weakens and the sense of gravity is lost - rendering the run unwatchable. There are hardly any examples where this could be useful.

Being an optical illusion, this basic form of running is different from how real people run, as it simply makes it look like the character is running. Actual running cannot be expressed by drawing lines, and coloring in space. This is because in reality it also includes very subtle movements of quivering muscles, the flapping of hair and the speed of leg movements. The basic running form is just a pattern used as a foundation that can be expanded upon. Animators create the kind of running that is expected from the scene, or what they want to express: whether it is serious, or slapstick. If it is done well, the basic form ties it all together and gives the image cohesion. (3)

Ink and Paint

Ink and paint have been the standard for animation from the first Disney animations until a few years ago, when the film industry focused on digital 3D animation productions. Ink and paint is a very basic technique used in making animation productions. The resources invested into the productions are visible in the final outcome. The most traditional form of ink and paint features hand drawing and painting each frame, and a camera to capture them. This is also called *cel animation.* The frames are drawn by hand on tracing paper, to make the frames match up. After the frame is drawn it is transferred onto a *cel*, a transparent sheet of celluloid. The outlines of the drawing are inked on or copied with a photo copier. When the outline is ready, the cel is colored with paint. When the cel is done it is stacked on top of the sheet containing the background. When the scene is ready a special animation camera will capture the frame onto one frame of film.

This type of work may require a lot of manpower and time, especially if a full length feature is going to be produced. This also requires a streamlined production process. The beginning of the animation production starts in a storyboard. The storyboard for an animation production is not much different than an ordinary live action production. Storyboard drawings are usually done in both productions, but in animation, the storyboard does represent the final result in a more accurate way.

The storyboard is laid out as a cartoon strip, portraying some of the frames in the story based on the script. The script also contains the dialogue, which is recorded before the animation itself has begun. The voice recording is done in advance so that the animation can be adapted to speech movement.

To get a better idea of what needs to be done in the animation, the soundtrack can be put with the frames from the storyboard to form an *animatic[2]*. This allows the animators to plan out the layout of the animation, including camera angles, camera movement, shading and coloring.

Producing the frames in a larger production requires a lot of planning. The job allocation grows according to the size of the production. There is a need for a lead animator to make most of the decisions in cooperation with the director(s). The lead animator work as a link between the character animators, background animators and special effects animators. The character animation may require a keen attention to details, as the sound is synched with the animations. For dialogue to look natural, all the speech movement for the character has to be lip synced to the recorded dialogue. This is a time consuming part of any animation project. Backgrounds and special effects are done separately and are later combined in the final stack of cels.(4)

Multiplane camera

Invented by the Disney department in 1933, the multiplane camera was invented to produce full length animated features that had a better visual quality. The huge camera rig had an animation camera at the top pointing down. Multiple planes are set up on a downward axis from the camera. The planes could be mounted with glass planes, with painted backgrounds on them. (5)

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[2] A simplified mock-up that gives a better idea of how a scene will look and feel.

Digital Ink and Paint

As computers became a normal sight in all forms of working life, it became clear that they had a big potential in animation. Digital ink and paint is not much different from the original process of animations. However, instead of transferring the hand drawn drawings from paper to cels, the drawing is scanned into a computer. Here software can be used to edit the frames, and put in backgrounds that may be digitally painted. This makes for a quicker way to compose the frames, without the quality loss of not being able to hand draw the animation. Today there are several software packages available for purchase, making animation a trade that everyone with a computer can take on. (6)

CAPS

With digital technology available, Disney developed an animation tool called *CAPS[3]*. CAPS could digitally recreate the backgrounds of animated shots, making camera panning and three dimensional movements possible on a bigger scale. This gave the creative animations teams more freedom in planning the scenes.

Producing Anime

Anime is produced in a similar way. The animation starts with sketches and design. These are concept drawings that make a foundation for the general design for characters and or backgrounds. Image boards can be produced, to create various colored concept art to define the art style and atmosphere of the anime. The storyboards created based on the script and image board can vary in level of detail, depending on how much instructions is needed.

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[3] CAPS stands for Computer Animation Production System

Based on the storyboard, the planned shots that need to be drawn are assigned to different animators. Depending on the size of the animation crew, certain animators can be handed instructions for an entire shot of animation. This differs from American animation production, where different parts of the shot are assigned to multiple animators. The animators draw a layout based on the storyboard with instructions, to send onto the background artists to base their drawings on.

To make an outline based on the concept, key animators draw the most important frames in the shot. These are frames that are crucial to the story, and often involve motion in characters. This also requires the key animators to be involved in the story and general idea of the anime, to achieve the best result. As the key animation frames are approved by the animation director, the work on the inbetweeners can commence. The key frames are placed on a timeline, illustrating what frames are missing from the shot. As more inbetweeners are drawn, the frames start to connect. The key animator can draw reference shots if they are needed. As in many other animation productions, a lead figure is required to organize the different departments of animation. In Japanese animation studios, they are called episode directors.

There are some fundamental differences in how the work process is organized that differentiate American animation from Japanese animation. In Japan, it is customary for voice acting to be done after animation is complete, making characters 'fish-mouth' the dialogue. Instead of the animators adapting the dialogue with mouth movement, the voice actors time their dialogue with animation. It is the complete opposite with American animation. Here, lip sync is so finely-tuned that you can mute the sound and still make out what they are saying. (7)

Animating on a Budget

Budgets are an important aspect of every animated feature - it ultimately determines how much detail you can expect from a 30 minute episode of animation. With animes being as mass-produced as they are, they usually come with a standard budget for a single episode, and if the show becomes popular, it might get a budget increase. So how much does one episode of anime cost to make? According to an investigation by *Media Development Research Institute Inc.,* a 30 minute episode of a TV Anime in 2010 totaled ¥11 million (around $138 000 at the current exchange rate). If an average episode has 5000 frames that puts each frame at around $3. This rate apparently has nt changed that much in 30 years. (8)

So to compare, how much does an episode of American animation cost in this case? Let's look at the production cost for an episode of The Simpsons. One episode of the Simpsons costs over $5 million, with the voice actors alone costing around $2.4 million. The longer the show stays on the air, the more it costs to produce, with salaries gradually increasing. (9)

History, culture and religion

In American civilization, many consider the creation of the animated industry to be the creation of the animation studio 'The Walt Disney Company', commonly referred to as *Disney*, started by *Walt Disney*. Here was a studio that put animation in the forefront, made it an art form, and just as viable a medium as any live-action film. Disney's aesthetics, ideologies and technology has become known as the 'Disney style' that many artists and studios across the globe strive to emulate. While Disney is an important, and necessary, part of American animation, it neglected many other American pioneers at the time. It took ownership of animation and stapled it as a purely 'American phenomenon'. Many critique the process, design and meaning of the Disney output - both as a tribute, and as a challenge to themselves. (4)

The Walt Disney Studios was founded in 1923 by the two brothers Walt and Roy Disney, with the purpose of producing animation. This marked the start of the true American animation. Their first productions consisted of a series called *The Alice Comedies* which was based on live-action actors interacting with animated characters. The series was not very successful. The Walt Disney Studios moved on to bigger facilities and took on bigger projects. Here, Mickey Mouse was created. In his debut, *Steamboat Willie* released in 1928, it became clear that Walt Disney had a talent for creating cartoon characters that entertained people. In 1934, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was produced, which is considered the world's first full length animated feature. The movie received good reviews. From here, the studio would move on to produce more films and grow into a huge company, while improving the technology used to animate. The multiplane camera allowed for greater realism in animation, along with the move towards digital animation.

Disney studios did have some competition, in the form of other American studios making a move towards animation. In 1930, Warner Brothers[4] created *Looney Toons*, an animated series featuring recognizable characters like Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck. Much like Disney's Mickey, these characters charmed American audiences. They were featured in cartoon shorts, inspired by the slap stick humor that was popular at the time, a comedic style that would affect animated shows in the future. These shorts were often featured in cinemas, surpassing Disney's classic short films in popularity.

The reason for this popularity was the sense of non-realism in the animation productions. They depicted comical and unrealistic events and created a universe where anything was possible. The audience, seeking an escape from the brutal reality of the time, sought out these animated features and shorts. America was at the time coming out of a depression and entered World War II, and found comfort in animation. As the war ended and American society evolved, animation lost its popularity with the older audiences.

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[4] Warner Brothers is a subsidiary to multinational media corporation "Time Warner"

At this point, American animation had become childish and no longer connected with adults. The industry adapted to this situation and focused on bringing in more revenue by creating merchandise based on the animated characters. (10)

As Disney's features were produced through the 60's 70's and 80's, the public started to lose some interest. The animators working at Disney the past 50 years were starting to retire, bringing in a new generation of animators. They certainly felt the pressure towards producing similar films as their predecessors, as they started planning new projects. Their big break didn't come until the release of The Little Mermaid in 1989, a success both in the box office[5] and with the critics. (11)

At the time, they probably did not know they were entering the last era of traditional animation. In 1995, the CG animated movie *Toy Story* was released in America, produced by Pixar and published by Disney Studios. This was Pixar's first full length production using CG [6] technology. Disney had made an agreement with Pixar where they would publish three Pixar movies. Toy Story was first considered a flop in the cinemas, but eventually it would earn success in the world wide market, to some surprise for both Disney and Pixar. These two studios had a financial disagreement after publishing the following two films for Pixar. Disney wanted more of the profit from Pixar's releases. They made a financial agreement soon after, but in 2004 Disney decided to buy up all of Pixar's stock, making Pixar a part of Disney Studios. This has had an effect on the animation department at Disney. The focus on making feature films with drawn animation was now becoming almost non-existent. (12, 13)

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[5] Box Office is a term used to get the sense of total seating areas, or 'boxes' sold for a film. If it is a box office success, it sold a lot of tickets.
[6] CG, short for Computer Graphics, are images edited and rendered on a computer

Culture & Religion

American storytelling in animation, especially Disney, has had a clear aspect in their storytelling. The good and bad side. The good side represented by a main character that wishes to achieve a specific goal. The evil side is usually the obstacle in achieving that goal. Many Disney films are based upon older fairy tales. These stories date back hundreds of years, but are still based upon the religions that still is prominent in Europe and later America. The norms, morals and traditions in the culture are partly based on those religions, and affect the artists that are inspired by them. Morals are highly present in Disney films, with the line between good and evil always present.

In recent time, cartoon shows with adult themes have gained popularity in America. Animated shows like *The Simpsons, South Park and Family Guy* are shows that receive good ratings on the American networks. These shows are more adult oriented, with adult humor and references to American pop-culture. These shows usually have morals in their stories, with the character learning moral lessons at the end of the episodes. (14)

History of Japanese animation

As unbelievable as it may seem, the success of both the anime and manga industries in Japan rests firmly on the shoulders of one man: *Ozamu Tezuka*. This man is considered the Japanese equivalent to Walt Disney, and he served as a major inspiration during his formative years. With his innovative stories, styles and thinking he redefined genres, pioneered techniques and stylized Japanese adaptations of American literature. His output for the industry earned him titles such as 'The Godfather of Anime', 'Father of Manga' and 'God of Comics'.

Let us step back for a minute, and go to the early days of the Anime and manga industry. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese graphic artists started to feel the influence of the American newspaper comic strips. Using a linear story-line and word balloons, these strips had a structure that was very accessible to the masses. Japanese cartoonists started producing their own newspaper comics, which would eventually lead to the development of the modern Japanese comic book, or 'Manga' as it has come to be known. At this point, Japanese artists would start experimenting with animated motion pictures, and the Anime industry would start growing from this point on.

Ozamu Tesuka became a cartoonist after World War II. His approach to telling a story was different from others at the time, placing focus on telling explosively emotional stories through his illustrations. He borrowed techniques from French and German cinema, telling stories much like how a filmmaker would; unfolding stories over several pages, eventually culminating it in a single emotional scene. Telling stories in this manner, he inspired entire generations of artists how to visualize and compose stories. His largest contribution came in the design of characters. *Ozamu* needed a vast emotional template to tell his stories, and he received his inspiration from Disney's pre-war American animation. Tezuka's animal and human characters were designed much like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck; round heads with huge, expressive eyes. While looking simple and cartoonish, these features allowed a character to express a wide range of emotions, everything from laughter to rage. This led to the development of today's 'Manga-style' character, as it was extremely flexible, and allowed for simple facial features, with a lot of volume.

From the start of the 1950's, Japanese animation studios started working to expand its viewing audience, as its main audience at this point was mainly children. Toei Animation Studio was founded in 1956, and they released their first feature, *The Tale of the White Serpent*. This, along with Toei's follow-up films started paving the way for a more serious and adult approach to animation.

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At this point, Tezuka formed his own animation department, and started feeding animated TV series to the public, with series like Tetsuwan Atom[7], which became so popular that it was released worldwide.

As popular as Japanese television series were in the 1960's, they were still mostly aimed at children, following basic story-telling formulas. There were exceptions, but most followed the usual good guy VS.. bad guy formula. This changed in the 1970's, ushering in a more sophisticated approach to televised anime, with the series *Lupin Sansei.* Created by the manga artist *Monkey Punch*, the titular main character Lupin is a master thief. The show was part comedy, part action-adventure, aimed directly at an older audience. The show's popularity spawned two TV sequels, and multiple feature films. The science fiction genre also made drastic advancements, with shows like *Space Battleship Yamato[8]*. This show explored the complexity of human emotions, which captured the hearts of Japanese viewers. There were also Mecha shows[9] like Mobile Suit Gundam that introduced large amounts of merchandise to the public, in the form of plastic model kits based on the series.

At the start of the 1980's, producers in both film and television had a hard time keeping up with the constant demand for more sophisticated and exciting animated programming. In the coming years, the home video market came to the scene, giving fans the possibility to watch their shows whenever they wanted by buying the shows in stores. This became so popular that some production companies started producing straight-to-video releases. Having created the home video market, anime created strictly for adults could be released, without worrying about TV and film censors. Strange and sexy programs like *Kekko Kamen[10]*, featuring a naked super heroine, could now be produced for home video release.

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[7] Tetsuwan Atom followed the amazing adventures of a robot boy as he fights crime and protects his friends
[8] The series followed the crew of the Space Battleship Yamato as they tried to save humanity from destruction while fighting off an alien invasion. Often violent and gritty, Yamato showed that there was an audience for sprawling space operas.
[9] Mecha is a science fiction genre, centered around robots or machines
[10] Kekko Kamen (Translated to Splendid Mask) is series about the misadventures of a student name Mayumi Takahashi who attends a boarding school called Toenail of Satan's Spartan Institute of Higher Education that is run by sexual predators

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Producers started scouring the manga industry to find shows to adapt. Akira Toriyama was one of the first to benefit, with the comedy series *Dr. Slump*[11]*, and later *Dragon Ball*[12]*. In 1986 his fantasy series *Dragon Ball* went on to become Japan's most popular animated TV show. Another manga artist which dominated the 80's and 90's was *Rumiko Takahashi.* Most of *Rumiko's* works were in the romantic comedy genre, enchanting audiences of all ages.

Ridley Scott's science fiction film *Blade Runner (1982)* redefined how people visualized the future. Japanese manga and anime artists were among the first to pick this up and experiment with it. The first and best was artist/director *Katsuhiro Otamo*, with the groundbreaking movie *Akira. Akira* led the way for the growth of anime popularity outside of Japan, and is considered a landmark anime film, bringing with it a new style of anime.

While new anime and manga was starting to lean towards the more unconventional and bizarre, some were quite serious. Keiji Nakazawa's Barefoot Gen is a manga about his own personal experiences as a Hiroshima survivor. Released in 1988, Grave *of the Fireflies* follows the struggle of two orphans who survived the fire-bombing of Tokyo. *Roger Ebert* considers it to be one of the most powerful war films ever made. (15)

At this point, audiences were becoming more receptive to animation that wasn't strictly comedy- or action oriented, and many turned to Japanese literature for inspiration. Anime had, at last, freed itself from being only intended for children, and could seemingly tackle any genre, for any audience.

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[11] Dr. Slump is a slice of life series about the characters that live in Penguin Village

[12] Dragon Ball is a series inspired by the classical Chinese novel *Journey to the* West. The series follow the protagonist Goku from childhood to adulthood as he trains in martial arts and explores the world in search of the seven titular Dragon Balls.

International audiences now started enjoying more popular anime, such as Pokémon[13], Sailor Moon[14] and Dragon Ball. The most significant is the fact that Disney started working with *Studio Ghibli* to start bringing all of *Studio Ghibli's* masterpieces to American audiences. Anime's success can be credited to the dedication of Japanese artists to experiment with the possibilities of animation as a medium. They understood that more could be done with moving pictures than just simply entertaining children - The complexities of human emotion, and the boundaries of time and space could be explored. This willingness to experiment is what has made anime so dynamic and appealing. (16)

Culture

After looking at the history of Japanese animation, it is understandable that the medium naturally intertwined with the mainstream, and it has even grown into its own subculture. This subculture is rooted in its deep fascination with manga books, anime shows, figurines and much more. The ones invested in this culture are mostly known as *Otaku.* They collect figurines, purchase DVDs, or visit cafés staffed by waitresses dressed as comic book maids. The growing popularity of this subculture has transformed a neighborhood in downtown Tokyo, known as *Akihabara[15],* into a hot-spot for anyone looking to purchase manga books, anime figurines, video games or anime DVDs.

Otaku have long been considered social misfits, escaping from reality into fantasy, which is seen as troubling by the Japanese populace. "Because of fear of being rejected or disliked, people turn to anime characters or idols that pose no personal conflict" said *Psychologist Rika Kayama.*

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[13] Pokémon is a media franchise based around collecting insects called Pokémon
[14] Sailor moon is a media franchise which redefined the magical girl-genre. It follows Usagi Tsukino, a girl who finds out she is a Sailor Moon, a special warrior with the destiny to save Earth, and later the entire galaxy.
[15] Akihabara is a major shopping district in Tokyo, for electronics, computers, manga, anime and Otaku goods

While the Otaku subculture is generally frowned upon, there have been many successful attempts at shining a positive light on this subculture, with shows like *Train Man*[16] and *Genshiken*[17], so in recent years they have become more socially accepted. Japan's culture has always had a fascination with the artificial, like *bonsai trees* and *rock gardens*, so an *Otaku*'s affection for figures or artificial characters might not be that far-fetched. There is also another reason that this culture has been given free rein to blossom as much as it has. (17)
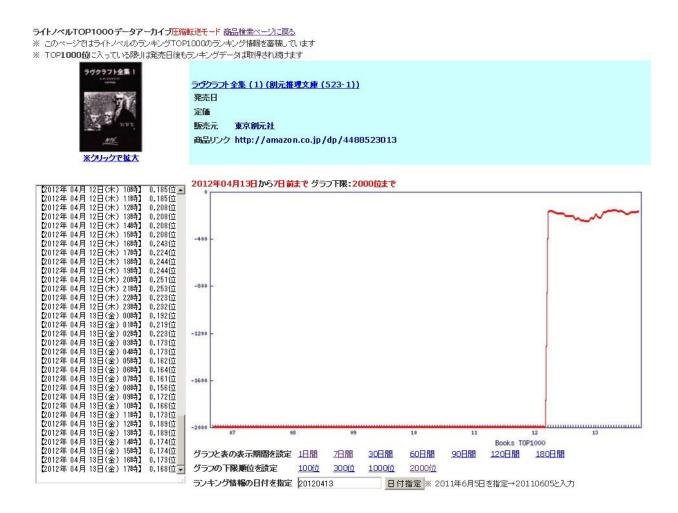
Drowning in Money

The Otaku economy includes sales of dolls, manga, films , outfits, trading cards, and games amongst other things. Japan's leading anime-doll maker, *Kaiyodo Co,* projected sales for about $25.6 million in 2006 - an increase of 10% from last year, and *Economist Takuro Morinaga* at *UFJ Institute* puts the overall otaku market at *$26-34 billion. Akihabara* is considered a huge tourist spot, with tourists coming from all over the world to experience it. (17)

Including all this, there have also been cases where a popular manga or anime has influenced sales completely unrelated to the anime culture. *Drops of God,* a slice-of-life manga about wine, intended to bring a little slice of European culture to Japan, had an unforeseen impact in wine sales all across Asia. In South Korea alone, wine sales rose from less than ⅓ of the market, to around 70% of all alcohol sales soon upon publication. The impact of the series has been so massive that the creators have been nominated to receive a *Wine Intelligence Business Award* for their contributions to the wine industry over the past decade. (18)

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[16] Train Man is a supposedly true story about a 23-year old otaku who intervened when a drunk man started to harass several women on a train. The otaku ultimately begins dating one of these women. The story grew and became many forms of media, like a TV series, manga, novel and so on.

[17] Genshiken is a manga series by Shimoku Kio about a college club for otaku and the lifestyle its member pursue.

This is not the only case of such a phenomenon. *Haiyore Nyaruko-san* , an anime about the Cthulhu Mythos, has triggered a H.P. Lovecraft boom. The Amazon Sales rank of H.P. Lovecraft's Complete Works Vol.1(In Japanese and first published in 1974), boomed massively the instant the episode aired, as shown in the chart below.

Shinto - The Religion of Nature Worship, Emperor Worship and Purity

As mentioned , Anime thrives on variety, and many storylines find their basis in the Japanese religion of Shinto. Shinto can be best described as a disorganized religion, with no single God, but several deities to be worshipped at shrines. There are no sets of theological beliefs or code of morality, instead it places its focus on cleanliness and communal guilt. Shinto religion is at the core of Japanese culture and history, therefore it greatly affects the outcome of pop culture in modern Japan - frequently exploring many social relations that would be taboo in American terms.

Because of these reasons, Shinto is therefore prevalent in both anime and manga, affecting how the story is told, as well as how characters act. For instance, death is often shown in anime. If the main character of a story gets killed off, this rarely causes a shock with the Japanese audience, because death is honorable in Shinto, especially if the character dies for a noble cause. A parallel with this can be drawn to the kamikaze pilots in World War II. A main character dying in a cartoon is considered a taboo, as death is something American society wishes to avoid, or ignore.

Another big aspect of the Shinto religion is blurring the line between good and evil. Characters mostly have a mix of both good and bad qualities. A character's motives can be good, but their methods can be evil, and vice versa. Characters often switch sides, and battles can unfold with either side being neither "good" nor "evil". This is a continuous guessing game that draws audiences into Anime, giving them the freedom to root for whomever they see fit. (14, 19)

Analysis'

Disney & Ghibli

These two studios are the producers of the four films we are going to be analyzing. Both studios were founded by people who are considered to be very important figures in the animation industry; Walt Disney and Hayao Miyazaki. The Walt Disney Studios is today one of the biggest media corporations in the world, but it all started with one man's idea of an animation studio producing animated films. The studio quickly gained a reputation after producing their first feature films. Their goal has always been to tell a story that captures both the mind and the heart.

Studio Ghibli was founded by Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata. They worked in TV animation in Japan and had been involved in animated features when they realized the bigger budgets in filmmaking were a possibility to create animation with more creative freedom. Together, they founded Studio Ghibli in 1985. Toshio Suzuki, the current Ghibli Executive Director, explains the name as such:

"For those who are not aware, the word "GHIBLI" means "hot wind blowing through the Sahara Desert," which was used during the World War II by Italian pilots referring to their scouting airplanes. Miyazaki, a craze for airplanes, knew this, and decided to take this word for the Studio name. "Let's blow a sensational wind into the Japanese world of animation!" was, I remember, the intention behind the naming of GHIBLI."(20)

Miyazaki and Takahata went on to create feature films. They were depending on them being a success, or it would end their Studio. Luckily, they have yet to produce a flop.(20)

Alice in Wonderland

Alice in Wonderland (21) is a animated Disney movie based on Lewis Carroll's Alice books - *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and Through the Looking-Glass.* It tells the story of a girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar, anthropomorphic creatures. The story explores themes such as loss of innocence, death as a constant, dreams ,subversion, and it puts Alice in the middle of madness, toying with her sense of being and logic. It is considered one of the best examples of the literary nonsense genre, and its narrative course and structure has been enormously influential, especially in the fantasy genre.

Walt Disney has always been fond of the Lewis Carroll Books, and as soon as he could, he acquired the film rights for Alice in Wonderland. Walt Disney and Lewis Carroll could be thought of as kindred spirits, as they both appreciate childhood, and it could be the reason why Walt Disney was so fond of the Alice books. Walt Disney once said this about childhood:

"Too many people grow up. That's the real trouble with the world, too many people grow up. They forget. They don't remember what it's like to be 12 years old. They patronize, they treat children as inferiors. Well I won't do that."(22)

Starting the project

Walt Disney had a hard time bringing Alice to life, beginning his fascination with it as early as 1923. He started out by making 'the Alice Comedies', which were shorts about a real girl named Alice , who walked around in a drawn world. Over fifty of these shorts were created, and the success of these silent films established Disney as a film producer, and could be seen as the significant success of the later Mickey Mouse, which is usually credited as Disney's first great success. Ever since then he had thought about making a film based on Lewis Carroll's story, and he even wanted it to be his first feature-length film.

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Walt Disney purchased the rights to the Tenniel Illustrations in 1931 and registered the title with the Motion Picture Association of America in 1938. World War II interrupted development, and production did not start in earnest until June 1947 as a fully animated feature.

Finding Alice

Disney had a lot of trouble finding actresses that could portray Alice, and had rejected the actress portraying Alice in the shorts, and rejected two more in 1945; *Ginger Rogers* and *Luana Patten*. After auditioning over 200 young girls, a 14-year-old girl named Kathryn Beaumont was picked to play the part of Alice. The animated character of Alice was modeled after Kathryn , because she not only provided her voice, but she, as several other voice actors, also acted out the role in live-action footage filmed for the animator's reference, wearing a specially created Alice costume. Several other voice actors also portrayed their characters in this manner, including Ed Wynn (the Mad Hatter), Jerry Colonna (the March Hare), and Richard Hayden (the Caterpillar).

Adapting the Story

Walt Disney, along with his story artists, had a lot of trouble turning the episodic nature of the Wonderland stories, and Alice's wanderings, into a dramatic structure. Even though they had considered using the White Knight and the Jabberwock as the hero and villain, and had even composed songs and voices for the latter character, they were eventually abandoned. while it was "imperative to have a story structure", Walt Disney said this on the matter:

"We decided that Alice's curiosity was the only possible prime mover for our story and generator of the necessary suspense. The result is a basic chase pattern that culminates when Alice, after her strange adventures, returns to the world of reality."

After working out the story structure for the movie, they had to condense the story and characters due to running time constraints and continuity demands. The Wonderland stories boast 80 characters, and Disney's Alice brought about 33 of these characters to the screen. Walt Disney felt that the tricky part was condensing two books - around 10 hours worth of reading material - into 75 minutes of film. Walt created amalgams in the characters, and hinted at other characters that were left out , like the Cheshire Cat singing 'Jabberwocky' , and the Queen of Hearts being the four queens and the Duchess combined. One character, however, was created by Disney; the *Talking Doorknob.* The reason for creating this character was "to avoid a long explanatory monologue at the beginning of the story and to give Alice a foil to talk to". The 'Drink Me' bottle had also been given a voice and personality by Disney, but was abandoned in favor of the *Talking Doorknob.*

Character Visualization

Sir John Tenniel was the illustrator for the Alice books, which is why Walt Disney acquired the rights to them as the basis for the characters of his movie. The issue with these illustrations was that the complex ink and pen designs did not lend themselves to animation. Instead, the animators used the illustrations as a starting point and gave them a 'Disney Makeover'. The realistic illustrations became more childlike, and some characters ended up getting human traits and features. It required months of rough sketches before the model sheets, which would guide the animators, were finished. The inspirational paintings that Mary Blair created, deeply influenced the final visualization of the movie and its characters.

Production

Production started in 1946, it took five years to finish and it cost the studio about $3 million, partly because a full-length live action film was shot so that animators could consult it while animating the film. Disney used profits from his earlier movies, to get some of the top radio talent in the world, at the time, to provide voices for characters.

Alice has the most songs of any animated Disney feature, mostly due to the parodies of rhymes present in the Wonderland stories, but most of the songs are original. Salvador Dali, a prominent Spanish surrealist painter at the time, influenced the animation sequences. (22)

Theatrical Release and Aftermath

When Alice in Wonderland was finally released, audiences were disappointed. The overall consensus was that Disney had failed to capture the atmosphere and intellectual humor of Lewis Carroll's story. Disney himself was disappointed with the movie and blamed its lack of success on Alice's "lack of heart". He was also dissatisfied because he still thought there were too many characters playing in it. Some of the only success brought forth by the movie was the music. "I'm late" and "The Unbirthday Song" were two songs that became quite popular with the public. (23)

Spirited Away

Chihiro Ogino is moving with her family to a new neighborhood, but after a series of events she becomes trapped in an alternative reality inhabited by otherworldly beings and spirits. Her parents get transformed into pigs by a witch called Yubaba, and Chihiro is forced to start working in the witches' bathhouse. While working there, Chihiro tries to figure out a way to get her parents back to normal and return to the real world.

The setting is based on old Japan, with the foundation of it all being Miyazaki's nostalgia for how Japan used to be a long time ago. The bath house is the movie's center and where most of the movie takes place. The bath house encompasses the good old-fashioned Japan. While the nostalgic element for old Japan is in place, Miyazaki is not so simple-minded as to locate a perfect vision of the past. The employees are frequently rude and discriminating towards Chihiro, and the employees show their corruption through their greed, frequently fighting amongst themselves for chump change. (24)

Miyazaki had two projects rejected before finally getting *Spirited Away* approved. All three projects were based around an old Japanese bath house. Miyazaki himself always thought that the bath house was a mystical place filled with wonder and he usually fantasized what went on behind locked doors. One of these fantasies was the inspiration for the bath house in Spirited Away. (25)

After Spirited Away was released, there were rumors speculating that Hayao Miyazaki would quit directing, and that Spirited Away would be his final film. This came as a huge shock, and outright fright, to the Japanese audience. Miyazaki, and his films, are extremely popular in Japan, and part of this success comes from his extreme commitment to his films. Miyazaki gave the final approval for every piece of key animation in the film. running at 124 minutes, with 24 frames per second, the job was absolutely overwhelming for him.

In addition to this, Miyazaki helped with choosing the voice cast, and personally attended every voice taping session and every recording session for the background music. He often worked until two or three in the morning for months on end.

When Miyazaki got a chance to explain, he said that he wasn't planning to quit, but merely delegating more duties to his younger animators. This was a problem in Spirited Away, because he would often describe what he wanted, but many young animators couldn't picture what he requested because of their young life experience. Miyazaki wanted Haku's true form as the white dragon to have the snout of a dog, and react like a dog would when something was forced down its mouth. However, the animators had never owned a dog, so they had no idea what he meant. In this case, he took the animators to a veterinarian's office so he could show them exactly what he meant. Miyazaki's troubles with his staff are ironic, because this is exactly the same sort of sheltered upbringing that troubles Chihiro.

Major Characters

Chihiro Ogino is a ten-year old girl, spoiled and overprotected. When we first meet her, she is angry at her parents for moving to a new town and she does not want to go. The parents want her to think of this as an adventure, but she refuses. However, Chihiro is a very sensible child and is very understanding for her age. She values and follows rules that she knows is important, even when authority figures tell her to break them. An example of this is when her father wants to start exploring the abandoned theme park, Chihiro's instincts tell her it is not a good idea. When her parents start gorging on the food they find, Chihiro refuses to eat. Her wise respect for rules becomes important to her in the spirit world, although she has yet to understand this.

When Yubaba changes Chihiro's name to Sen, Chihiro seems to be losing her true identity. Forgetting her real name, and who she used to be, will cause her to be lost in the spirit world forever. She believes that resisting her new identity is necessary to survive, yet Chihiro's time spent as Sen is where her true self starts developing. Chihiro has always been kind and respectful, but as Sen, she relies on these qualities.

Chihiro and Sen, while in the same body, can be seen as two independent characters, teaching each other as they go. When Chihiro leaves the spirit world she has become a self-sufficient and self-reflective young girl. She realizes that the problems of moving to a new town and a new school are nothing compared to the real challenges of growing up.

Haku has the appearance of a sixteen year-old boy, but he is actually a lost river spirit that can take the form of a white dragon. His form as a white dragon gives him a majestic and graceful presence, much like the river he once represented, namely Kohaku River. Haku may seem powerful at times, but he is also weak - he cannot remember his name, which means he can never leave the spirit world, and he is under Yubaba's control. Chihiro learns later that Yubaba controls him through a slug she planted inside him.

Haku is one of the few people displaying kindness towards Chihiro, and she saves Haku on several occasions throughout the film. He and Chihiro develop a loyal and deep friendship, and love each other like brother and sister. Chihiro eventually does find Haku's true identity, which helps him break the shackles that held him in the Spirit World and of Yubaba's control. Chihiro learns that Haku once saved her from the Kohaku River when she was younger. Haku's ultimate fate is never explained, but at the end of the film he has at the very least found a measure of freedom and peace.

Yubaba/Zeniba are the twin sisters that teach Chihiro that both good and evil exist in the world, and often within the same person. While Yubaba is the representation of evil, she honors her word and is honest in her business dealings, almost to a fault. Yubaba trusts no one and assumes that everyone is as sly and greedy as she is, but she adores her baby, *Boh*, beyond all reason. Yubaba has a big warty head and a huge nose, classic features of a witch that make her seemingly evil out at first glance.

Zeniba seems, at first glance, to be as unscrupulous as her sister, but Zeniba leans more consistently towards good. She notes that her and Yubaba are complete opposites even though they are identical twins, but their differences aren't always so black and white. While Zeniba threatens to kill Haku for stealing her seal, she later forgives him with no strings attached. By the end of the movie Sen addresses both Zeniba and Yubaba as 'Granny', this suggests not only that both twins are wise in their own way, but that they are merely two sides of the same coin.

Minor characters

Many characters are not the main part of the film, but they each play an important role in Chihiro's time in the spirit world. Lin is the main female bathhouse worker that is initially gruff towards Chihiro but comes to admire her and acts as her big sister. Kamaji is the spider-like spirit that runs the boiler room, and he is the first to witness the humanity that makes Chihiro special. Boh, Yubaba's spoiled baby, is what Chihiro might have turned out to be if she hadn't come to the spirit world.

Value in details

When creating the characters in Spirited Away, the artists paid close attention to the consistency of the setting, as well as the characters. Yubaba, being the rich head of the bathhouse, has a sense of richness about her, even when she's just sitting around . Chihiro always looks plain, with simple clothing and a ponytail.

While backgrounds and scenery is usually of second importance in animated films, it is highly impressive and detailed in Spirited Away. The bathhouse is highly detailed and full of life. Many minor characters, seen only for a split second, could be fully realized protagonists in any other film, brimming with identity.

Underlying Themes, Motifs and Symbolism

The Power of Names

In Spirited Away, names are synonymous with one's true identity, and losing it means becoming trapped in the spirit world forever. When Yubaba steals part of Chihiro's name, She is warned by Haku to remember the qualities that define her, and stay true to them. Sen succeeds in keeping her identity and eventually helps Haku remember his, ultimately freeing them both. Names are important in the spirit world, and those in power keeps their control by stealing and changing names.

Blurring the Line between Good and Evil

Every character in Spirited Away has a mix of good and bad qualities, even those who seem good at first, like Haku and No-Face. Chihiro as well is unpleasant in the start, but reveals her better nature by becoming Sen. The way Spirited Away portrays the blurred line between good and evil is an accurate reflection of the real world outside of the film. Evil is never vanquished, but characters push them aside by making choices that weaken these bad influences, and Sen's kind acts bring out the good in those she meets.

Entering Adulthood

This is a theme rarely dealt with, and it is one of the reasons Spirited Away distinguishes itself. Entering the adult world, and the world of work, is a shocking transition for Chihiro, who is used to the idle luxury of childhood. Chihiro is unable of doing anything independently, and is used to complaining to get her way. When she becomes Sen and starts working in the bathhouse, she works idly and ineffectively. Lin becomes aware that Sen has never worked a day in her life, and corrects her along the way, gradually making Sen a diligent worker. While hard work is not the only element that turns Sen into a more capable person, it helps her deal with her problems more maturely.

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Greed

Greed is a part that exists within everyone in Spirited Away, and it always ends up being a destructive force. Human greed is the reason why Haku can't go home - filling in the river to build apartments, Chihiro's parents' greed turns them into pigs, and Yubaba's greed causes No-Face to go on a rampage through the bathhouse. No-Face can make gold out of thin air, but those who receive it find that it gives them no happiness. For example, Sen, who turns down the gold, ends up with a much richer life than those who accepted it. In Spirited Away, greed makes people oblivious to what is truly important.

Environmentalism

This is a motif present in most, if not all, of Miyazaki's films. Spirited Away examines the consequences of actions that alter the natural world in destructive ways. The ancient river spirit and Haku are representations of these consequences - the river spirit seems to be a stink spirit because it is so polluted, and Haku lost his home. Spirited Away lets the characters view the pollution caused by human hands, to shed a new light on these issues. (26)

Theatrical Release

Spirited Away became a universal success, and the most successful movie in Japanese history, grossing over $274 million worldwide. It overtook *James Cameron's Titanic* in the Japanese box office, and it is said that in 2002, one sixth of the Japanese population has seen Spirited Away. Spirited Away is considered one of Miyazaki's best works to date.

The Little Mermaid

The Little Mermaid (27) premièred in theatres 15. November 1989. It was produced by Walt Disney Studios. However, the back-story of the production started much earlier. Walt Disney bought the rights to H.C. Andersen's fairy tales in 1939, including *The Little Mermaid.* The plan was to make an animated feature based on the story, but the project was shelved. In 1986, the idea of an animated film featuring a mermaid was presented to the Disney executives who green lit the project. The film would depend heavily on the musical numbers within the movie, so Disney brought in songwriter *Howard Ashman*. *Ashman* had previously worked on Broadway, and his decisions when creating the music for the movie would also change the story, characters and how the animators was drawing the scenes. The production itself would require vast resources, making *The Little Mermaid* the most expensive animated feature Disney had ever produced at that point.

The Disney Animation Studio needed a success at this point. The studio had been through a generation shift a few years earlier and conflicts between the board and executives were creating an unproductive environment amongst the animators. However, the studio was turning things around. The release of the animated feature *The Great Mouse Detective* marked the turning point for Disney's animators. The movie was a moderate success, and gave the creators confidence in their upcoming project, *The Little Mermaid*. (11)

Story

Ariel is a sixteen-year old mermaid living in her father's kingdom on the bottom of the sea. Her father *Triton* is the sea king, which rules all the creatures in the sea. All creatures except the evil *Sea Witch*. Ariel is fascinated by the human life that exists above the sea. She seeks out human artifacts from sunken ships scattered on the ocean bed. While discussing her collection of stuff with the crab Sebastian, who works as the king's adviser, she spots a ship on the surface. On the ship is Prince Eric. Ariel swims up to investigate the ship, and spots the prince.

She falls in love with him almost instantly. A hurricane suddenly forms, and the ship sinks. Ariel rescues the prince and carries him across the sea to the land side. As the prince wakes up, he hears Ariel's beautiful singing as she swims away. Back under water, the king is informed of his daughter's new interest. In his anger, he destroys Ariel's collection of artifacts, and forbids his daughter to seek out humans.

Ursula, the Sea Witch, has observed Ariel looking for ways to exploit her. After the conflict between King Triton and Ariel, she spots Ariel's weakness. She lures Ariel to her lair to trick her. She proposes a deal, granting Ariel human feet so she will be able to walk on land and find her prince. The cost however, is Ariel's beautiful voice. Ariel strikes the deal with Ursula, which give her three days to secure the love of Prince Eric through a kiss of true love. Failing this task will make her Ursula's minion. Ariel finds the prince on the surface, but is unable to communicate without her voice. Prince Eric grants her shelter, but is still unaware of her identity. Ariel tries to seduce the prince, with the help of Sebastian who accompanies her on the surface. Ursula is starting to worry, spying on Ariel though her magic. On the last day, the Witch takes on the form of a beautiful human woman and uses Ariel's voice to trick Prince Eric to think that she is the one that rescued him. Prince Eric immediately organizes a wedding. Ariel, unable to communicate, seems defeated by Ursula's trickery. But with the help of her friends from the sea she is able to sabotage the wedding. Prince Eric learns the truth about Ariel and Ursula. But as they are about to seal the spell with a kiss of true love, the sun sets and Ariel is turned back to a mermaid in the property of Ursula. King Triton tries to intervene, but the contract is watertight. Ursula takes advantage of the king's desperation and offers him to trade place with his daughter. King Triton makes the deal, granting Ursula his powers over the sea. With her new powers, Ursula turns into a gigantic sea monster trapping all the ships on the surface in a maelstrom. Commanding one of these ships, Prince Eric steers into Ursula, stabbing her with the ship. Ursula loses her powers and dies, turning the powers back to King Triton. After regaining his powers, King Triton sees Ariel's true love for Prince Eric. He turns his daughter into a human being so that she can marry the prince and live with him on the surface.

Adapting the Story

Disney's story and H.C. Andersen's story does carry similarities. In the movie the main character, Ariel, is the youngest of five sisters, which is also featured in the tale. The mermaid in the tale also falls in love with a prince she rescues from drowning, and trades her tongue for human feet with the Sea Witch. The ending however, differs from Disney and the Danish folktale. The film has a classic "Disney ending" with the prince marrying the beautiful mermaid. In H.C Andersen's original tale, the Sea Witch marries the prince, and the mermaid has to kill the prince and wash her feet in his blood to become a mermaid again. She chooses not to however, and with the final day ending, she throws herself into the ocean. Her body is turned into a holy spirit forced to wander the earth before receiving God's grace. The Disney film does pay homage to the Danish writer through copying the known statue placed in Copenhagen illustrating The Little Mermaid. Ariel copies her pose on the rock on the shore after rescuing the prince. (28)

Music

The musical numbers in this movie was, as mentioned earlier, a great part of the story. As Ariel was fascinated by the human life, the crab Sebastian attempts to perform a musical number for Ariel, to convince her to stay in the ocean. The musical number was written and constructed by Howard Ashman. Originally, Sebastian was supposed to be more of a British butler type of character, but Ashman suggested making him Jamaican. This gave room for another music type to be used in this musical number. Ashman and the animation studio won an Academy Award for Best Song, and another for Best Score. (29)

Characters

Ariel, being the protagonist, drives the story forward. The decision to make her hair color red was not random. Disney had already made a live-action movie about a mermaid, released by *Touchstone Pictures,* called *Splash.* As they didn't want Ariel to resemble the mermaid in *Splash* , which had blonde hair, the hair for Ariel was turned red. The animators drawing Ariel made the contrast between Ariel's red hair and blue tail stand out, making the character more recognizable. She is portrayed as a young teenager who is growing up and wants more control in her life.

When Ariel gives away her speech and singing voice to Ursula, she loses her main form of communication. This makes her body language important for her to communicate. This made the animation even more important for Ariel to express her feelings while not able to talk. The directors wanted a sense of realism in the physics, and with much of the scenes being under water, this was a challenge. The animation team used live action performances to model Ariel's movements underwater. Her hair movement was modeled after a female astronaut in zero-gravity.

King Triton is the God of the Sea, and Ariel's father. His character design bears a close resemblance to Poseidon, the Greek God of the Sea, and he is named after Poseidon's son. His weapon is a *Trident.* The king is very protective of his daughter. He shows this by reacting with anger when she goes against his will. He is very powerful, with magical powers matching Ursula's magical powers. He does show remorse when he realizes that he has gone too far in his disciplinary actions. There is a struggle in his character, between protecting her daughter and letting her live her own life. He eventually realizes that he needs to let Ariel go, so his child can grow up and live her own life, making her own decisions along the way.

The Sea Witch Ursula represents the bad side in the story. Her power is visualized by evil magic, spying by channeling her magic through eels. A stereotypical representation of evil characters in known Disney fashion.

Themes

The Little Mermaid is based around Ariel, a 16 year old in a world ruled by her father. She is in a period in her life where she feels more adult, while not able to see the full consequences of her actions. She is struck by love as she first see the prince in his ship, and her actions following this event is affected by blind love. She ignores her father's orders, a clear sign of disobedience. Ariel is assertive, and follows her goals.

Theatrical Release

The release in theaters brought a huge success in the box office. The critics quickly grew fond of the movie, saying it was as entertaining to adults as it was to children. They also compared it to Disney's earlier films saying it was just as good, if not better. This brought huge relief to Disney's animation department, and gave them the confidence needed to create even bigger success to the studio. (11)

Ponyo

The Japanese animated film *Ponyo* started out as something completely different. According to the movie's producer Suzuki Toshimo, the original idea was based on a Japanese children's book *Iya Iya En* (*The Whale Hunt*). The idea was developed into a short film in 2005 by Hayao Miyazaki. After making the short film, Miyazaki was inspired to do a full length feature with similar themes. After visiting a Japanese coast town, Miyazaki decided to make the story now known as Ponyo. (30)

Originally, Ponyo started out as a frog, inspired from another children's book, but later Miyazaki changed the character design to a female goldfish.(31)

"There was a children's book aimed for small children that gave me a bit of a hint at the beginning, (...) I was thinking of perhaps using that as the original story to work from, and that was a frog in there. But as I worked on the story, it became something completely different from that original children's book. So I didn't pursue that direction. I have told the author of that children's book that that was a hint for this film, though."(31)

Miyazaki wanted to make a film where the ocean played a big part. One would think that Miyazaki sought inspiration from H.C Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* or Disney's film with the same name. However, Miyazaki has stated that he did not want to tread on Disney's toes and copy their story. Still, the films do have their similarities.

Story

Ponyo is the name of the girl, or rather, the fish in this film. She starts out as a fish with a human face, kept in the sea by her father, Fujimoto, who is a powerful human wizard of the sea. Ponyo escapes her father and finds Sozuke, an ordinary ten year old boy who lives with his mother on top of a cliff overlooking the ocean. Ponyo and Sozuke become friends, despite him being a human and Ponyo a fish. Ponyo develops powers allowing her to grow limbs and become human, making her a human girl as old as Sozuke with similar supernatural powers as her father.

She later becomes captured by her father, but breaks free. In doing this, she unleashes one of her father's experiments into the ocean, making it run amok, threatening the lives of everyone in Sozuke's village. As Sozuke and Ponyo takes on a world that is now ruled by the powers of the ocean, they develop a strong relationship. In the conclusion of the story it becomes clear that, for Ponyo to keep her human form, Sozuke has to truly love her as both a fish and a human. (32)

Characters

Ponyo, being one of the main characters, triggers most of the events of the story. After meeting Sozuke her only objective in the story is to be with him as his friend. She is presented as a very childish character, with little knowledge about the world above the sea. She is easily fascinated by the everyday things Sozuke goes through, such as drinking warm beverages.

Sozuke was based on Miyazaki's son, Goyo Miyazaki. Sozuke is a 5-year old who discovers Ponyo, and becomes obsessed by her. He is very intelligent and grown up for his age, consoling his mother when she becomes frustrated or depressed, and knows Morse code fluently. However, his child-like behavior starts showing when he first discovers Ponyo. He can't leave her sight for a second, rudely ignoring the people around him, and when she gets captured he jumps into the sea without a second thought, to rescue her.

Sozuke is just as infatuated with Ponyo as she is with him, but their love for each other is more like that of a brother and sister. For example, at the end of the movie Ponyo has fallen asleep, but Sozuke wakes her up and holds her hand while they search for Sozuke's mother.

Fujimoto is Ponyo's father. When we are first introduced to him he is portrayed as an eccentric scientist conducting experiments on his submarine. His agenda is unspecified, but we learn that he is planning on making the sea a much bigger part in life on Earth.

When Ponyo disobeys her father, she also sabotages his work. However, Fujimoto does not react with anger. Realizing that the world is unbalanced he seeks out the Goddess of Mercy that happens to be Ponyo's mother. She relays a message for Fujimoto. If Sozuke can pass the test of true love, the world will be restored to normality, making this Fujimoto's goal in the film.

Lisa is Sozuke's mother. She is in a long distance relationship with Sozuke's father who is a seaman, which takes its toll on the daily life, essentially making her a single mother. Lisa seems stressed at times, rushing Sozuke along. When the ocean overflows, she is forced to drive to the retirement home where she works in the middle of the storm, risking her own life for the well being of others. She is an accepting mother that invites Ponyo into their home without a second thought. Sozuke shares many of her mother's traits.

Visual expression

The visual expression in Ponyo differs somewhat from other Studio Ghibli movies. The animation is executed in a cleaner and simpler fashion, while keeping the amazing attention to detail only Hayao Miyazaki is able to perform. The producer Suzuki Toshio stated:

"The waves are an important theme. He never makes others draw the waves. He draws them all by himself. He is devising to find a better way on how to express waves and sea. He is enjoying it."(30)

Most of the movie features the ocean and waves, all drawn by Miyazaki. The colors used in the animation also differ from previous Ghibli productions. In an interview, Miyazaki stated that he wanted the simplicity of the story to be reflected by the simplicity in the colors. Ponyo's bright red color for example, was not to overwhelm the rest of the colors which was also made bright. (30)

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Themes and motifs

There are many themes and motifs that repeat in Miyazaki's films, and in Ponyo's case the focus is on water and environmentalism. In Ponyo, water represents both entrapment and freedom. Whenever Ponyo is in Sozuke's tiny water-filled bucket, she is essentially free, while when she is in the open ocean she is trapped by her father's authority and power.

At the start of the movie, when Ponyo is on her way to land for the first time she is almost caught in a net from a fishing boat. The boat is bottom trawling for garbage, which the ocean floor is full of, but it is picking up various sea life as well. The seawater near the shores is polluted with floating garbage and dirty water, while it is crystal clear where Fujimoto resides. Later in the movie, when Ponyo unleashes the forces of the sea, flooding the harbor town in a great typhoon, it's the humans that have to adapt to the sea life. Fishing boats are swept out to sea, the water is flooding houses and roads, so people have to move around in boats. Under the sea, extinct ocean animals are brought back to life.

If we take a look at the story in Ponyo, it doesn't have the traditional construction and story development as many other movies, both children's films and others. We expect to see conflicts and a conclusion where these conflicts are solved. In Ponyo however, we don't have any major visible conflicts. Ponyo's actions do have consequences however. Her decision to transform herself to a human causes an imbalance in the world, visualized by the water flooding the land. Again we see Miyazaki's own technique in telling a story and making characters with several layers.

The Simpsons

The comedy animation series *The Simpsons (33)* was first broadcast on American TV screens in December 1989. At least, this was the first time The Simpsons was shown in their own show. The Simpsons originated as a rough sketch by the creator Matt Groening. He was sent to the broadcasting studio *Fox* to pitch one of his earlier creations, but decided last minute to come up with a new idea. The show revolves around a typical middle-class family in America. Described at best as a dysfunctional family, The Simpson family consists of the father Homer, the mother Marge, and the three children: Bart, Lisa, and the baby Maggie.

Before its premiere, this family was featured on *The Tracy Ullman Show*, a sketch-show also showed on Fox. The Simpsons consisted of animated sketches only a couple of minutes long. These sketches became so popular that Fox decided to try this concept out as a stand-alone show. The first episode of The Simpsons aired on the 17th of December 1989. The initial response was good. The Simpsons initially appeared as a show with great potential. It became clear that the writing and the script would become the crucial make-or-break factor of this show. The characters had already become popular in America and later, the world. "Bartmania" was sweeping America. The bad-boy with a slingshot, skateboard and the catchphrase "Don't have a cow, man!" had charmed the viewers. The positive revenue from the show was primarily made in merchandise, like Simpsons T-shirts and Bart dolls. In their second season on Fox, the show became the most popular show on the network. Fast forward today, in 2012, over 500 episodes have been made, all on the same network. This makes The Simpsons the longest running animated show in the United States.

Characters

Homer Simpson is an obese, beer drinking and fairly dumb family man working as a safety inspector at a nuclear power plant. Despite having all of these negative qualities, he is one of the most lovable animated characters in history. In 2003, Homer Simpson was voted the "Greatest American of All Time" in an online poll, and can be considered one of the most famous Americans in the world, although he is fictional. Homer Simpson is not a perfect father or husband by a long shot, but he would go to hell and back for his family. There are cases where he is violent, but it is mostly played for comedic effect. A man so filled with faults it is practically pouring out, but who still tries to provide for his family, is what makes one identify with Homer. Nobody is perfect, but he is genuinely trying his best at taking care of his wife and family.

Bart Simpson is considered to be the biggest reason The Simpsons became so successful in the show's beginning. What seemed to appeal most to the American audience was Bart's attitude towards authority. In 1990, the T-shirt sale was estimated to a million shirts a day, depicting Bart Simpson on the front. He was a front figure, pictured on the front page of *Rolling Stone Magazine*. Described as a self proclaimed underachiever, anarchist and epic prankster, He was followed by millions of the TV audience. This was a time where taking a stand against the authority was considered important. Punk rock was still a big musical genre. In summary, Bart Simpson was the sum of the rebellious generation, explaining why he got almost instant cult status in America. Of course, some conservative people did not agree with this character's morals, and was not a fan of how Bart was corrupting this generation, posing as a bad role model for children.

Much like Homer, Bart is often the center of attention in episodes. He is almost always an annoyance to his sister Lisa, and drives his father to, and over, the brink with his pranks, resulting in Homer strangling his son. While Bart is almost always causing mischief in his my hometown *Springfield*, he also has certain ideals to live by.

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There are certain times Bart has to face the consequences of his actions, resulting in learning a moral lesson. While he enjoys annoying his sister, he does realize when he needs to act like a brother, and comforts her and/or takes her side. His mother Marge is all too aware of her son's mentality towards society, calling him her "special little guy". She knows he sometimes means good, but has a hard time showing it sometimes.

Marge Simpson is portrayed as a typical American housewife, and seems to have a high point of tolerance towards her family's shenanigans. Be it illegally brewing beer in the basement, or starting a war with *Shelbyville*[18], Marge can for the most part be found doing chores around the house, helping out her family with whatever they need doing. She might not like what they are doing all the time, but she tries her best to be supportive. When she does get angry, the family usually takes it seriously. No matter what they do, she still loves them. She is considered a voice of reason within the show. For example, she is the only person to doubt the building of a cheap monorail proposed by a sleazy salesman. She goes to investigate, and if it wasn't for Marge, the whole thing could have ended a lot worse.

Lisa Simpson is almost a complete opposite of her brother Bart in every way. She is intelligent, even considered a genius. She does well in school and is a teacher's pet. She is also very caring to her family and sometimes, even to Bart. One of her similarities to her brother is caring enough to take a stand and even, if it being necessary, being rebellious. Starting out, Lisa was more of a sidekick for Bart and his shenanigans. As portrayed in the Tracy Ullman Show, she did not have much of a personality, compared to her brother and father. As the show progressed, it became clear that Lisa was going to be a voice of reason in the mayhem that is the Simpsons family. While her father and brother get into various easily avoidable situations, she usually stands on the sideline with her mother sharing a worrying look. However, she is also capable of getting into trouble of her own, mainly caused by her sense of feeling like she is being much older than she actually is.

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[18] *Shelbyville* is Springfield's neighbor and rival city.

Her advanced intelligence is also the cause of why she is considered a bit arrogant and a "know-it-all". She is not afraid of sharing her opinion to others, and while she may be right, she often provokes someone in a negative way. It is considered that everyone in the Simpsons family has a heart of gold, but with Lisa there is no doubt.

Minor Characters

The Simpsons cast has grown exponentially over the years, and it is now a huge, colorful array of characters that are mostly stereotypes found in popular culture. There is the lazy police officer, the geeky professor, the Indian shopkeeper, the greedy mogul and many more. There are even times when real people are in the show, and in most cases they are voiced by their real-life counterparts. The Simpsons even holds a Guinness world record in most guest character appearances. (34)

The Universe

Evergreen Terrace Springfield, USA is the home of the Simpsons. There has been much debate on which Springfield, seeing how there are multiple towns in the US with this name. The fact is, Matt Groening wanted the location of the city to remain undecided. Groening wanted the audience to identify this town with their home town, and called it "Anytown USA". This also gave them the freedom to create whatever city they wanted, without any relationship to reality. The universe where the show takes place is somewhat abstract. This is why Springfield is home to a giant escalator leading to nowhere and the world's biggest tire fire. Springfield is also a coastal town, surrounded by canyons, a desert and mountains. The script writers could make any environment they wanted and place it in Springfield without worrying about consistency. The Simpsons is like, many other American adult oriented animation series, an episodic show. After every week, the universe seems to reset back to the starting point, opening up for a new episode where everything can happen. Even though the show is almost 23 years old, Bart and Lisa are still children, along with Maggie the baby, who has yet to walk or talk. No matter what situations happen to the family and town they live in, everything is forgotten the next week.

Production

The creativity within the writing of The Simpsons is very visible in the show itself. The various gags and jokes, similar to the standard American sitcom, is performed at a high tempo without lingering on each subject longer than necessary. All this thanks to a very creative writing staff. Following the start of the show, Sam Simon, one of the executive producers, set out to assemble the most talented comedy writers in the US. One of these writers, George Meyer, had been a writer for *The Late Night Show with David Letterman*[19] and *Saturday Night Live*[20]. George Meyer became an important part in how the episodes of the Simpsons were created.

"The key to Meyer's importance in the Simpsons cosmology lies in how the show is produced. Every episode begins not as a drawing or an actor's character sketch but as a script. And each script [...] is only a blueprint. The real alchemy [...] takes place in a conference room at Fox Studios known as the "rewrite room" - or, more reverentially, The Room" (35)

While in The Room, the script would be rewritten multiple times. All the writers would make their suggestion, and based on whatever worked best in the script, it would be changed. But rumors have it that it was George Meyer who was the master of The Room. (35) When the script is ready and approved by the directors, it is sent to the voice cast who rehearse it. The voice-cast work with the script, and help the directors form an image of what the scenes might look and sound like. If changes are necessary, these will be done here.

Next, the recording session begins with the voice cast. Together with Matt Groening, Sam Simon and other writers, the cast rehearse and record the voices. When the voices are recorded, the work on the storyboard can begin. This is done by the animating directors and animators.

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[19] The Late Night Show with David Letterman is a nightly hour-long comedy talk show on NBC created by David Letterman

[20] Saturday Night Live is an American late-night live television sketch comedy and variety show created by Lorne Michaels

The storyboard consists of one key frame from every scene. The storyboard may have up to 400 frames. They are basic black-and-white hand drawings, illustrating movement. Finally, the complete storyboard is reviewed by the directors.

Now the animation can start. Blueprints based on the key frames together with detailed instructions are shipped to an animation studio in South Korea. Every frame is drawn based on the blueprints and instructions in an own animation studio, before it is shipped back to the United States. While the animation is done in South Korea, back in Los Angeles, United States, the backgrounds are being drawn and the coloring is done.

With the animation being close to finished, the episode needs music. An entire orchestra is at the director's disposal to ensure just the right music for the episodes. Changes to the dialogue are also done if needed.

In 1990, it took about six months to finish an episode, costing more than $500,000 per episode. Creating the episodes is a long process, causing the production team to work on multiple episodes at once. The producers have a deadline to meet, because every Sunday, while in-season, the episodes have to be ready to broadcast on the Fox network. (36)

From the first season, The Simpsons was animated by the production studio *Klasky/Csupo*, but in 1992, the Simpsons switched production studio, to *Film Roman*. (37) In their 14th season, the animation production changed to digital ink and paint. Another big change in the Simpsons production, was the move from the standard widescreen format to the High Definition format. Film Roman had also been used to produce *The Simpsons Movie*, which was made in HD (High Definition). The move to the digital format changed how the Simpsons looked on the screen. The change from *SD (Standard Definition)* to *HD* is as clear as night and day, although from the start, the animation incrementally improved with each new episode. (38)

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Style

The Simpsons had a unique art form that separated the series from anything else. When drawing the first characters, Matt Groening made their skin color yellow, gave them big eyes and small noses. The unique art style, together with the unpolished animation in the first seasons of the series gave The Simpsons an imperfect style that seemed to appeal to the masses. Matt Groening didn't want the show to be beautiful and seamless. As he describes his style himself:

"*My style is not that easy to emulate. [...] And we had a rocky beginning, trying to draw the characters the way I designed them. It's very hard for people who devoted themselves to animated American animation to break the habit of cuteness. My characters are anti-cute.*"(35)

When the show changed from SD to HD, the show did lose some of its rough edges. The style changed towards a sleeker look, adapted to the HD flat screens, but it still had the "Matt Groening Flavor".

Behind the Voices

The voices of The Simpsons family are as familiar as their faces. The voice cast, consisting of Dan Castellaneta as Homer, Nancy Cartwright as Bart, Yeardley Smith as Lisa and Julie Cawner as Marge. This is the original cast starting out when The Simpsons was just a featurette on the Tracy Ullman show. All of them portray multiple characters in the show, some even being able to hold natural conversations between characters they portray. For example; Harry Shearer can hold a natural conversation between Mr. Burns and Waylon Smithers, two characters in the show that he both voices. Today they are some of the best paid actors in the US. (9)

The 'New' Simpsons

As The Simpsons went on, the ratings started to drop. As of October 2011, its audience has shrunk by almost 20% since 2006. Reception for the show became worse, and the show started losing its moral footing. Earlier shows tried to explore human emotions, and usually taught the characters an important moral lesson, but in the later seasons it is mostly replaced with slapstick comedy, and transferring the characters to alternate time periods. Most fans feel that the characters have gone 'flat'. The later seasons have also changed Homer - a change fans like to refer to as *Jerk-Ass Homer.* This has even been parodied in the show in the episode *E Pluribus Wiggum*. Jerk Ass Homer is a personality change Homer has gone through, in which he became meaner and less sympathetic to others. This happened during what is dubbed the *Mike Scully Era*, which is between seasons 9-12, where Mike Scully was executive producer. (9, 39)

The Simpsons is still celebrated as a popular show, continually breaking records in the entertainment industry. The Simpsons have won several awards, including 27 *Emmys*, and has been given a star on the *Hollywood Walk of Fame*. It has influenced many adult-oriented animated sitcoms, and Homer's catchphrase '*D'oh!*' has even been adopted into the English language.

One Piece

One Piece (40) is an Anime that originated from the Manga by the same name, which is drawn and written by Eiichiro Oda. It has been serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump (WSJ)* since August 4, 1997. The universe, characters and main storylines are all created by Eiichiro Oda. One Piece is the story of Monkey D. Luffy, his comrades and their travels through the world. One Piece is currently the most popular manga series of all time in Japan, and it is also one of the most popular manga series worldwide. It is the highest-selling manga of all time in WSJ, and is applauded for its art, characters, story and humor.

The series begins with the execution of Gol D. Roger, a man known as the Pirate King. Just before his death, Roger announces that his treasure, the One Piece, will be up for the taking, which causes the Great Pirate War to begin and countless pirates set out to sea to find the treasure. Twenty-two years after Gold Roger's execution, 17-year old Luffy becomes inspired by a pirate named Red-Haired Shanks and sets out to sea in search of One Piece, and through his travels create the Straw Hat Pirates. Many of the people Luffy encounters, he befriends, and they in turn become his crewmates. For now, the Straw Hat Pirates consist of, in the order they were recruited, the Swordsman Roronoa Zoro, the Navigator Nami, the Sniper Usopp, Sanji the Chef, Tony Tony Chopper the Doctor, Nico Robin the Archaeologist, Franky the Shipwright and the musician Brook. Each crew member is a close friend of Luffy, all of which he refer to as his Nakama.

Nakama

The Japanese word Nakama (仲間) is lost in translation, and is a very important word in the world of One Piece. A dictionary would translate the word as a 'company, set group , party, fellow, companion' etc. In One Piece, the meaning is not strict to any of the proper definitions. It is more general, and it changes in emphasis according to the situation. One Piece's Nakama can either mean 'Comrade/ally, crew-member' or 'friend/mate/partner'.

Throughout the entire series, to talk about a Nakama is to talk about someone who is both cared deeply for and who shares the same road in life. It has a double meaning of 'best friend' and 'partnership'. Understanding this deeper meaning of attachment, it is easy to see why the characters react the way they do when the term is used in this manner. They are not simply crewmates or companions, nor are they just good friends. They are much more than this, and yet not in a romantic manner. This is Nakama (仲間). One Piece contains several oddities, special words and characterizations like these, and it is important to understand the double meanings behind these words.

Starting Out

Inspired by Akira Toriyama's Dragon Ball at a young age, and his fascination for Vikings made Eiichiro Oda want to become a Manga writer, commonly referred to as a Manga-ka. He submitted a manga to WSJ called *Wanted*, which made him join WSJ as a staff. Here, he worked as an assistant to many established manga writers. His fascination with Vikings and various pirate events in his life, made him want to create a pirate manga, so during his apprenticeship he started working on One Piece. It originated as three stories entitled Romance Dawn, which had the title character Luffy along with many other elements of the main series. All of these various elements got put together for the first chapter of One Piece, and the series became popular fairly early on.

Oda had originally planned for One Piece to last five years, and the ending was already planned, but he found himself enjoying the story too much to end it in that amount of time. At the release of the 598th chapter[21], which featured a 2-year time skip in the story, Oda stated that it was the half-way point of the series. In 2007 Oda also mentioned that the ending he had decided on at the beginning is still the one he is committed to seeing through, no matter how long it will take. (41, 42)

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[21] Volume 61, which contained chapters 595-603 was released February 4,2011

Working Method

When Oda starts working on each One Piece chapter, he starts out by making a *Name*. This is a rough draft of how the panel layout will be, what is going to happen on each page, and what the story and dialogue will be. He sketches these using various pens and pencils in conjunction with erasers and art gum eraser to fix the errors. He works on the story for three days, and then he draws for three days. He has no days off, and because of this he decided that he wouldn't draw any long-term works like One Piece again; "I don't think it's possible for me to make another long-term serialization, my body couldn't physically handle it." (41)

Oda draws everything himself, from animals, smoke, clouds, crowds and oceans, to create a consistent look. The assistants draw backgrounds based on sketches drawn by Oda. He has an average of 5 assistants that help him with inking, penciling details, backgrounds and application of adhesive *graytones*. He prefers painting in black and white, and avoids using graytones. The only exceptions are when he shadows characters in dramatic scenes, to separate planes and when drawing Shanks' Hair. Like many other Japanese artists, Oda seems to avoid using digital methods. This is so the manga gives off a handcrafted feel, and it is something many Japanese artists aspire to. American artists usually prefer using digital methods, as it is fast and easily yields high-quality results.

Art Evolution

When One Piece was published, it was favored to create big-eyed characters with cute features, than to have the old-fashioned dot-eyed style, which caused Oda to be worried. His art features bizarre and extreme character designs, which gets even more exaggerated as the series progressed. The art has changed over its decade-long run - in the beginning it used thick lines, which gave everything a very cartoonish look. Eventually the lines became thinner and he started using different techniques to improve his art. As the story has grown progressively darker and more adult, the art has become more refined and emotionally intense.

Creating the Story

When working on the story he's always a few chapters ahead of the story as it is being published. His manga is released weekly with a single chapter at around 19-22 pages. The manga follows the adventures of the Straw Hat Pirates, and while each adventure is vastly varied, it is still not without a format. Oda uses certain elements to tell a story, and he enjoys putting his characters in extreme situations they must overcome, which they usually do. While the story has gotten darker, he never forgets to put in elements of comedy to make every situation fairly relaxed to read and enjoy. He tries to avoid drawing scenes of death and killing, but if they do happen, he never, for example, draw a sword in a gaping wound.

A reader once asked Oda who Nami is in love with, and he answered that there will most likely not be any romance among the Straw Hat Pirates. The reasoning for this is that as a series, One Piece is meant for young boys (shonen), and the young boys who read the manga are not interested in romance. He has also stated that he does not wish to incorporate, or even be told, other people's ideas, whether they are his readers of his staff. He does not want to become dependent on other ideas as he derives self-confidence from the fact that his work is his alone. (41, 42)

The Universe

The universe is comprised of a single ocean, making islands the only source of dry land, so boats are the most common way to travel. To travel the seas, a special compass is needed, called the Log Pose. The Log Pose locks onto an island's magnetic field, before locking onto another island when it has arrived. This forces travelers to settle on an island for some time before travelling again. There is another type of compass, called an Eternal Pose. This compass is set on a single specific island and never changes.

The world of One Piece is filled with several other anachronisms, like transponder snails. These are snail-like animals that can be attached to electrical equipment and function as phones, fax machines, cameras and similar devices. There also exist shells from certain sky-dwelling animals that can store wind, heat, sound, images and the like.

There also exist supernatural elements, in the form of Devil Fruits and Haki. A Devil Fruit is a type of fruit that, when eaten, gives a power to the eater. Devil Fruit Users cannot swim in sea water as they are 'hated by the sea', and they become paralyzed if they are even partially submerged. There are three categories of Devil Fruit, each with their different properties. There is also Haki, a mysterious power that is inside every living being in One Piece. It is not that different from a person's regular senses, but most people aren't even aware of it.

Characters

Throughout the series' publication, hundreds of characters have been introduced so we will only be focusing on the main characters and the biggest organizations that are a large part of the story and the greatest source of conflict for the Straw Hat Pirates.

The main characters, the Straw Hat Pirates, all follow a similar format in that they each have a dream, they have a tragic past and they all end up being saved by Luffy, most of the time in a literal sense, but many times they get redeemed by him, so they decide to follow him. While Luffy is silly in nature, he will give everything he has to save his crewmates, even going so far as to declare war against the world to rescue *Nico Robin*.

The Straw Hat Pirates

Monkey D Luffy, also known as *Straw Hat Luffy*, is the captain of the Straw Hat Pirates and the main protagonist. Luffy ate the Gum-Gum fruit, which gave his body the properties of highly stretchable rubber. Oda gave Luffy this power so that no matter how tense a situation gets, the reader can relax without becoming stressed out. While creating Luffy, Oda wanted to strive for a 'manliness' quality similar to those found in the Dragon Ball series created by Akira Toriyama. Oda describes Luffy as a 'strong-willed boy'. (41)

Roronoa Zoro, is Luffy's first crewmember and a master swordsman. He made a promise to his, now deceased, childhood friend and rival to become the world's greatest swordsman. Luffy saves him from being executed, after agreeing to join him.

Nami is the Straw Hats' navigator, who is also an excellent thief. Her dream is to draw a map of the world. She has spent most of her life being a prisoner to Arlong, a racist fish man, after he killed her caretaker. Nami harbors a deep resentment against Arlong, but is powerless to do anything. Luffy defeats Arlong, after seeing Nami break down in tears, and she joins his crew to pursue her dream.

Usopp is a liar, inventor and sniper amongst other things. He serves at the Straw Hats' Sniper. After his mother falls ill, and eventually dies, Usopp starts telling lies in his sadness, finding himself unable to stop. Usopp is a weak-willed character, who easily abandons his responsibilities, but he is also portrayed as the comic-relief character. After meeting Luffy, he decides to become a brave man of the sea, and joins his crew.

Sanji is the Straw Hat's cook. As a young child, he almost starved to death, so he will never refuse someone a meal. Having seen his kindness in this manner, Luffy asks him to join his crew. He initially refuses, but after seeing Luffy's chivalry, he joins his crew to follow his dream - finding *All Blue*, a sea said to contain every fish in the world.

Tony Tony Chopper is the Straw Hats' Doctor and a reindeer that has eaten the *Human-Human* fruit. This has given him the ability to speak and to transform into various forms, like a human. Through Chopper's back-story, Oda wanted to send the message that even though a family member is not related to you by blood, they can still be considered a member of one's family.

Nico Robin is the Straw Hats' Archaeologist, whose dream is to decipher the writings on the ancient *Poneglyph* stones, which are said to contain the world's lost history. As a child, her birthplace was bombed by the world government for housing archaeologists who research the 'Void Century', as it is illegal. She escapes, and spends the majority of her life hunted by the government, branded a 'Devil Child', before settling with the Straw Hats.

She leaves the Straw Hats at one point, fearing they will eventually betray her, even stating that she would prefer death over this. Luffy, along with the Straw Hats, burns the world government's flag, declaring war on them, and asks her if she wants to live. Unable to doubt her crewmates any longer, she tearfully begs them to take her out to sea with them.

Franky is the Straw Hats' Shipwright - part human, part cyborg. His dream is to build a ship, become its shipwright, and sail it to the end of the world. He builds the Thousand Sunny, the Straw Hat Pirates' second ship. Franky joined the Straw Hats' temporarily when they went to rescue Nico Robin. Getting to know them, and their camaraderie, made him warm to them. After building their ship, he is conflicted between choosing to stay on the island, or joining them. He eventually gets convinced to join them as just building the ship isn't enough, he also has to maintain it and sail it around the world.

Brook is the Straw Hats' Musician, who has been granted a second life by the *Revive-Revive* Fruit, although his body is just a skeleton at this point. His dream is to fulfill a promise to a pet whale he made with his earlier pirate crew over 50 years ago. The Rumbar Pirates promised to return after sailing around the world. The idea of a skeleton musician was first conceived by Oda in 2000, but his first appearance wasn't until 2007.

Rivaling Factions

While there are many characters, groups, gangs and organizations in the world of One Piece, most of them are either pirates or working for the World Government, both of which serve as the primary source of conflict for the Straw Hats. The World Government is a political organization comprised of several military organizations, the most prominent of which is The Marines. The Marines are a military sea force, whose duty is maintaining law and order throughout the world. They are the main antagonistic force against pirates, as a pirate is automatically branded a criminal, regardless of actually committing a crime or not. A Pirate is classified as anyone who raises a pirate flag and travels the seas, blurring the line between good and evil somewhat. Many pirates are peaceful in nature, helping the weak and avoiding conflict when possible, while others are stereotypically evil. Marines are just as morally ambiguous, often taking drastic measures to pursue, and punish, criminals. A marine is to obey any orders given, regardless of how questionable it might be. (40)

Sales & Merchandise

One Piece's primary source of sales comes in its Manga format. Single chapters get released weekly in WSJ along with other manga, and when 10 chapters have been released, they become bundled together in a single Volume, comprised of between 180-220 pages. One Piece, being as popular as it is, usually sets records with each single Volume that gets released. the market research firm *Oricon* published some interesting manga sales charts in March, 2012. Volume 65 had sold over 3 million copies in less than 2 months. While at least eight previous volumes had sold over 3 million copies each, none had done this in less than 2 months. Volume 65 went on sale February 3,2012 with a record-tying first print run of 4 million copies. It sold 1,934,961 copies in just three days. (43)

Other merchandise has also been produced for One Piece, including, but not limited to: figures, games, clothing of various sorts, and items from the series (like Luffy's straw hat).

Animating One Piece

Turning One Piece into an anime is done by the veteran studio Toei Animation. They used traditional animation for 10 years, where the cels were hand drawn and the backgrounds brushed manually. However, in later years they evolved to a digital production process. Drawing tables were replaced with touch sensitive LCD-tablets. The tablets still makes hand drawn animation possible with a pen that creates lines in the digital image. The digital platform also allow for more options for the animators, making the process both easier and faster. The animators can make mistakes, and undo them with a push of a button, unlike drawing on paper, where you have to start over. After implementing digital animation, the animators at Toei Animation was able to work 7-10 times faster compared to the traditional methods. The work process is still the same, but it has just become digitized.

Like most animation studios Toei Animation is divided in various animation departments. One of these is the Special Effects department. This department adds things that cannot be expressed well through painting, like clouds, smoke and so on. Using a computer for this sort of work is very helpful, as any effects can be multiplied easily, without the need of manually creating one each time. Effects like swords and steel clashing is turned into CG by the animators, then the texture and extra details is added by the special effects department. The extra detail gives the image more depth, and gives it a more realistic, fleshed-out look. They work on multiple projects simultaneously, and while it is hard work, they have to work hard to follow their deadlines - forcing them to work into the long hours of the night. If there are 100 pages, they all have to be done to completion. (44)

The first episode of One Piece aired 20.10.1999, and episode 548 aired on 20.05.2012. Creating an episode of One Piece varies, but it usually takes around 1-3 months to complete. The production cost for one episode is ¥10 million (around $126 000) (45) .Just like The Simpsons, several episodes are being worked on simultaneously.

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Discussion

After looking into the information on how animation is made, how the history, culture and religion affect the production, and analyzing the films and TV series, we will now form a discussion based on our findings. We want to point out the differences that separate American animation and Japanese animation, while finding out why the gap between these two is there in the first place. We will be taking on the films at first, then we will move onto the TV-shows and how their production is done.

Simpsons VS. One Piece

Looking at the most popular and critically acclaimed shows from each region, there are many distinct differences in production, animation, story and their cultural legacy. We felt that while analyzing movies from each region gave informative results, they did not tell us anything about continually producing content for an unspecified amount of time, which is why we decided to take these shows into consideration. Both of these shows have deeply affected the culture surrounding them, and vice versa, making them culturally, and historically, significant.

Production

One of our starting questions was based on the production of the TV shows that represented the two different regions. Specifically, how are Japanese animation studios capable of producing so much content, compared to American animation studios. By analyzing the production process from both the makers of The Simpsons and One Piece, we have found that the tools used to make the animations themselves are similar. The major difference in production is that Simpsons is being outsourced to South Korea, while One Piece is being made entirely in-house. We can only speculate at why the animation work is outsourced to a different country by The Simpsons, but costs most likely have something to do with it.

Our claim has been that Japanese animation studios are capable of producing more content than an American animation studio, and simply looking at when each show started, and how many episodes they've put out , has confirmed our claim. One Piece started in 1999, and by 20.05.2012 a total of 548 episodes have been aired on television. The Simpsons started in 1989, and by 20.05.2012 a total of 508 episodes have been aired on television. One Piece started 10 years later, but has managed to produce 25 more episodes. Simply looking at the numbers, they are drastically different, but to better understand this, we compared the major aspects of the production process.

First, we took a look at the story. The major difference in the shows is that everything in One Piece is created by a single person: Eiichiro Oda. Oda writes the manga containing the story, which the anime is faithful to. This means that most of the troubles with producing a show have been eliminated, as the characters, story, dialogue, universe and general progression has been mapped out beforehand. In contrast with The Simpsons, One Piece is not episodic. While episodes from The Simpsons are interchangeable with each other, One Piece follows a standard story structure, moving the story along with each episode.

The story for The Simpsons is produced by a number of writers, who develop a script for each episode every week. The writers are regarded as the brains behind the show, writing the dialogue and actions that eventually will take place in the final episodes. The staff of The Simpsons writers work together to develop a story, based on their professional skills in writing. Of course, these are a collection of creative people, maybe some of the most talented in show business. The framework, characters and the universe is already created for the writers. What they have to do, is creating the story using these elements.

In creating One Piece, the production team does have a big advantage in having a premade script. The manga for One Piece is written, drawn and published up to 2-3 months before the anime is meant to air. The manga also works as a form of storyboard. As we explained in the technology, a storyboard does resemble a cartoon, or, a form of manga.

Looking at the production process for both of these shows, it is clear that One Piece clearly develops shows at a faster rate. We have looked into how long it takes to produce a single episode of One Piece in comparison with The Simpsons, and producing a Simpsons episode takes 6-9 months, while a One Piece episode takes 1-3 months. While we know that Simpsons is outsourced, that by itself should not be enough to create a 6 month difference when producing an episode.

The major difference is the budget each episode gets, which ultimately affects how detailed the animation is. The less time you need to work on making it detailed, the faster you can get production finished. One episode of One Piece costs around $126 000.On the other hand, an episode of the Simpsons costs more than $ 5 million to produce, with the voice actors alone bringing the cost up to $ 2.4 million. The production costs for The Simpsons will continue to rise the longer the show is on the air, as it becomes more expensive to produce. It needs to look cutting-edge to keep up with the competition. While this happens, salaries naturally increase. With budgets in Japan being what they are, concessions obviously have to be made, so an anime cuts corners where possible, saving time, thus making the animation process more efficient. For example, In the Simpsons, the mouth movements are lip-synced perfectly with the actor's performance, but in One Piece the mouth animation is done beforehand, so the actor needs to time his dialogue accordingly.

Disney VS. Ghibli

Walt Disney Studios and Studio Ghibli are two juggernauts in their own regions. Disney has, as we have previously explained, built the foundation of animated features in America, and is for most people considered *the* animation industry. Studio Ghibli on the other hand is a much younger company, but still, the leading producer of animation features in Japan. While Disney does have a richer and more eventful history, we still feel that Studio Ghibli has earned the place by producing animated movies that have all been successful; both commercially and financially. The animation process between the two studios bears some similarities, but the style and art form between the two are vastly different. They have each put their mark on the industry by having recognizable styles that many strive to emulate.

In our comparative analysis of the four films we have chosen, we are going to look at the differences in storytelling, when using a similar foundation, and how they interpret stories based on their cultural background. Both stories are grounded by the culture that surrounds them, often creating movies based on fairy tales.

Alice in Wonderland VS. Spirited Away

Both of these movies have a foundation in the bizarre, and unknown. Both Alice and Chihiro get stuck in a fantasy world filled with odd characters, which both help and hinder them. Neither of them belongs in the world, and both are trying to get out, but in vastly different ways. The way their adventures proceed , and eventually conclude, is where the influence of their cultural legacy comes into play. For Alice, she always faces adversity, and must grow through it, but Chihiro receives help in many forms, and forms friendships with many of the characters.

The biggest difference between these movies is the fact that Spirited Away blurs the line between good and evil, while Alice in Wonderland has a clear evil villain, with Alice being the good heroine. An example of this would be the introduction of the Queen of Hearts, showcasing her cold-blooded nature, by having anyone who enrages her executed on the spot. There is no question here who is the evil villain, and she remains evil to the end, with no hint of redemption. In Spirited Away, we are introduced to Yubaba, the owner of the bathhouse. Her look is like that of an evil witch, with a big nose and warts. She is scrupulous in her dealings, and assumes everyone is as sly and greedy as she is. However, her kind nature is shown towards her absolute affection towards her child; Boh. Towards the end of the movie, we have seen both her kind and evil nature, and it becomes clear that both good and evil can exist within the same person.

Both movies deal with the troubles of entering adulthood, but in very different ways. Chihiro is forced to enter the world of work, where she learns to deal with her problems more maturely, and her adventures force her to become self-reflective and assertive. Alice also enters a strange world, but mostly because of her child-like curiosity. In Spirited Away, Chihiro gets trapped because of her parents' curiosity. In order for Alice to escape Wonderland, she needs to grow up. This happens quite literally at the end of the movie, when she grows to giant size , then proceeds to talk down to the Queen of Hearts, much like how a parent would discipline a child when it has done something bad. After this, she is promptly chased by everyone in Wonderland, and she escapes, revealing that it was all a dream. Another big difference between these films is the main characters effect on the momentum of the story. While Alice is the primer that keeps the story moving, she never actually moves the story forward. She just seems to wander into a new episode of events that go on with her being just as confused at the beginning as she is at the end. Meanwhile, in Spirited Away it is Chihiro's assertiveness that moves the story forward. She never would have gotten a job at the bathhouse if she hadn't been persistent in asking, and she never would have been able to free Haku if she hadn't forced him to swallow the purifying ball, freeing him from Yubaba's control.

Both of the films are set in an abstract universe, but drawn in very different ways. The culture that the stories are based on plays a big part in how the overall look and visualization ends up being. In Alice in Wonderland, there is a clear sense of surrealism, with backgrounds depicting forests and corridors bending in improbable directions. The Victorian design of the movie helps establish the time period it is set in, as well as being a link to the art designs of the original books. In Spirited Away, the bath house is based on Miyazaki's nostalgia for old Japan, and being in the spirit world gives off a sense of time coming to a grinding halt. This comes through in the pacing of the film, as many characters seem to have all the time in the world. Spirited Away takes the time to show the most mundane activities, like someone eating breakfast, because the world allows it. In Alice in Wonderland, everyone is rushing through the adventure, which is especially the case with the *White Rabbit*. Throughout most of the film he is running, all the while yelling ' Look at the time! I'm Late, I'm Late, I'm Late!'.

The Little Mermaid VS.. Ponyo

Just like Spirited Away VS. Alice in Wonderland, these movies shares most of the same similarities. Disney does have a clear good and evil side of the story, with Ariel and Ursula the Sea Witch. It also showcases Disney's inspiration in making the story such, inspired by the good and evil balance from older fairy tales, like The Little Mermaid by H.C Andersen. In Ponyo, the evil sea witch is replaced with Ponyo's father Fujimoto. While he is not necessarily evil, he doesn't want Ponyo to associate with humans, and uses the forces of the sea to capture her. Fujimoto can be seen as a combination of the evil sea witch and King Triton , while possessing neither of their absolute qualities - In this case, good and evil. Just like Spirited Away, Ponyo blurs the line between good and evil.

Both movies are centered on telling the fairy tale by H.C. Andersen, but they do it in vastly different ways. Disney's The Little Mermaid uses it as the foundation, building its story around it, but adapts the ending so it becomes more 'Disney-esque'.

However, Ponyo uses the idea to create something different. Miyazaki has said that he did not want to tread on Disney's toes and use the same story, but he wanted to create a movie where the ocean played a big part. Environmentalism is usually a big motif in Miyazaki's films, and this is no exception. In the far depths of the ocean, we see Fujimoto tinkering outside his submarine, surrounded by the clear ocean along with all its sea life. Near the shores where Sozuke's village is, the water is murky and filled with garbage, almost devoid of life.

One big aspect of The Little Mermaid that Ponyo does not have, is the attention to music, with its lavish musical numbers. This earned Disney an Academy Award, and was a big part of the critics' consideration when reviewing the film. Disney always planned on making a musical animated movie, while Ponyo's focus is more on creating an ocean that seemingly comes alive during its climactic storm.

Historical, Cultural and Religious differences

From the beginning, both American animation and Japanese animation started out being aimed at children, but as time went on, Japan started experimenting, while America kept its focus on what the public wanted. Starting in the 1950's, Japan started paving the road for more adult-oriented anime, exploring complex human emotions and genres. After they had gotten good reception on more adult-oriented shows, they started exploring the more unconventional and bizarre, and eventually turned towards the more grim and dark, like Hiroshima. Audiences started becoming more receptive to animation that wasn't strictly comedy or action-oriented. The dedication of Japanese artists had opened the doors for anime, giving it the freedom to tackle any subject and genre, including many taboos.

When the American animation became more child-oriented in America, the focus of the American animation changed. It became clear that the educational aspect of the American animation was important, teaching valuable lessons to the children watching them. The American sitcom was a big influence in the new adult-oriented American animation that became popular in recent time.

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Family has always played a big part in these sitcoms, so this became the focus of the American animation, often with humorous elements playing a major part. The American animation that enjoy huge popularity with the adult audience are mostly based on animated sitcoms, like The Simpsons. America has been bound to a single genre allowed for the adult audience, while Disney movies and other genres are almost solely reserved for children. The exceptions to this are Pixar's CG animation, like Toy Story, which has been enjoying great popularity in America. In Japan, CG animation is not as popular, and it is a lot more expensive to produce.

The vast diversity of anime has allowed it to branch out to other markets. Product placements feature anime characters, and both anime & manga have managed to increase sales in markets they are not even part in. For example, The manga *Drops of God* increased wine sales so much that the creators were nominated for a *Wine Intelligence Business Award*. The popularity of anime has also caused a subculture to be born, namely the Otaku culture. They collect figurines, games and various other objects, which have caused a huge market to be born. The overall Otaku Market is estimated to be around $26-34 billion.

While anime is based on a continuous storyline driving forward with each episode, American animation is mainly episodic, finishing the story in each episode. Here, the episodes start with a problem and ends in a conclusion, as we see in episodes of The Simpsons. The reasons to have a new story each week in American animation are beneficial for the audience that may miss certain episodes. They can still resume watching the show the following week without the risk of missing crucial points of the story. Again, this is a heritage from the sitcoms that were also of an episodic nature.

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Finally, the last piece of the puzzle goes on how they tell their stories, which has a basis in their religion. The traditions and morals within the story of films, animes and American animation are based on the culture and religion that are present in their history. For example, anime usually blurs the line between good & evil, while American animation has a clear evil villain and good hero. Secondly, death is often shown in anime, so finding the main character dead is rarely a shock for the Japanese audience. This is because in the religion of Shinto, death is honorable, if the person died for a noble cause. A main character dying in a cartoon is considered a taboo, as death is something American society wishes to avoid, or ignore.

Conclusion

These were our original theoretical questions:

- How has each side of animation influenced the culture surrounding it, and vice versa?
-Why can Japanese animation studios presumably produce more than twice the amount that an American animation studio produces?
- What are some of the structural differences when looking at similar, but ultimately different, productions from each side of animation?

The way the animation has influenced the culture is revolutionary in Japan, and evolutionary in America. In Japan, anime is everywhere, and is suited for everyone. Every one of all ages watches anime, and it crosses all subjects and genres. In the beginning it was aimed only at children, but as time went by it became accepted by everyone in Japan to watch anime, as it explored many genres. Anime is now a multi-billion dollar industry that affects the economy around it. The way culture has influenced the animation is in its storied Shinto religion. Shinto is at the core of Japanese culture, and it affects both storytelling and visual elements in anime.

In America, the gap between the younger and older audiences is more visible, with studios and networks working with either one. A shift happened in the culture mid-century when animation became entertainment meant for children. Later , American animation made a shift towards an older audience, with adult oriented American animation and CG films with stories that appeal to all ages. Adult oriented American animation are mostly limited to the sitcom genre, sticking to a 'dysfunctional family' theme. Combined with the sitcom genre, American animation often make references to American pop-culture, using these in situational humor. In comparison, America never experimented as much as Japan did, so it is mostly divided between shows that are for children, and adult shows that are almost only oriented towards adults.

We have come to the conclusion that the main production differences in American and Japanese animation are based on several factors. Producing one episode of The Simpsons takes 6-9 months, while producing one episode of One Piece takes 1-3 months. The production rate in Japan is higher. The Japanese animes are also much cheaper to produce, costing around $126 000 to produce each episode, compared to the $5 million it takes to produce one episode of *The Simpsons*. Because of this, anime has to cut corners where possible, reducing the details of the animation, which in turn reduces how long each episode takes to produce.

While The Simpsons has to be produced from the ground up, starting with the story, most of the story for One Piece has already been pre-produced, in the form of its manga counterpart. In the manga, the story, visualization of characters and surroundings ,and more, have already been created up to three months in advance, so with the anime it is only a matter of bringing it to life. Finally, The animators working on One Piece have to work with very strict deadlines, forcing them to work into long hours of the night.

Looking at films with a similar foundation from each side, we have found some structural differences. The way the films portray good and evil differs drastically between each side. American animated features usually portray a clearly defined good hero, and an evil villain. Japanese animated features usually mix both of these qualities within each person, making them prone to both good and evil actions.

Another difference is the pacing of the story. Disney films usually work in a lot of scenes, details and action that brings the viewer a sense of excitement and the feeling that things are continually happening. Studio Ghibli films usually have a slower sense of pacing, allowing the story to breathe. There are instances where nothing is happening, but is building up to something. For example, in Spirited Away, when Chihiro is trying to walk down some stairs, she first starts by sitting down. She then slowly starts crawling down the stairs, and as she puts her foot down, she loses her footing, and her only option is to start running. she runs down the stairs, and slams into a nearby wall. Without the slowly paced opening of this scene, it wouldn't have been as dramatic when she loses her footing.

In conclusion, we can say that while they do carry similarities, they are, ultimately, completely different.

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Attachments

Attachment/vedlegg a)

Vestlig Animasjon mot Asiatisk Animasjon

Oppdragsgiver: Høgskolen i Gjøvik, IMT
Gruppemedlemmer: Stian Olsen og Frank Johnsen
Kontaktinformasjon:
Bakgrunn:
Når vi ser på vestlig animasjon sammenlignet med asiatisk animasjon ser vi store forskjeller. Forskjeller som strekker seg utenfor selve stilen, men også de kulturelle og historiske forskjeller som har påvirket de forskjellige stilene vi kjenner i dag. Hver av disse to kulturene har utviklet forskjellige måter på å effektivisere animasjons- og produksjonsprosessen. Dette har resultert i to metoder som kan summeriseres på følgende måte: "Kvalitet over kvantitet" og "kvantitet over kvalitet."
Et vestlig animasjonsstudio produserer ca. 16-24 episoder av en animasjonsserie iløpet av ett år/en sesong, mens et asiatisk animasjonsstudio kan produsere 50-52 episoder iløpet av samme tidsperiode.
Mål:
Vi vil sammenligne de forskjellige måtene å animere på ved å se på historien/kulturen,konseptutvikling hos serier, ressursbruk og teknikkene som blir tatt i bruk i vestlig og asiatisk animasjon. Gjennom å se på historien og kulturen ønsker vi å se hvordan serier har vokst og påvirket samfunnet rundt seg og visa versa. Vi vil se på hvordan serier starter og realiseres og ønsker å finne ut de kritiske forskjellene som påvirker alt fra startbudsjett til popularitet. Ved å se på ressursbruken og animasjonsteknikkene til de forskjellige studioene hvor arbeidet blir gjennomført håper vi å finne ut hva som er grunnen til at forskjellene er så store som tidligere ble nevnt.
Sett bort ifra vår hovedoppgave; å lage en omfattende rapport basert på vår forskning, vil vi også lage en medieproduksjon rundt våre funn. Det vi lærer av de forskjellige animasjonsteknikkene ønsker vi å formidle videre i en videoproduksjon som forklarer dette på en måte som ikke krever stor kunnskap om animasjon..

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Problem:
Vi vil få utfordringer som krever kreative løsninger fra vår side. Innhenting av relevant informasjon vil naturligvis være prioritert i begynnelsen av prosjektet. Denne informasjonen vil sannsynligvis være utfordrende å hente. Men ved å danne et informasjonsnettverk håper vi å gjøre denne innhentingen enklere.

Vi skal lage en omfattende prosjektplan med Gantt-skjema, logg og andre prosjektstyringsverktøy for å gjøre dette prosjektet så oversiktlig som mulig.

Forskningsspørsmål:
-Hvordan kan asiatiske animasjonsstudier antageligvis produsere dobbelt så mange episoder som et vestlig animassjonstudio kan på samme tid?
- Hvordan har de kulturelle forskjellene påvirket produksjon av animasjonsserier i disse to kulturene?

Attachment/Vedlegg b)

Vestlig mot Japansk Animasjon.

Prosjektplan.

Oppdragsgiver: Høgskolen i Gjøvik.

Gruppemedlemmer: Stian Olsen og Frank Johnsen

Kontaktinformasjon:

1. MÅL OG RAMMER

1.1. Bakgrunn

Gjennom vårt bekjentskap med animasjon har vi lagt merke til forskjeller i hvordan filmer og serier blir laget i USA og Japan. Sett bort ifra at disse forskjellene er basert på kultur og historie så finnes det også forskjeller på hvordan disse blir utviklet og produsert.

1.2. Prosjektmål

Effektmål: Se på forskjellene mellom vestlig og japansk animasjon. Ved å gjøre dette vil vi ha en utdypet kunnskap om emnet.

Resultatmål: Omfattende oppgave og en medieproduksjon som beskriver våre funn.

1.3. Rammer og ressursbruk.

Vi vil benytte ressurser fra biblioteket for å skaffe mest mulig forskningsmateriale, som tidligere oppgaver som er gjort rundt emnet animasjon og annen relevant litteratur. Vi vil også prøve å skaffe informasjon ved å kontakte personer som er involvert i animasjon og som kan peke oss mot informasjon vi vil få bruk for. Prosjektet blir delt opp i forskjellige faser og løst stegvis. Begge av oss har satt av 30 arbeidstimer hver, hver uke.

2. OMFANG

2.1. Oppgavebeskrivelse

Vår hovedoppgave er å lage en rapport basert på problemstillingene vi har laget. Forskningsspørsmålene er som følger:

- Hvordan kan asiatiske animasjonsstudioer antageligvis produsere dobbelt så mange episoder som et vestlig animasjonstudio kan på samme tid?
-Ved å se på produksjoner som drar store likheter ved hverandrer, hvordan illustreres karakterene og universet og hvordan forteller de historien gjennom animasjonen?

2.2. Avgrensning

Vår oppgave avgrenser seg til selve animasjonsteknikkene som brukes og hvordan produksjonene blir planlagt og produsert. Det kan dukke opp kulturforskjeller i oppgaven, men det vil ikke være vårt hovedfokus.

Ved å sette produksjoner som er produsert i hvert av disse to landene vil vi analysere forskjellene og undersøke på hvilken måte disse to er produsert.

- Vi vil sammenligne animerte langfilmer opp mot hverandre. Laget av vestlige studioer og fra japanske studioer.Vi tar for oss filmer som forteller like historier og som holder seg i samme univers. på denne måten ser vi hvordan de illustrerer filmenes univers og forskjellene

- Vi vil gjøre det samme med to episodebaserte animasjonsserier som er pågående i begge land.Her vil vi se hvordan ressurser brukes, og hvordan de animerer med en stram tidsplan. Fokuset ligger kun på animasjonen.

3. PROSJEKTORGANISERING

3.1. Ansvarsforhold og roller.

Vi vil dele opp forskningsdelen i oppgaven slik at hver av oss får egne arbeidsområder. Vi vil møtes på planlagte tidspunkt i uka for å diskutere det vi har funnet. Det er utnevnt en kontaktperson som vil stå for kommunikasjon med veileder.

3.2. Rutiner og regler i gruppa

Gruppen har avtalt faste veiledningsmøter har hver uke. Det er anslått ca. 30 timer per uke per person for arbeid med oppgaven. Dette vil etterfølges og kontrolleres med logg for hver arbeidsøkt. Det er oppnevnt en kontaktperson i gruppa som vil fungere mellom veileder og andre personer involvert.

4. PLANLEGGING, OPPFØLGING OG RAPPORTERING
4.1. Hovedinndeling av prosjektet

Hovedinndeling av prosjektet er som følger:

- Førprosjekt

- Innhenting av fagstoff og annen informasjon.

- Rapportarbeid

- Arbeid med medieproduksjon.

- Ferdigstilling av rapport, plakat og fremføring.

 Vil avtales fortløpende under arbeidet i forhold til Gantt-skjema. Det er allerede avtalt møter før hver milepæl påbegynnes og arbeidsfordelingen vil bli diskutert i detalj.

5. RISIKOANALYSE

Mulige problemer i prosjektet:

- Får ikke innhentet informasjonen vi trenger

Denne oppgaven krever mye materiale for å oppnå de resultatene vi ønsker. Noe av dette materialet vil være krevende å skaffe.For å unngå dette er det satt ned tid for å planlegge denne delen av prosjektet.

- Får ikke dannet det kontaktnettverket vi ønsker.

Et kontaktnettverk vil være verdifullt for vår del med tanke på geografien i vår oppgave. Vi vil gjøre det som er mulig gjennom mail og lage en liste med personer vi kan hente informasjon fra.

- Gruppemedlemmer oppfyller ikke arbeidskrav.

Ved å planlegge dag for dag håper vi å ha kontroll over arbeidsmengde i forhold til arbeidskrav. Ved å skrive logg håper vi å gi hverandre oversikt over hva som gjøres.

6. PLAN FOR GJENNOMFØRING

Milepæler er lagt inn i et Ganttskjema som gir oss oversikt over hvor langt vi er kommet i fremgangen i forhold til planlagt tidsbruk på de diverse oppgavene. Milepælene består av førprosjekt, research, rapportskriving (utkast og ferdig rapport), produsering av medieprodukt plakat samt forberedelse til fremføring.

Ganttskjema er produsert i Google Docs. Dette gir oss muligheten til å revidere dokumentet fortløpende.

Attachment/Vedlegg c)

Statusrapporter

 07.02.2012

Frank Johnsen og Stian Olsen

Vi har finalisert prosjektplanen (endringer kommer til å foregå kontinuerlig, men vi kan ikke bruke mer tid på den), nå som har begynt på research. Den offisielle researchperioden er på en måned, med start 1. februar. Vi søker gjennom bibsys og finner bøker og tidligere oppgaver som kan ha potensiell relevanse for bacheloren. Aktuelle bøker vil bli bestilt iløpet av uka. Vi jobber med å gjøre klar en mal for en mail vi sender til forelesere/skoler/studier. Håpet vårt for mailen er at de enten sier 'Ja jeg kan hjelpe dere, møt meg på xxx' , 'beklageligvis så vet jeg ikke, men ta kontakt med xxx så kan nok han hjelpe dere', 'jeg har ikke tid til å hjelpe dere, men jeg anbefaler å lese denne boken' eller en miks av alle tre. På dette punktet trenger vi all hjelp vi kan få, men det verste vi får ut av denne mailen er et 'nei', så det er verdt det.

Vi har funnet ut hvilke filmer og serier vi skal ta for oss hittil. Vi skal ta for oss Ponyo (Japan,Ghibli) opp mot The Little Mermaid (USA,Disney) da de begge har basis I eventyret skrevet av Hans Christian Andersen. Vi ser på hvordan de illustrerer karakterene,universet og hvordan historien fortelles ved bruk av bildene.

Vi skal ta for oss Spirited Away (Japan,Ghibli) og Alice in Wonderland (USA,Disney). Begge tar for seg en absurd fantasiverden og tar for seg en liten jente som er I 'the eye of the storm'. Igjen så tar vi for oss hvordan de illustrerer karakterene, universe tog hvordan historien fortelles ved bruk av bildene.

Vi håper å finne flere filmer av studio Disney og studio Ghibli som har både en lik historie og setting, da vi kan ikke få fram hvor forskjellene ligger med bare en enkelt film.

For serier skal vi ta for oss The Simpsons (USA) og Kochikame (Japan). Begge seriene har 300+ episoder, og har et publikum som treffer alle aldersgrupper. Hovedpersonene Homer Simpsons og Kankichi Ryotsu er veldig like hverandre og historien går generelt ut på uhellene som befaller begge. Vi føler at disse seriene har mange identiske elementer, og setter derfor disse seriene opp mot hverandre.

Statusrapport 19.03.2012

<div align="right">Frank Johnsen og Stian Olsen</div>

I de siste ukene har vi diskutert hvordan strukturen på oppgaven vår skal være. Vi har satt opp bacheloroppgaven med den originale disposisjonen, og fyller inn punktene vi har. Det renskrives kontinuerlig, men tanken vår er å fylle ut biter etterhvert som vi finner ut om det og renpusser det etterveis så alt får en kontinuerlig tone og flyt. En bekymring er at vi har skrevet i en 'hjemslig tone', og lurer på om det må gjøres mer profesjonelt. hvor er tonen vi skal følge? Akkurat nå virker det som mange biter har en form for kåseri. Dette er første utkast til innledningen for animasjon:

Bacheloroppgaven vi har valgt å skrive, og som du leser nå, har valgt å ta for seg Vestlig Animasjon sett opp mot Japansk Animasjon. Jeg føler at det første som burde gjøres er å ta for seg hva vi mener med 'Vestlig' ,'Japansk' og 'Animasjon' da de få tilfellene oppgaven har blitt nevnt så har det forårsaket misforståelser.   Med 'Vestlig' og 'Japansk' mener vi simpelthen hvor animasjonen har originert, blitt kultivert og har fått en rik historisk bakgrunn. Den vestlige animasjonen originerte i USA og den japanske originerte i Japan. Denne biten pleide sjelden å være forvirrende, men 'animasjon' var noe helt annet. Grunnlaget til forvirrelsen er at animasjon eksisterer i mange former,oppfattelser,størrelser og dimensjoner, så det er essensielt å spisse det ned, så dette blir klart og tydelig fra første stund. Vår definisjon av animasjon som vi ønsker å se dypere inn i er såkalt 'Tradisjonell animasjon' , også kjent som hånd-tegnet og/eller celleanimasjon. Denne animasjonen brukes i filmer som Den Lille Havfruen og i serier som The Simpsons. Vi skal ikke sette oss inn i tredimensjonell(3D) animasjon, eller andre varianter som blir manipulert hovedsakelig gjennom dataprogrammer som Flash eller Adobe After Effects.

Nå som vi har definert hvilken type animasjon vi skal se på, så er det neste naturlige steget å besvare spørsmålet'Hva er animasjon?'. Vel, en enkel måte å si det på er at animasjon er illusjonen av bevegelse.

Vi har hatt diskusjoner om hvordan fokuset vårt skal bli tilrettelagt. Vi har originalt fokuset på animasjon, men mye av researchen viser jo at story og forfatterprosessen har en stor påvirkning på animasjonen. Vi tror vi har mye materiale vi kan skrive om akkurat her, hvertfall i sammenheng med de to forskjellige seriene. The Simpsons har opptil fire-fem personer som jobber med script alene, mens

One Piece har færre. Arbeidsstrømmen til disse to seriene er noe vi kommer til å skrive om, i forhold til forskningsspørsmålet vi har i problemstillingen.

Vi har også jobbet videre med filmanalysene. Denne uken skal vi se over filmene igjen i plenum, lage notater og diskutere aspekter ved filmene. Nettsiden skal finpusses litt, og Fokuset vårt blir å 'fylle' bacheloren med relevant informasjon som blir renpussa senere.

En av våre milepæler er å få til et utkast til bacheloroppgaven innen påske. Det betyr at vi må gå inn i en ganske heavy skriveperiode nå. Målet er å få skrever 20-30 sider i Bacheloroppgaven , lage et utkast og få andre til å lese det for å få kritikk.

Notater i veiledning: Dokumentarer: Waking sleeping beauty. (Disney)

Ikke bruk gant-skjema til oversikt over veiledninger.

Statusrapport. 10.05.12

Frank Johnsen & Stian Olsen

Etter vår forrige veiledning satt vi oss ned og tok en kikk på noen deler av oppgaven som måtte jobbes på.

Analysene er 90% ferdig, kommer til å se over justeringer i løpet av den siste uken når vi renskriver. De største bitene som er igjen er kultur/historie, tekniske biter i animasjonen og drøftingen. Vi vet hva våre konklusjoner er (sånn ca.), vi mangler bare å skrive det ned. Vi har planlagt å ha en versjon ferdig iløpet av neste uke, slik at vi har tid til å finpusse og stilsette oppgaven. Det kan også være fare for at det blir alt for stort sideantall som er forsvarlig for oppgaven vår, så her må vi også ha tid til å forbedre.

Iløpet av de ukene som har gått så har vi også jobbet med videoen vi skal produsere. Vi nærmer oss slutten av planleggingen og kan begynne å produsere. Vi har planer om å jobbe med videoen i samsvar med oppgaven.

Vi har utviklet noen ideer som vi tror kan gjøre videoen bedre. Vi har planer om å gjøre en fullstendig video i After Effects, som skal være basert på det vi har funnet ut i løpet av Bacheloren. Vi skal gjøre det som en informasjonsvideo, som gjøres i en Q&A session med visuelle hjelpemidler under forklaringen. i.e:

strekmann #1 stiller et spørsmål

strekmann #2 svarer (når han prater, scroller det opp til en video. når han er ferdig med å forklare, stiller #1 et spørsmål til, video roller osv. til alt er dekket)

Dette er formatet vi har planer om å bruke. på inget punkt har vi planer om å nevne bacheloren, det kan ses som en stand-alone video.

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Vi har planer om å bruke infobokser for å gi info sammen med visuelle hjelpemidler. kan muligens være bedre med voice-over.

OBS: Alt er på engelsk

Attachment/Vedlegg d)

Logg Bachelor.

Frank Johnsen og Stian Olsen.

03.02.2012:

- Gjorde ferdig den endelige prosjektplanen. det kommer til å bli endring senere, men kan ikke bruke mer tid på å finpusse den.

-Vi har valgt å ta for oss flere disney/ghibli filmer for comparison. fokuset her blir å finne like filmer og se på hvordan hver side bygger universet og 'fyller' det. hva er de artistiske forskjellene i animasjonen.

-Vi har valgt å ta for oss en serie. fokuset her blir å se på hvordan de animerer, hvordan de bruker tiden, og optimaliserte animasjonsteknikker de benytter seg av. detaljer etc.

05.02.2012

Møttes for å gjøre de siste endringene i prosjektplanen.

07.02.2012

Research. Vi søkte opp aktuelle bøker i Bibsys. Fant mange med relevanse til animasjon. Disse ble booket og lånt ut. Noen av dem fant vi i biblioteker hos andre universiteter, så de kommer etterhvert. Å finne stoff på Disney kan bli en utfordring, siden de har et godt grep på informasjonen som handler om selskapet generelt. Det samme gjelder japansk animasjon, siden mye informasjon er på japansk.

21.02.2012

Vi møttes for å snakke om hvor langt vi hadde kommet etter å ha lest i de forskjellige bøkene og hvilke merknader vi har gjort oss. Bestemte oss videre for å ta opp Hayao miyazaki og walt disney's syn på animasjon, og om de. VI velger også å se på historien for disney og ghibli, og ser på eksperimentasjonen de har jobbet med tidligere (disney hadde nazi-propaganda i form av nazi donald duck f.eks), og hvordan animasjonsstilen har gått fram.

08.02.2012

Har funnet ut at Kochikame ikke finnes med engelske tekster. Men fant en erstatter, One Piece. Ikke like relevant til Simpsons storymessig, men veldig populær i Japan/verden.

21.03.2012

Etter veiledningen så ble det lagt notis på valg av språk i bachelor-oppgaven. Vi bestemte oss for å skrive bacheloroppgaven på engelsk, da det gir oss et bredere perspektiv og kan gjøre det aktuelt å publisere/presentere den internasjonalt. Det 'store' grunnlaget er at det gjør det enklere for meg . Hvis en i gruppen føler at dette ikke fungerer, så velger vi å gå tilbake til norsk. Jeg må da gjøre stor skrivvask og jobbe med å endre på skriveprosessen min. Siden det er mine feil som gjør byttet, må jeg passe på å ta for meg muligens ekstra ansvar for å gjøre arbeidet lettere for partneren min.

25.03.2012

Har oversatt det meste vi har gjort i oppgaven til nå til engelsk. Har blitt noen forsinkelser så vi har nok ikke et fullstendig utkast klart. Om noen dager drar vi hver vår vei for påskeferie, hvor vi skal jobbe videre selvstendig. Først og fremst med å få all teori på plass.

10.04.2012

Etter veiledning i dag jobbet vi videre med oppgaven. Mye som mangler fortsatt. Bestemte oss for å prioritere analysene, siden de er såpass vesentlige.

19.04.2012

Etter dagens økt begynner vi å få en god del skrevet ned på papiret. Vi prøver å skrive litt ukritisk siden vi kommer tilbake til det uansett.

01.05.2012

Startet planleggingen av video. Har diskutert utseende, stil og punkter som er viktige å få frem.

10.05.2012 Mange ting som kom på plass etter dagens veiledning. Her ble det foreslått at vi dropper videoen siden den ikke er en del av vår innlevering. Og siden arbeidsmengden fremover blir relativt stor, blir det lite tid til videoproduksjon. Oppgaven vår begynner å få en skikkelig struktur, så vi har valgt å fokusere all vår energi opp imot den.

21.05.2012

Er så å si ferdig med alt innholdet, men det er enkelte ting som må justeres. Pluss noe av det obligatoriske innholdet som kildehenvisninger, fotnoter og generel utforming. Håper å få levert i morgen.

Attachment/Vedlegg e)

Oppgave	Ansvar	Januar						Februar								Mars				
		Uke 4	Uke 5	Uke 6	Uke 7	Uke 8	Uke 9	Uke 10	Uke 11	Uke 12	Uke 13

Arbeidsmaler
Forprosjekt
Research
Veiledningsmøter [1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [6]
Arbeid med rapport
Fremstilling av ukas I
Arbeid med video
Fremvisning
Arbeid med plakat

April				Mai				Juni	
Uke 14	Uke 15	Uke 16	Uke 17	Uke 18	Uke 19	Uke 20	Uke 21	Uke 22	Uke 23	Uke 24

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