

Reflective Essay

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It is fun to reflect on all the Disney movies that I have watched throughout my lifetime. Not only have I watched many Disney movies, but I have also rewatched them too many times to count. Some of my earliest memories of watching movies at home as a child include *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin* just to name a few. Thinking back on the movies and how they have influenced me I realize that in addition to them sparking a desire to want to draw or animate but they also really gave me a love for musicals and theater in general. I still to this day sing multiple songs from *Mulan* because they are so fun. I think that a very large part of my love for Disney animated films is the story that they tell. You always know going into a Disney film that you are going to get an uplifting, good- humored story where the good guys always come out on top, and the evil stepmothers are thwarted. As I have been in the Animation program here at UVU I have realized that telling a story is what really excites me. For a very long time I thought I wanted to make videogames as I played videogames my whole life, but as I have spent more time in the animation program and learned the different roles and jobs in the industry, story telling is what has stood out to me as what is most important. I think all the Disney movies I have watched have influenced that desire to be able to tell a story that can move an audience and leave them feeling good or thinking about what they had just seen. I want to talk about some movies or scenes from movies that really influenced me a lot with storytelling and the desire to animate.

Its hard to pin down exact favorites but I one that comes to mind right away is the scene in *Aladdin* where they sing the song “Prince Ali”. This sequence of animation in the movies was always one of my favorites. I loved how magical the whole parade felt with the Genie using his power to turn into so many different things. I always tried drawing the different versions that Genie transforms into during that scene when I was younger because they were so creative and made me laugh. Especially the one where he turned into the Gypsy lady. This movie and this scene really helped me feel the magic that animation can bring into a movie. Genie was such a great character for animation, and it really made this movie stand out in my opinion. Another example of an animated scene that really stood out to me is in *Beauty and the Beast*. During the song “Be Our Guest”, I never really realized how much I enjoyed that scene until I saw the live remake of *Beauty and the Beast* and felt how much more magical animation is. The scene of “Be Our Guest” in the live remake just was missing the magic that the original had. There is something about the traditional animation that just can make the unbelievable believable. It really made me appreciate traditional animation over CGI and 3D animation. That isn’t to say 3D animation can’t be awesome, because I love the newer Disney movies that are 3D animated. When I compare the two animated “Be Our Guest” scenes though, I feel the magic more from the traditional animation, and I think that is what gets me most excited when I watch something made in animation.

As I have gotten older, I have watched less of the Disney animated movies. I really have only gone to see one when its new and in theaters. I haven’t really rewatched any at home like I use to. There are a few exceptions to the above statement though, and one of them is *Tangled*.

When Tangled came out I was all about it. I remember my family went and saw it for our holiday movie that we would do every year and I absolutely loved it. I thought it was amazing animation, the songs were awesome, the story was awesome, and the world of the movie was really immersive. Tangled was the movie that really made me interested in 3D and made me want to learn more about it. In fact, it was the main reason that I signed up for a program in high school called CTEC. CTEC had a Digital Media/3D program where I would only go to High School for half the day and would then go learn about 2D animation and 3D modeling. In all honesty I didn't pay as much attention as I should have while there, but I loved being introduced to those industries. I used Maya for the first time while I was there, and I quickly learned that it would take a lot of work to even get close to making something like Tangled. That really put animation into perspective for me and made me respect and appreciate the time and talent artists put into making a movie. If I had to choose animation that really stuck out to me in Tangled, it would have to be Rapunzel's hair or Maximus the horse. It was fun the way they had her use her hair throughout the whole movie and Maximus's expressions and personality were very well animated and stuck with me. At the time of seeing Tangled it was for sure my favorite Disney movie.

Next movie on the list that really influenced me was Frozen. I remember seeing it in theaters when it came out, and I was blown away. At the time I thought nothing could top how much I enjoyed Tangled but man I was wrong. I absolutely loved everything about the movie. The music, the story and plot and animation all just really impressed me. This was definitely a Disney movie where I felt the "magic". For this movie I would have to say the music stuck out to me and made an impression far more than the animation did, but I really appreciated how well the characters look in 3D and were animated. I loved how they were able to use Olaf's model in such funny ways even though it is a very simple character, the way they animated him interacting with the environment made him feel very much more alive and interesting to watch. I also remember wanting to try and recreate the big snow giant monster in 3D. This Disney movie really was awesome for me, and I loved it a lot.

I didn't really watch any more Disney movies for a few more years. I was serving an LDS mission in Taiwan when Big Hero 6 and Inside Out were released so I kind of missed the initial craze with both of those movies, but I absolutely loved both when I finally did get around to watching them. I would say though, the movie that influenced me the most to go into animation was Moana. It was released in 2016, and at that time I was going to school down in St. George at Dixie State. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do in school and what career I wanted to work towards. I had at the time a friend of mine share that he wanted to go to either BYU or UVU for their animation program. When he told me this, it sparked a fire of desire to also do the same. I was on the edge though and couldn't decide if I should really go for it or not, when I saw Moana. It seriously was so amazing. I loved the animation; the water animation blew me away. Moana's hair when wet blew me away. The 2D animated sequence with Maui's tattoos was amazing. Moana seriously made me see what animation and story telling can do when done right. I wanted to be able to tell stories through animation the same way, which helped me decide to try and go into animation myself.

It has been fun reflecting on how Disney movies influenced me and my decision to try and pursue a career in the animation industry. At the beginning of writing this essay, I felt like I wouldn't have enough to talk about, but I realized a lot of the movies really did push me into trying to become an animator myself. Mainly the magic that I have been able to feel when watching something animated is what influenced me most. It is awesome what Disney has done in terms of pushing the envelope of what is possible to do through animation, and the world of art is better because of it. Though what I have wanted to do in the industry has changed a bit over the years, I still am being driven by the desire to share magic through animation and storytelling.