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IP thesis.

My Integrative Project is a 3D animation that uses an allegorical framework to tell a fantasy story. The plot is centered around a single lesson, while the characters of the animation all embody ideas as well as reflect a type of commentary on American society. The ideas range from greed, valor, religious corruption and lust. The lesson my story conveys is the idea that contemporary understandings of religious laws are too simplistic for multidimensional people to be subject to and that holding people to such standards proves to be impossible. This argument is the driving force of the plot and the actions of all the characters.



O', the main character

My 3D animation is set in the year 2012 and follows the character, O', who is sentenced to prison by the Law for a lifetime of committing atrocities and succumbing to his own greed. A large robotic specter comes to collect him and O' unsuccessfully tries to bribe his way to freedom. Against his will, O' is led by the specter across an apocalyptic

landscape toward the prison. As he travels, he runs into people he knows and tries to convince or bribe them into taking his place or coming with him to speak on his behalf. He sees his relative who complains of being overworked and not available to help him. He finds a religious leader and witty friend who both can't help him for their own reasons. He finds a past lover who refuses to help him because he is too ugly for her to accompany him. In the end, O' is left alone to face the last allegorical figure: the Law. Though he becomes a changed person through his journey, it will remain unclear if O' will be given leniency or sentenced to prison. This ambiguity maintains the complexity of the story, rather than simplifying the end into a defined position.



Specter

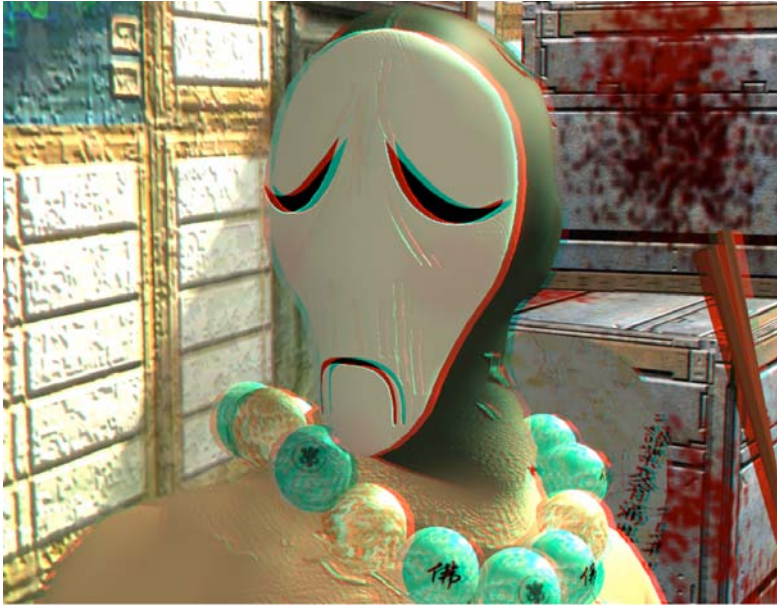
My argument is present through the O's actions through out the animation. The main character will have characteristics that could be both liked and detested by the viewer. He is not particularly attractive and wears a Kabuki-style demon's mask. The viewer will see him try to bribe other characters and even lie to them during the story. There are also wanted posters with his face on building sides. At the same time, the viewer will see him show pity for victims of war and disgust over the state of his environment. The environment will be a mixture of futuristic architecture and military

type installations and worn ruins. The environmental texturing will be symbolic of the synchronized relationship between economic prosperity, economic decline and war. Given the characters' actions, the viewer will see a sympathetic side of the character while knowing that the character is guilty of crimes that are not presented in the plot.

I designed my characters using the *Everyman* play's characters as inspiration. O' is a representation of every man. The robotic creature called Dark Specter represents the actions of the law or as in *Everyman*, Death. Ken The Dread represents O's family which is too overworked and concerned with their own affairs to care about him. Mat The Zen is a monk that represents forms of religious hypocrisy and corruption. I convey this by having the character sit within a broken shrine. Mat The Zen agrees to journey with O', however, the viewer will figure that based on Mat the Zen's direct environment that he may not be the best person to accompany O' to face the Law. The shrine is filled with money, weapons, and a dead body. Five Wits is the murderer and represents the chaos in the universe that can take good things away from people. Damsel is representative of women who strive to keep their conventional beauty by plastic surgery and augmentation. Her body will consist of scars from self-mutilation and amputated limbs, though she will attempt to remain sexually appealing to men by baring her naked breasts. O' and Damsel have a prior romance relationship to the plot, and he is partially responsible for her constant mutilation to make herself more desirable. Damsel has become victimized by O' and devalued as a result of O's value for contemporary beauty and sexual perfection. The Law character is an unrelenting God, invisible to the eye however undeniably present in the story as O' prays on his knees not to be sentenced to prison at the end of the animation.

The plot of the story is critical because it must be fully defined before it can be animated using the Vicon motion capture system (MOCAP). Though O' is not a model individual, it was important that that the viewer empathize with him, so it was crucial that there were instances of likeable human characteristics. These characteristics are seen in particular movements, namely his pity as he acknowledges the deceased. It was also important that the viewer empathize with O' based on his design. O' is the only character in the major plot that has human eyes. In illustration across many cultures, to give something human eyes is to give that thing intelligence. He is also one of the only two characters in the plot with a human face under his mask, suggesting he has flesh and a heart. All the other characters' masks are hollowed out; all are empty of eyes and faces other than Five Wits, who is intelligent but a schemer and a killer. He possesses eyes but no face.

The Media is 3D animation because I find it to be a great mode for giving creative expression a solid form. Digital 3D is like having full control over a drawing during and even after its creation. This is a media for people who enjoy videogames. They enjoy controlling aspects of their character, whether they control their physical attributes, movements, skills sets, gender and more. This is why my intended audience is the "Gamer" of this generation between the ages of eighteen to twenty-six. The conflict comes with the fact the viewer cannot control the animation. The experience is similar to watching someone play a video game. The viewer can only anticipate what will happen and want to change what's happening but will be unable to do so. This gives my audience and I a common ground on which to speak and my production's design and execution can be viewed in conceptual depth beyond the mere technical aspect.



Screenshot: Mat the Zen, character

The process of making this 3D animation was like producing a film. I spent a few months deciding on a particular story to use for the backbone of the plot. The *Everyman* play was appropriate, because it told a story I was interested in exploring further in my own way. I then drew concept sketches of the main character. When the sketches were done I wrote a script with dialogue using some of the original dialogue from the plays. I immediately noticed that the dialogue was making the animation a lot longer than it had to be, and voice casting so many people at once seemed to be a tedious task. The dialogue was also stifling the animation, explaining all the emotions in unnecessary words. I immediately rewrote it without any dialogue at all. However, this left me with the problem that if I was going to animate all of it, I was faced with the task of rigging and animating all these characters by hand, which in the time allotted, would prove to be almost impossible without sacrificing plot, details and a lot of quality. My solution to the animation problem became motion capture. A process in which I would record actors moving in real space and apply their movements to my 3D model characters.

I cast actors of different backgrounds and skills to play the parts of my characters. I put each actor in a motion capture studio where the actions of my story were portrayed in their motions. Seven cameras recorded their movements from all sides and they acted out the scenes of the animation. I took their motion capture data and applied it to the 3D character models for a seamless animation. I built their environment and placed the acting characters into scenes in the 3D software. I lit and rendered the scenes in an anaglyph camera set up which allowed me to control what pops out of the screen when viewed in 3D and how much depth and focus was in each shot. If I wanted something to pop off of the screen when viewed in 3D, I placed the object close to the camera lenses but still within the frame of the camera. I rendered out to a high resolution to be projected on the Duderstadt's Geo Wall in 3D and at the Work Detroit gallery.

Before I made my choices on camera angles, lighting, modeled anything in 3D or thought how it would be animated, I watched animations that had qualities that I wished to implement into my project and make my own. *Aeon Flux* and *A Scanner Darkly* are admirable for their fluid movement in animation. *A Scanner Darkly* used a rotoscoping technique and made live action into an animation. I also used live actors as the basis for my animation so that the animation would be smooth and expressive. Motion Capture is the three-dimensional equivalent to rotoscoping. *Jin-Ro'h* and *Akira* are both Japanese animated films I watched for their animation techniques as well as their antiheroic characters. O' nor his associates are defined as good or bad in my piece. *Fritz the Cat* is another animation I watched for its uncensored adult content. I felt it was important that my animation have elements that made the viewer aware of their own body as well as the Damsel character's body. These animations have inspired my project to be what it is.

Though my allegory contains elements that revolve around war and the conflicts over natural resources, religious hypocrisy and American views on conventional beauty in women, my main goal is to suggest and show moral complexity. Our morals are too complex to be subjected to the extreme standards that religious institutions subject us all to, and this means that the Human moral makeup is impossible to define as good or evil. Taking that statement into consideration, the future of O' will be left for the audience to decide. People cannot hold others to the same moral standards in which they hold themselves because to impose them on others is not only unjust but also to expect others to adhere by those standards is impossible. Because of the differences in each person, there can be no gauge to measure moral standards and to place a gauge upon people is to deny them the right of being individual human beings.



Aeon Flux, Peter Chung



Fritz the Cat, Ralph Bakshi, Robert Crumb



Jin Ro'h, Hiroyuki Okiura





Akira, Katsuhiro Otomo



A Scanner Darkly, Richard Linklater